A City Transformed?
Gendering the strategies and experience of urban change in Medellín

Alexandra Young

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Modern Languages, Newcastle University

May 2020

Abstract

This thesis contributes a feminist analysis of the urban transformation of Medellín, Colombia. By looking to the everyday experiences and practices in the city and assessing the gender logics that have informed and shaped their urban development strategy, I evaluate the celebrated urban transformation and highlight paradoxes within it. In a city that is globally recognised for its innovative strategies of development and reduction in levels of violence primarily from the 'turning point' in 2003, I pay attention to the gender inequalities and gender-based violence that continue to challenge local government and activists alike. The interdisciplinary research is situated within broader scholarship highlighting the gendered everyday of urban space and violence. Feminist scholars have shown how gender is mediated through underpinning political structures of patriarchy and neoliberalism, and how it is situated embodied and experienced in the everyday. I consider each of these dimensions within the city's institutions and beyond, exploring how gender has informed the policies, planning and successes of the urban transformation, alongside the lived (gendered) experience of the urban landscape. Focusing upon the connected themes of culture, space, and security, I show where and how each fit within a gendered understanding of the city and its policies for change. Drawing upon extensive ethnographic fieldwork and detailed interviews with activists, government officials and residents I provide a multi-layered account of the urban space and those who shape it. As such this thesis contributes an understanding of the contradictions and fractures that exist between, and underpin, the award-winning policy and the lived experience of the city. By paying attention to the gendered limitations of the urban transformation I show how such changes continue to fall short in truly 'transforming' – a process that requires challenging the systems of power including, but not limited to, unequal gender relations.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, Medellín has experienced an unprecedented transformation that has made it stand out both nationally and internationally. We overcame the horror of violence generated by drug-trafficking to regain confidence, using a different development model, which has brought results.

However, many challenges continue, and it is the time for us to sit down and think together about the dream for ourselves and for the generations to come. That is why we propose the city model we believe in:

> **In Medellín** we support integral development for human beings, for a society that guarantees the resources necessary to enjoy quality of life and live in harmony with others.
>
> **We believe in** citizen culture, relying on the citizens to participate in actions that promote the common good, in such a way that takes care of natural resources and commits to a model of sustainability, of social and territorial equality, based on education as a fundamental axis of development and the collective construction of society.
>
> **Medellín counts on you** to build the city we dream of, one that bets on being **+ legal + safe + equitable**: that belongs to everyone, where healthy coexistence predominates struggles for identity and that strives every day for a better habitat for its citizens
>
> *Plan de Desarrollo, Alcaldía de Medellín*, 2016: 23, bold in original
> (authors translation)

Medellín, Colombia's second largest city, has made remarkable strides in recent years, shifting the reputation of the city from one of extreme violence, to one of innovative urban development and transformative change. The above quote, from the 2016 development plan of Medellín's municipal administration, presents a familiar account of the city's transformative change, while also recognizing that there is still work to be done. Medellín's approach to urban development presents a priority of inclusion, where the city "belongs to everyone" within it, shifting to a "collective construction" of society and a prioritisation of a "healthy coexistence" amongst the citizens. In the face of a complex past of violence, inequality and social exclusion, the development approach has

been praised for reshaping the urban landscape and leaving the city with an international reputation for the 'Medellín Miracle' (Maclean, 2014). As the winner of the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize[1] in 2016, it is celebrated for its innovation and sustainability in urban planning:

> Medellín tells the compelling story of a city which has transformed itself from a notoriously violent city to one that is being held up as a model for urban innovation within a span of just two decades. Today, Medellín is a city that celebrates life – resolute in its commitment to create a more just, more human, freer and happier home for its inhabitants.[2]

In *The Guardian*, Joseph Stiglitz similarly celebrates the city, stating that:

> Medellín constructed avant-garde public buildings in areas that were the most run-down, provided house paint to citizens living in poor districts, and cleaned up and improved the streets – all in the belief that if you treat people with dignity, they will value their surroundings and take pride in their communities. And that faith has been more than borne out.[3]

Both accounts are typical of the international celebration of Medellín's development approach, emphasising the impressive infrastructure changes that are most commonly associated with the poorest areas of the city. Medellín's urban development has set out to bring stability after many turbulent years by improving the quality of life for residents and generating an economically competitive city. The language Stiglitz uses, of pride and citizenship, are also key to the development approach, with an emphasis not only upon the urban landscape but also the people within it.

Medellín's urban development approach, and the associated narrative of transformation, is the central focus of this thesis. As a successful city rebranding project, Medellín has been pinned onto the global map for its "principle of using policies of socioeconomic development to reduce violence" (Maclean, 2015: 58). While implementing policies that draw inspiration from other urban regeneration models,[4] Medellín is exceptional in its implementation of such policies in conditions of extreme

---

[1] The prize is named after the Singaporean Prime Minister credited with developing Singapore into a "distinctive, clean and green garden city … with a high-quality living environment, in tandem with rapid economic growth". The prize is awarded to cities and leaders displaying good governance and innovation to "bring about social economic and environmental benefits in a holistic way to their communities".
[2] https://www.leekuanyewworldcityprize.com.sg/laureates/2016/laureate/
[3] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/08/medellin-livable-cities-colombia
[4] Medellín draws directly for instance upon the Barcelona model, based on urban change through physical interventions in public space (Brand, 2013).

urban violence (Maclean, 2015). While there are numerous dimensions to Medellín's urban planning, I identify and outline three core strands often emphasised within the 'Medellín Model': (i) cultural change and inclusion, (ii) investment in public space, (iii) reduction in violence (the security dimension being a particular focus of the 2016-2019 Mayor, Federico Gutiérrez[5]). Each of these elements are interconnected. Interventions in public space, spread throughout the city have a particular emphasis on marginal areas that are seen as having a historic 'social debt' from prior years of neglect. Such investment is designed to bring about a feeling of inclusion and co-responsibility over the city, in turn generating responsible citizens who share values and adhere to laws to bring about greater social cohesion and, ultimately, security. The change in Medellín is therefore attributed to a change in culture and in the mentality of the residents, emerging from the interventions in public space themselves, but also encouraged by particular policies such as the development of so-called Citizen Culture. It is the emphasis and connection between space and culture that is of particular interest throughout the thesis, as the interventions within the urban space have an ambitious scope for change.

Urban space is produced by, and productive of, the social (Massey, 1994), consequently, cities are shaped by gender, and other intersecting categories (McDowell, 1983; Chant and McIlwaine, 2013). Medellín's innovative approach to urban development was designed to redress the balance between the rich and poor, but also the "social debt that the city has with women, youth, the elderly and ethnic minorities" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2001). The need to create more gender equitable policies has consequently been recognized within Medellín's urban planning. In recognising a 'debt' owed to women (alongside other neglected groups), the local government acknowledges its past failures with regard to women's differential experience of urban space. A gender sensitive approach has been part of the overall city development plans consistently since the 'turning point' in 2003, with the election of Sergio Fajardo as Mayor. Within Medellín however, gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV) are recognised as continuing challenges. In connecting violence with patriarchal structures, GBV is seen to produce and be productive of gendered norms (Segato, 2003; Shepherd, 2008; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). Yet, these violences exist within a society that claims to have 'overcome' the horrors of violence, as in the opening quote from the 2016 development plan. Within a government approach that continues to use the language of gender, and celebrates gender mainstreaming (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 264), a gendered analysis of the policies, practice and experience of the transformed city is significant. In

---

[5] Winning the election as an independent, Gutiérrez is a complex and divisive figure with often-changing political allegiances. Gutiérrez has supported the election of previous Mayor's Fajardo and Salazar in Medellín, but has also run as city councillor under President Santos' Partido de la U (Social Party of National Unity), eventually running as Mayor with the support of right-wing former president, Uribe (Lewin, 2016).

exploring the ways gender relations have shaped and informed the 'transformation' of the city I call into question the transformation itself. Within this context, the thesis is centred upon the following research questions:

1. In what ways has gender informed understandings of Medellín's urban crisis and the demands for transformation?
2. How has gender been integrated into the policy changes in recent years, and which actors have been involved in this?
3. How is gender equality used as a measure of success in the city and which women (and men), and spaces are considered within this?
4. What role does gender play in the contradictions that arise between the discourse, policy and urban everyday that characterise the transformative moment in Medellín?

I engage in an ethnographic study of Medellín's urban transformation from a critical feminist perspective. The discussions that follow contribute to various disciplines, including urban studies and planning, international development, international relations and political geography. The research is embedded within scholarship that emphasises the entanglement between gender, violence and urban space (Vargas, 2007; True, 2012), as explored further in chapter two, and takes seriously the everyday experiences of each (Enloe, 1990a; Elias and Roberts, 2016). Over a decade on from the emergence of the celebrated development approach, this thesis examines the strategies, policies and experiences of Medellín's transformation. Alongside the narrative of transformation are ongoing challenges in a city that continues to experience high levels of inequality, insecurity, violence and fragmentation. I therefore probe the buzzwords within the rhetoric of transformation and tease out the contradictions and complexities that emerge, remaining attentive to the neoliberal underpinnings of the urban development approach. I look to the integration, or lack thereof, of gender within the policy changes, and the lived experience of gender norms and logics within the city. In doing so, the thesis reveals how the urban transformation gets obscured in the neoliberalising masculine citizen-subject, and inequitable structures are not ultimately addressed.

1.1: Medellín: From Violence to the Model City
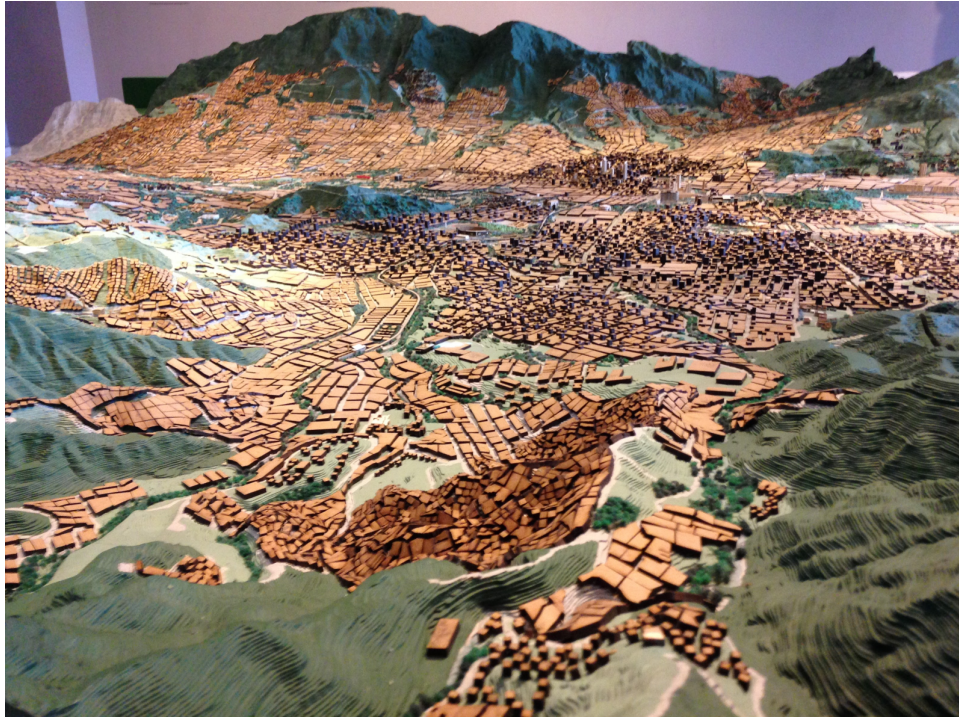
Figure 1: Scale Model of Medellín, Museo de Ciudad

Although currently famed for its transformation, Medellín once received less favourable international attention, as the most violent city in the world.[6] The city's radical turnaround has occurred in a remarkably short period of time, with the peak levels of violence recorded in 1991. Violence is often equated with everyday experience in an array of Latin American cities (Scheper-Hughes, 1993; Moser and McIlwaine, 2006), and Medellín became characteristic of such violence. Structural inequalities permitted the growth and spread of violence emerging from a multitude of actors, including drug cartels, gangs, paramilitaries and left-wing guerrillas (Maclean, 2014). In order to contextualise the discussions of the urban development approach in Medellín, I first consider a historical overview of the city.

Medellín is located in the Aburrá valley within Colombia's central Andean mountain range. At an altitude of 5,000 feet, the city has a favourable year-round climate, earning it the title of *La Ciudad de la Eterna Primavera*, or the City of Eternal Spring. The city was first founded in 1675 and as a result of rapid economic development it was established as a major commercial centre in Colombia, becoming the capital of the region of Antioquia in 1826. Historically, the city has been a centre of business and manufacturing, having an ideal climate and position for profitable pursuits. In its early years, the city went from strength to strength as a prosperous heart within Colombia

---

[6] http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,967029,00.html

with booming coffee growing, gold mining and textile-led industrialization (Riaño Alcalá, 2006). Until the 1940s Medellín was considered to be "an oasis of tranquillity in a turbulent country" (Gutiérrez Sanín and Jaramillo, 2004: 29).

As was typical of Latin American cities, Medellín grew rapidly over the course of the twentieth century and the population expanded from approximately 60,000 in 1905 to 2.2 million in 2005 (Maclean, 2014). The city attracted those in search of economic opportunities, as the industrial hub of the region, but the growth was also driven by the extreme violence in Colombia during the twentieth century. Following the assassination of the Liberal presidential nominee Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, violence across the country spiralled in a period now known as *La Violencia*. The violence in rural areas resulted in mass migration to cities including Medellín (Roldán, 2003). In the worst years between 1948 and 1953 there were an estimated 200,000 deaths (Pearce, 1990) and Antioquia alone recorded 26,115 deaths during *La Violencia.* The decades-long civil war that followed continued to displace large numbers who fled to the growing metropolitan region.

With rapid urbanisation, Medellín saw many of the problems that have been experienced across the world as urban populations and 'megacities' have proliferated, most clearly with high levels of inequality (Echeverri and Orsini, 2011). Displaced populations often arrived in Medellín with very little, constructing makeshift houses with whatever materials they could find. A vast disparity consequently emerged between the founders of the prosperous city and many of the new arrivals. The city became increasingly fragmented; the richer, formal, planned, neighbourhoods generally located in the valley basin, seemingly worlds away from the informal housing at the margins.[7] Overcrowded informal settlements precariously balance on the city's steep slopes; the "social geography of the city itself exacerbates the inequality and exclusion to be found there" (Maclean, 2014: 16). The municipal area is made up of sixteen *comunas*,[8] and five *corregimientos*[9] and each has a distinctive character and identity within the urban imaginary. The differing experiences in the city from the growing wealth in areas such as El Poblado compared to the destitution experienced in many of the settlements on the edges of the city, led to what Roldán describes as the emergence of "two cities" (2003: 136), highlighting the tensions and fractures in the urban landscape.

---

[7] Tensions were reported between the pre-existing wealthier residents of the city and the new arrivals, who were seen to be contesting the myth of the united regional Antioqueño identity (Riaño Alcalá, 2006).

[8] *Comunas* are districts of governance in the city, although the term *Comuna* tends to be used only for poorer and peripheral neighbourhoods (Arias, 2017).

[9] These rural jurisdictions are subdivisions of Colombian municipalities that surround Medellín.

From 1965 to the mid-1970s, unemployment levels were worsened by population increases and a concurrent decline of the manufacturing industries (Ceballos Melguizo and Cronshaw, 2001; Franz, 2017). As opportunities for employment reduced, violence and crime increased, especially within the poorer and informal marginal neighbourhoods. By the 1980s, the lack of opportunities and huge inequality in the city led many, and particularly young working class men, to pursue alternative economic opportunities within the growing drug trade and criminal gangs (Riaño Alcalá, 2006). Medellín was well located for not just legal but also illegal goods, leading to the huge growth in its role in narco-trafficking. Gangs, often involved in such industries, were mostly located in the peripheral *barrios* (neighbourhoods) and became entrenched in the structure of the city, providing an achievable means of upward mobility for residents (Salazar, 1990; Drummond *et al.*, 2012). The huge illegal industry surrounding the drug trade was also connected with various sectors in society including the political establishment, the church and the police, meaning that their activities generally went unchallenged (Riaño Alcalá, 2006).[10]

During the 1980s and 1990s, violence between various groups escalated. Bombings, killings and kidnappings were commonplace and political forces recognised that the city was at war (Riaño Alcalá, 2006). In addition to the criminal gangs and drug cartels, there were also various left-wing guerrilla militias present in Medellín from the 1980s.[11] Discontent in the government and weak presence of the state meant that such groups gained momentum, particularly within poorer neighbourhoods (Cárdenas *et al.*, 2008) and many members joined the militias in order to defend their *barrios* from threats of criminal gangs (Civico, 2012). There were frequent clashes, resulting in large death tolls between the rival groups. However, despite terror spreading across the city, the vast majority of deaths were young men from poorer backgrounds (Riaño Alcalá, 2006) and the state remained largely absent in the worst affected areas.

In the period of the greatest influence of the drug cartels and the increasing presence of the guerrilla rebels within the city, pressure mounted to retaliate. Levels of violence had accelerated, and by the 1990s far exceeded those in the rest of the country; in 1991, the homicide rate reached an alarming 381 per 100,000 inhabitants. The violence and particularly the terrorist tactics were often indiscriminate; even the wealthy were

---

[10] Most notoriously, the Medellín cartel and their infamous *patrón,* Pablo Escobar, rose to a prominent position in the city, with Escobar even elected to the House of Representatives. The cartel moved in to areas where the state had been absent and invested in the communities, for instance building new homes and infrastructure such as sports arenas (Skaperdas, 2001), giving the criminal actors high levels of popularity and influence, which continues in some parts of the city to this day (Gugliotta and Leen, 1989).

[11] A *Bloque Popular Miliciano* (Popular Militia Bloc) formed in 1994 between FARC, the ELN and various independent militia groups (Amnesty International, 2005).

vulnerable in a way that they hadn't been in previous periods of violence in the country (Roldán, 2003). Consequently, right-wing paramilitaries, previously concentrated in rural areas, began to move into Medellín in the mid-1990s (Rozema, 2008). With high levels of support within Medellín, the paramilitaries were perceived to be a solution to years of insecurity (Maclean, 2014). By 2001, the paramilitaries had taken hold of numerous parts of the city, often in bloody struggles, with one of the largest organisations, *Bloque Metro,* claiming to control seventy percent of the city by 2002 (Amnesty International, 2005). Clashes between rival paramilitary groups contributed to much of the violence in the following years, with *Bloque Metro* eventually submitting to Don Berna's[12] *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* in 2004 after a violent struggle for control. By this point, the city's insecurity was framed as a national security concern (Garcia Ferrari *et al.*, 2018) and politicians and security forces worked closely with the paramilitaries to take control of areas of the city where the left-wing guerrilla groups retained power (Rozema, 2008). In 2003 the paramilitaries officially demobilised,[13] but the process was largely seen to be a façade, with many groups retaining control and human rights violations continuing to be attributed to the paramilitaries in Medellín beyond this (Amnesty International, 2005).

Multiple actors have therefore contributed to complex and extremely high levels of violence in the city, each competing for territory and promoting their own ideals. Such violence is central to understanding both the urban environment within Medellín and the development approaches that have attempted to transform it. Following the introduction of municipal elections in 1988, and after the Colombian Constitution was established in 1991 (explored further in 1.3) power shifted from the central government in Bogotá to institutions around the country. City leaders had extended powers in a new form of participatory democracy, with the responsibility for education, housing and healthcare transferred to municipalities (Daughters and Harper, 2006).[14] In the early 1990s, after tumultuous years with warlike conditions, President Gaviria also initiated a Presidential Programme for Medellín. The programme further decentralised power and gave significant funding and space for discussion to community groups, social movements, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and

---

[12] Diego Fernando Murillo, known as Don Berna, is a significant figure in the criminal elite of the city. He had long formed connections with the state forces in Medellín, having been involved in bringing down Pablo Escobar in 1993 (see Hylton, 2007). Don Berna was arrested in 2005 and extradited to the United States in 2008 for drug trafficking charges.

[13] As the first in a series of demobilizations, the AUC's televised demobilization ceremony of over 850 paramilitary combatants suggested that their activity would cease, however this was only a small proportion of the overall members, and there were concerns as to whether they were being removed or simply 'recycled' into the conflict, continuing criminal activities after formal demobilization (Amnesty International, 2005).

[14] The 1991 Constitution broadened a process of decentralization that had begun in 1968 with constitutional reform and expanded in the following decades. By 2003 45 percent of expenditure was at the subnational level making Colombia one of the world's most decentralized political structures (Daughters and Harper, 2006).

academics, to look into the problems in Medellín. Decentralisation, together with the national prioritisation of the city's crisis, meant that urban planning took on new significance in Colombia.

Within Medellín, the Chamber of Commerce found that the economic stagnation of the city was attributed to both the inequality of the residents and its reputation for crime and corruption (Maclean, 2014), turning attention to concerns of social exclusion. While activists and social movements had highlighted the need to engage with those in poorer neighbourhoods, they had previously lacked the political authority to effect change (Pearce, 2007). Within a divided city, Roldán argues that the consistent and extreme violence encouraged the elite and authorities in Medellín, finally, "to negotiate with lower class dwellers on the latter's terms" (2003: 144).[15] Emerging, then, from pragmatism, the crisis point led to calls for change from numerous fronts, ranging from civil society organisations to business leaders (Pearce, 2007).

Figure 2 : Metrocable from La Aurora station

The development of Sergio Fajardo's political party, *Compromiso Ciudadano*, and their election in 2003 followed, shifting the previously traditional political landscape in Medellín (Pearce, 2007).[16] After years of consistently high levels of violence and a subsequent downfall in economic investment, the promise of change gave political

---

[15] Some, including activists and social movements had highlighted the need to engage with those in poorer neighbourhoods, but they had previously lacked the political authority to effect change (Pearce, 2007).
[16] Breaking with the traditional parties, previously popular in Medellín, Fajardo describes himself and *Compromiso Ciudadano* as 'non-ideological', distancing himself from other political parties and positions - https://www.newsweek.com/qa-medellin-mayor-turns-city-around-96755.

legitimacy to a different planning strategy (Bateman *et al.*, 2011). Social Urbanism, as *Compromiso Ciudadano's* development approach was termed, is dedicated to reversing the historic social debt of the marginal areas of the city, and is lauded as the key turning point in the transformation of Medellín (Maclean, 2014). Using public finances including 30% of the profits from *Empresas Publicas de Medellín* (Medellín's public utilities company), the city has invested in a variety of projects. The planners have won over forty international prizes and changed the global perception of the city from one of violence and danger, to that of innovation and inclusivity, as shown in the quote beginning the thesis. Diverse urban development projects have included transport initiatives, parks and green spaces, the prioritisation of education, enterprise, community involvement in policy development and, most famously, highly visible infrastructure investment in poorer areas of the city.[17] San Javier, or *Comuna* 13 as it is more commonly known, is one of the focal points of the urban transformation, and houses a number of the flagship projects,[18] including the *Metrocable* (Medellín's cable car system, see Figure 2) and the renowned outdoor escalators, discussed in detail in chapter six. Although levels of violence have continued to fluctuate since the shift in urban planning and development, the homicide rates in Medellín had dramatically reduced by nearly 80% in 2012 (Franco *et al.*, 2012).

Over a decade since the project of Social Urbanism began in Medellín, it is being lauded world over. Successive governments have furthered Fajardo's legacy with new urban development projects. The background of the 2016 Colombian peace agreement between President Santos and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC)[19] has brought further international attention to Medellín, as the potential of the city for investment has been highlighted within the post accord state.[20] However, critiques of the urban development approach have also emerged, questioning the magnitude of the change in the city (see for example, Colak and Pearce, 2015; Franz, 2017). I draw attention in particular to the unequal structures that continue, and cause an inherent fragility within the broader project of urban change. Inequality, poverty, and lack of opportunity were key factors in the complex experience of violence explored above. However, such factors remain largely unchallenged within the urban

---

[17] Not just connected to infrastructure projects, there are a range of policies aiming for social inclusion and promotion of shared values. A *Cinturon Verde Metropolitano (*green belt), around the city, is currently under development, in order to prevent further urban sprawl and ensure access for residents to green space. Medellín is also one of the largest cities in the world to practice participatory budgeting.

[18] PUIs or Integral Urban Projects, are one of several types of projects that are concentrated in the poorer neighbourhoods, as shown in Figure 3.

[19] Following years of negotiations, and in spite of a vote against the peace accord in the national plebiscite in September 2016, the agreement was quickly amended and passed later that year, demobilising 8,000 FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) combatants and formally ending five decades of civil war.

[20] The peace that has been secured is precarious, with continuing vulnerabilities to multiple violences (O'Bryen, 2019).

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

PUI NORTHWEST
2008

PUI NORTHEAST
2004

PUI COMUNA 13
2004

PUI EAST-CENTRAL
2008

STRATA
1
2
3
4
5
6
N/A

METRO
METROCABLE
METROPLUS BRT
MEDELLIN 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
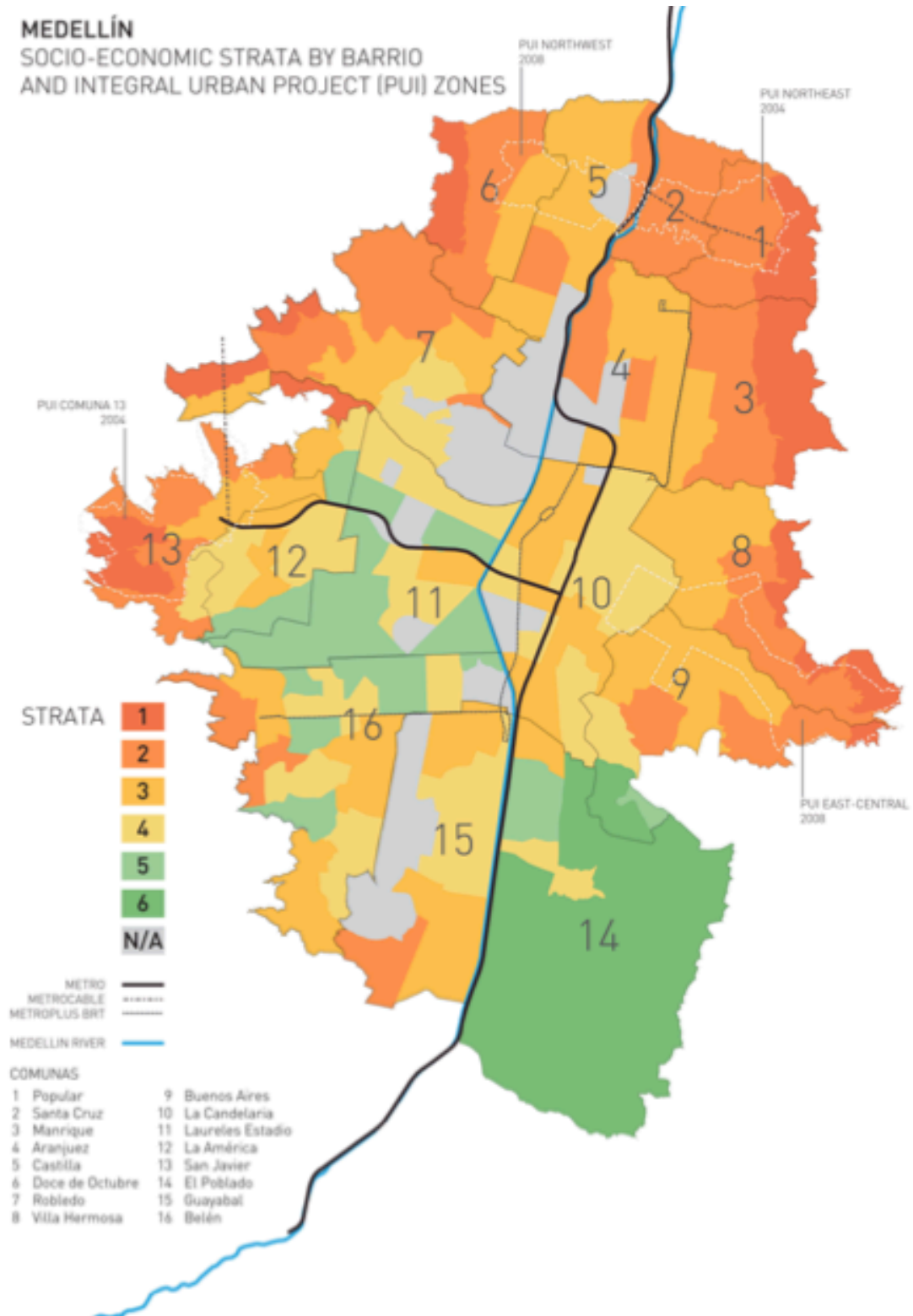
Figure 3: Map of Medellín, (source: Ellis Calvin, 2014, p 23)

11

development approach, causing severe limitations within its scope for change. The vast majority of Medellín's residents remain poor; in 2014, 79.6% of the homes in Medellín were classified as *estratos* (stratum) 1 to 3[21] (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016), with only limited areas having the designation of *estrato* 5 or 6 (see Figure 3). As one activist told me: 'we can't stop the politicians, with their pretty infrastructure projects, hiding the big problems'. He suggests therefore that the projects cover, but do not tackle, ongoing problems and inequalities within the city.

1.2 Gender and urban transformation

Medellín's municipal government states that the "urban transformation in recent years has made Medellín a global reference point" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 19). Its urban development approach has aspired to change the narrative of the city. The interventions of social urbanism aimed to address severe problems of violence, insecurity, poor education and lack of mobility, in order to better integrate citizens and produce a cohesive and inclusive urban environment. Addressing historic debts both to the socially marginalised and specific groups, including women, this is transformational in scope. The concept of 'transformation' is fundamental for most feminisms, whose work is premised on emancipation agendas, asking how we can transform and improve the lives of women (and men) by challenging and comprehensively changing gender relations (Young, 1993; Wibben, 2011; Marín Mira and Rivera Guzman, 2015). However, transformation becomes another buzzword when change fails to challenge structural inequalities, including, but not limited to, gender.

Previous assessments of the 'transformation' of Medellín, whether celebratory or critical (Restrepo, 2008; Bateman *et al.*, 2011; Brand and Dávila, 2011; López, 2016; Naef, 2016; Franz, 2017), may have briefly mentioned gender, but have neglected it as a key logic that informs broader power relations. Consequently, there is a significant gap in understanding core limitations of the praised urban development strategy that can be clearly seen through persisting gendered inequalities, and insecurities that are examined throughout this thesis. Where gender has been brought into the discussion, it has focused on specific subjects, for instance examining the construction of masculinity within the leadership of Mayor Sergio Fajardo (Maclean, 2017), or the relationship between youth gangs and violent masculinities (Baird, 2012b). While such discussions enlighten and inform this project, there is a gap in a gendered consideration of the city's strategies and policies in and of themselves. This thesis therefore fills this gap by

---

[21] A system of *estratos* (stratum) officially designed to establish subsidies for those in poorer areas, depending on the quality of the housing in each area each area is assigned a level from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest. However, it has also led to further entrenched ideas of class, and stigmas with lower strata areas.

engaging in a critical feminist analysis of the strategies and experiences of Medellín's urban transformation.

Beyond the gleam of Medellín's transformation, I have mentioned that inequalities continue and various types of violence emerge, always having a gendered dimension (alongside intersecting categories including race and class). Instability and insecurity, often related to urban inequalities (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Koonings and Kruijt, 2007), have compromised the economic potential of cities, turning security into a key focus of urban development (Humphrey, 2013). GBV, as one such insecurity, is a significant barrier to development within urban space, resulting in calls for gender specific planning and evaluation to acknowledge and mitigate such violence (Vargas, 2007; Falú, 2009). However, GBV (a consistent and prominent concern within Medellín (Martínez and Marín, 2017)) is overlooked in the celebration of its urban change. In gendering the strategies and experience of change in Medellín, the contestations and complexities of the urban landscape are brought to the fore. Feminist critiques of urban planning and development continue to remind us of the importance of gender at a broader scale, with gender relations underpinning urban development, labour relations, economics and politics, and positioning women at the margins (Fenster, 2005b; Falú, 2009; Tankel, 2011). With the centrality of gender and GBV within urban space, a gender analysis of Medellín's urban development is necessary, to demonstrate the significance of gender in the relations of power, instability and insecurity in Medellín's urban environment (Falú, 2009; Moser, 2012; Enloe, 2017). Within the context of the narrative of the city's transformation, such emphasis is vital.

Transformation has long been a central tenet of feminist thinking. In recognising that gender relations are made intelligible and naturalised through patriarchy, in order to address inequality and GBV, we must disrupt and ultimately transform patriarchal systems (Young, 1993). In Medellín, as across the globe, feminist activists and scholars argue that a transformation of social structures is required in order to challenge the normalisation of gender inequality (Marín Mira and Rivera Guzman, 2015). bell hooks outlines the need for transformation to challenge and change societal norms and perceptions underpinning structural oppressions, relating to the existing "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy", with feminists themselves having undergone this process in order to "gain the strength to challenge patriarchal forces" (2014: 11). Transformation therefore requires an intersectional confrontation with cultural norms and understandings, promisingly referred to as a central part of Medellín's approach to urban change. An emancipation project that addresses "core structural roots" is thus key to any feminist research (Wibben, 2011), and this understanding of transformation is crucial for my own analysis. When considering the transformation of oppressive

structures, I emphasise patriarchy and the gender relations which emerge from it. This draws a focus that aims to not only shed light on gender inequalities but recognising this as one element within interlocking systems of domination (Crenshaw, 1991). I therefore pay attention to the ongoing inequalities that contradict Medellín as a transformed city.

Cornwall and Brock (2006) highlight the tendency for originally powerful and radical concepts to lose a transformational emphasis in their adoption by mainstream development agendas. This phenomenon tends to be associated with terms such as empowerment, participation and indeed gender, often critiqued for being easily appropriated for differing political agendas in ways that render such terms almost meaningless. For Medellín, the rhetoric of inclusion, of addressing historical injustices and of transformative change in itself can be recognised as having roots in radical and critical theories. Leal argues that the "primary task is, as it should always have been, not to reform institutional development practice but to transform society" (2007: 546). Similarly, Cornwall suggests that it "is, after all, in the very ambiguity of development buzzwords that scope exists for enlarging their application to encompass more transformative agendas" (2007a: 481). Transformative change is often framed in this way, as the solution to the depoliticisation of ambiguous development language, and as such the term itself escapes critique. However, in its own adoption by mainstream actors, as in the language used by the *Alcaldía* (local government) in Medellín, it is important to consider whether 'transformation' too falls into the same trap as other ambiguously used buzzwords. In setting out my own understanding of transformation, as rooted within the feminist commitment to radical and structural change, I affirm the significance of assessing Medellín's claims of transformative change.

1.3 Transformation and gender in a neoliberal city

In the numerous celebrations of the government's approach to development in Medellín, the change in the city is attributed to the innovative policies and interventions across the urban landscape. It is consequently important to consider the role of institutions in change. Within a city that has taken a pragmatic, technocratic and business-centred approach to change, looking to gender relations can help us to identify what constitutes change, and what the limitations of such changes are. Such assessment acknowledges that the scope of urban planners is to some extent limited by broader political and societal conditions and norms (Fainstein, 2014), which also require transformation. In probing Medellín's change, the context of its reforms within a neoliberal state and development agenda (Abello-Colak and Guarneros-Meza, 2014) is significant. Although neoliberalism is not the focus of the thesis, a recognition of the

functionality of neoliberal urban governance underpins the analysis throughout. As a result, it is important to explore how neoliberalism manifests in Medellín.

Neoliberalism, as a frequently used term, encompasses a broad range of phenomena but within this research project it is most usefully understood as an ideology privileging the common sense of the market, as a logic that becomes embedded within various aspects of society (Giroux, 2004). It primarily claims that societal advancement requires free markets, free trade, and private property rights, and that the position of the state within this framework is to facilitate the smooth, free-running of the markets (Harvey, 2005; Peck, 2012). Neoliberalism is therefore both market-oriented and placed within a hierarchical "distribution of economic, political and social power" (Franz, 2017: 52). Peck and Tickell (2002) usefully frame neoliberalism as a process, rather than a specific end-result; as such it has different phases to achieve its ends. While the early mantra of neoliberalism tended to encourage liberalisation, or the 'roll-back' of the state, more recent iterations, termed 'roll-out' neoliberalism, instead include the building of government interventions (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Inherent contradictions within neoliberalism therefore show a potential for a simultaneous withdrawal and extension of the role of the state (Laurie and Bonnett, 2002).

Neoliberalism expresses itself in different ways depending on the context (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) as localised experiments in governance (Larner and Walters, 2000). Latin America has been seen as a testing ground for neoliberal policies, with the debt crisis in the region prompting controversial global pressure to liberalise their economies, known as the Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1993). Aligning with preferences from policymaking elites, Latin America moved away from the state, seen as the culprit for the regions problems, towards the market as their panacea (Kingstone, 2011). While many countries in the region have seen resistance to such policies (Silva, 2009), neoliberal ideas and agendas have retained prominence in Colombia at a national level, with an emphasis on trade and financial liberalisation (Estrada Álvarez, 2006).

Colombia's 1991 Constitution was a key moment for the consolidation of neoliberalism in the national political agenda, integrating the projects of social democracy, multiculturalism and neoliberalism (Mejía Quintana, 2007). In the 1980s, the eroding trust of political institutions as a result of corruption, clientelism and years of violence, (including the assassination of three presidential candidates in the lead to the 1990 elections) led to demands for political reform (Cárdenas *et al.*, 2008). The 1991 Constitution responded by vastly expanding local government powers with greater regional autonomy. Voices beyond the traditional political mainstream had new

mechanisms of amplification, alongside local representatives to work with. While the process of decentralisation has not overcome some of the problems that initiated it (with ongoing corruption and clientelism (Bejarano, 2001)), it did widen and restructure citizen's access to processes of state decision making, in ways that allowed for Medellín's model of urban governance (Maclean, 2014). Where civil society organisations had been sceptical of the government in the past,[22] numerous actors became involved in formal politics, as seen by the collaboration of academics, activists, NGOs and business leaders in *Compromiso Ciudadano.*

While emphasising the notion of participation, representation and inclusion, the Constitution also integrated the recommendations of the Washington Consensus, opening the country to global markets (Mejía Quintana, 2007) in a further shift away from the Import Substitution Industrialisation of the preceding decades.[23] Consolidating a neoliberal shift, President Gaviria oversaw a reduction of tariffs, and a breakdown of domestic protectionism in the early 1990s, opening up the markets to cheaply manufactured foreign goods (Browitt, 2001). The shift to the free market in the 1990s had a particular impact in urban areas, with the promises of the superiority of market forces largely unfilled, and urban areas in Latin America often experiencing growing inequality, poverty and precarity (Portes and Roberts, 2005). Urban environments have been central testing grounds of neoliberal policies, with cities seen as key competitors for economic investment (Humphrey, 2013), and urban renewal bringing integration to the global economy alongside further challenges for socio-spatial justice (Garzon-Ramirez, 2018). The dual priorities of economic growth and inclusion were brought together both in the 1991 Constitution, as in Medellín's approach to urban development.

Urban neoliberalism has shaped the 'competitive cities' agenda (Humphrey, 2013) and within Medellín this was a significant impetus for change, despite the tendency to frame the development approach within a discourse about justice (Franz, 2017). A shift to free markets had significant impacts for the country's industries, including that of textile manufacturing in Medellín. In an attempt to become a viable competitor for investment and combining with the decentralised power structures following the updated Constitution, Medellín's elite led the innovative changes, as a combined result of the pressures of social movements and their own desperation after years of economic decline. The insular business elites were both threatened and bolstered by the neoliberal shift and the globalised market presented new opportunities that are key to understanding the approach of the Medellín Model (Maclean, 2015).

---

[22] Formal democratic structures in Colombia had been seen to be exclusionary, due to the two-party system and clientelistic relations (Martz, 1996).

[23] Dominant across Latin America, these policies attempted to reduce dependency on foreign imports with an emphasis on domestic production and industrialisation (Rozenwurcel, 2006).

The city and its approach subvert certain expectations of a 'roll-back' neoliberal city, presenting an urban development strategy with alternatives that are instead exemplary of 'roll-out' neoliberalism. In an interview about the urban development approach, Fajardo connects his policies to attracting new business, stating that "business supports us because they see how much this can help them".[24] The city's innovative approach to urban development, in attempts to address the 'social debt' of years of neglect and abandonment in the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city, is ultimately business-centred, a pragmatic attempt to rebrand the urban area and improve investment opportunities. The 1991 Constitution thus allowed for the conditions of possibility for Social Urbanism, widening participation but at the same time consolidating the primacy of the market and leaving the structures of inequality within the city unchallenged.

The emphasis on justice and the recognition of inequalities including gender and race can free individuals from constraints that can prevent their participation in the market, in a way that can be complementary to struggles over identity politics such as gender. Including a discourse of inclusion and justice, can therefore "facilitate the creation of an efficient and harmonious consumer capitalist society" (Laurie and Bonnett, 2002: 31). The ambiguities of the Colombian Constitution, as well as Medellín's neoliberal governance, bring forth multiple dimensions of participation, neoliberalism and multi-culturalism. Gender speak and its associated policies, now common global parlance, are not therefore inherently counter to neoliberal governance. Feminist ideas (and other identity politics) can often be tolerated by, or even integrated within, neoliberal logics in a process that has both been heavily criticised (Fraser, 2009), but also seen as leading to some feminist gains through the potential to repurpose neoliberal technologies (Prügl, 2014). Critiques of a neoliberalisation of feminism and feminist goals however have highlighted the complexities that are encountered when there are certain gains for *some* women (Scharff, 2014).

Consistently, within neoliberal policy, market strategies are given prominence, even expanding into the public sphere, with a focus on freedom and individual choice (Rose, 1999) rather than equality. Neoliberal policies have been seen time and again to exacerbate poverty and perpetuate inequality and the unequal distribution of power (Harvey, 2007; Gill, 2008), even if such inequality is formally addressed in legislation or rhetoric. Neoliberalised feminism can provide opportunities for gender equality and the empowerment of *some* women, but in its insistence on rationalism, heteronormativity and genderless or neutral economic structures (Prügl, 2014) neoliberal practices ultimately reproduce and reinforce the unequal distribution of power and resources

---

[24] https://www.newsweek.com/qa-medellin-mayor-turns-city-around-96755

according to gender, race and class (Shepherd, 2010; Roberts, 2017). Even if neoliberal policies may benefit some women, the reproduction of structures of inequality runs counter to the critical feminist understandings of transformation I presented in section 1.2. A key conceptual question throughout, bearing this discussion in mind, is therefore about the potential for transformative change within a neoliberal city. Despite the relative confluence of some of the goals of feminism within a neoliberalised environment, market driven regimes further reinforce the exclusionary politics of neoliberal subjectivities. Hubbard (2004: 666) argues that gendered injustices are wrought by the neoliberal city, not just through "the re-centralisation and accumulation of corporate capital, but also … the re-inscription of patriarchal relations in the urban landscape." Bringing together these points, this thesis thus highlights the continuation of the (gendered) unequal contours of the city.

Furthermore, the determinism of an ideology founded on the supremacy of the market (Motta and Cole, 2014: 4) runs counter to concepts of transformative change. As Cornwall et al. (2008: 8) highlight, engaging in struggles for transformation is a "process of challenging and changing the very norms of behaviour that are reinforced by neoliberal development." However, David Harvey reminds us that it is "not always easy to distinguish between reformist and revolutionary initiatives in urban settings" (2012: 136), highlighting the co-option of more radical language by international and neoliberal institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank, (even mentioning the role of events such as the World Urban Forum, hosted in Medellín in 2014). The coexistence of radical rhetoric and neoliberal practice is exemplary of the complexities inherent to environments where multiple actors and institutions are consistently engaged in struggles and negotiations with opposing pressures and priorities, as show throughout the thesis. Remaining attentive to the neoliberal context in which Medellín's urban development takes place, I prioritise feminism as a broader emancipatory project that is therefore "necessarily linked to struggles against racism, imperialism, homophobia and class domination, all of which require[s] transformation of the deep structures of capitalist [and neoliberal] society" (Fraser, 2009: 107). Social urbanism, in its connection to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989), can be framed as a pragmatic invitation to become a productive subject based within neoliberal logics, and the gendered implications of such must be examined to identify the potential contradictions and limitations of Medellín's urban change.

1.4 Thesis structure

Speaking to development practice, particularly in violent settings, the analysis of the strategies and experiences of the changing urban space that is presented in this thesis

informs discussions of urban planning and change. The limitations and challenges of urban planners are highlighted, particularly when dealing with complex histories of violence and inequality. In an interdisciplinary study, a gendered analysis of the multi-dimensional urban landscape illuminates some of the gaps and limitations of the urban change, based upon my emancipatory feminist understanding of transformation. To interrogate the urban change I consider development policy, alongside the accounts, experiences and positions of civil servants, activists and non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers, and city residents. Based upon in-depth interviews and rich empirical insights from twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork, the thesis contributes to a greater understanding, not only of Medellín's case of urban development, but to the limitations of urban development and change, without a concurrent challenge to continuing structural inequalities. The discussions within each chapter consider different aspects of the urban change and show its limits through considering the ongoing patriarchal cultures, logics and norms, showing the ways that the government policies, and their shortfalls in challenging ongoing insecurities within the urban landscape, continue to (re)produce gendered inequalities.

In order to assess the case of urban transformation, the thesis is organised into different themes each exploring a particular aspect of, or underpinning concept behind, Medellín's approach to urban development. The change in Medellín is often attributed, in the official narrative, by civil servants, and by residents, as a change in culture and in the 'mentality' of the residents. One way of achieving such change is through the extension of the work of the *Alcaldía* to the outskirts of the city, most famously, with symbolic investments in infrastructure and public space. Such investment is seen to filter into a change in perceptions and behaviours in and towards the city from residents. As a result, the first two empirical chapters (four and five) consider the work of the *Alcaldía*, and the integration of gender, with a specific consideration of citizen culture and gender mainstreaming. The second three empirical chapters (six, seven and eight) move to consider the outcomes of the urban development approach, in reference to the supposed security improvements, and the experience of the changing urban landscape.

In chapter two I lay out the theoretical framework that both emerged from and underpinned my engagement with the city and its residents. Beginning with the everyday, this chapter explores the conceptual frame I draw upon and how it has informed the discussion that follows. The key themes that emerge from privileging the fieldwork and everyday experiences within the city are gender, urban space and violence. Cynthia Enloe's (1990a) repositioning of the often overlooked mundane (and gendered) roles and moments, as having significance in (re)producing 'higher' politics,

has been part of broader research agendas in feminist international relations, international development, political geography and a range of other relevant fields. From this starting point, I outline the framing of gender that informs my project, explaining gender as a key logic and structure that shapes broader social relations, urban space and violence. Violences are shown as a continuum, which (re)produce patriarchal norms and relations. I also discuss how urban space is imbued with the social, produced by and reproducing each of the outlined elements of gender relations. I show that the underpinning theoretical frame considers each of the central themes within an understanding of the everyday of gendered urban violence, in multiple and complex forms, along a continuum.

Chapter three outlines my methodology. Using a multi-scalar approach that takes multiple sites and actors seriously, I consider the accounts and experiences of civil servants, residents, activists and NGO's, in order to gain insights and perspectives from those both shaping and experiencing the urban space and the everyday of the city. I detail my understanding of critical feminist ethnography, as a flexible and embedded process of knowledge sharing. I explore how a grounded feminist methodology brought me to my research questions and focus, drawing back the everyday as not just a theoretical but also a methodological priority of this project. I detail my research process, as a result, discussing my engagements within the city throughout the research process. Finally, I explore the ethical considerations, including representation, researching violence, language and my positionality and privilege as a white British woman undertaking research in Colombia.

In drawing analysis from the institutional everyday, and critical feminist ethnography, chapter four assesses the underpinning concept of urban change and the narrative and imaginary of the city, through the prism of cultural identity and the government's attempts to shape it. Citizen Culture is emphasised by Medellín's government; it is given its own department and understood as a tool of urban transformation. Emphasising the work of the Citizen Culture department, here I discuss the prominence of the changes in Medellín as a change in culture, focusing on the concept and work of the Citizen Culture department due to its specific engagement with cultural change. I show the ways in which the urban everyday, the cultures and experiences within the city, (re)produce its own policies. The chapter therefore pays attention to the ways in which social urbanism and Medellín's urban development approach is underpinned by the unchallenged cultural norms of the city. Drawing upon policy analysis and interviews with civil servants I explore the underpinning ideas of Citizen Culture, illuminating the ways in which it is a prescriptive and paternalistic concept that is rooted in both neoliberal and patriarchal norms and understandings. While much of the language of Citizen Culture is

progressive and inclusive, elements such as the presentation of a neutral subject of the 'ideal' citizen dismiss and undermine the ongoing influence of not just gender but a range of intersecting identity categories on the experience of, and engagement with, the city. The cultural juxtaposition between the innovative, progressive city on the one hand, and the traditional and conservative city on the other, warrants further attention. An emphasis on gender relations and norms unchallenged within the concept of Citizen Culture indicates the need for the inclusion of gender within any proclaimed cultural policy and transformation.

Chapter five moves to consider the significance of the investigation of Medellín's transformation with an emphasis on gender. Broadening the engagement with the *Alcaldía*, I explore the approach to gender mainstreaming across several departments, considering what 'doing' gender looks like within development strategies and approaches. Linking to the previous discussion, here I explore how the inclusion of gender in Medellín's formal urban development plan has a number of key limitations. Gender mainstreaming as a central claim of the government in Medellín has been a key part of Social Urbanism and the governments closer ties with women's movements and activists in the region. However, I show that gender continues to be positioned as a topic requiring expert knowledge, as reflected in the separation and designation of the responsibility for gender themes and issues to the women's department. Part of the separation of gender as a particular and distinct concern is reinforced by the reliance on a binary understanding of gender, predominantly shown to be synonymous with women (working solely with women or, very occasionally, only men) and what are seen to be 'women's issues'. Finally, I indicate that the gender approach has limited intersectional understandings, recognising that gender has implications throughout and across society rather than being a concern that is separated out to certain (poorer and racialised) subjects. These key problems relate to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the *Alcaldía* and are further compounded by the position of gender as a changing priority dependent on the leadership and resulting variable (and reducing) resource allocation.

After a close consideration of the policies and accounts from civil servants in chapters four and five, I turn in chapter six from governance to consider the lived impact of the changes within the city and the way that it has shaped and altered experiences of public space. As a key emphasis of the government interventions, the way such space is experienced and the social relations that are reproduced within it, become key to a feminist engagement with the urban change as a whole. Here I explore how the failure to challenge wider patriarchal structures and associated cultural norms also feeds into the way that public space in the city is inhabited. With an emphasis on the gendered

nature of space, I draw upon the significance of the everyday as a site for understanding both societal norms and values and the (re)production of gendered subjectivities. I consider the ways in which public space continues to be restricted according to gender norms before moving to show how the infrastructure projects and changes in public areas have produced new and gendered political economies of space. Finally, I outline how the greater freedoms in public space have opened up opportunities for resistance. This chapter highlights the messiness of urban space, seeing the various actors that shape and contribute to its use and development, and the ways in which both space and gender are concepts in flux, but continually placed within relatively firm boundaries. In the everyday of the city's public space possibilities of making the city emerge (Sassen, 2013), but the binary of gender roles and norms retains strength.

The final empirical chapters (seven and eight) both consider what is arguably the driving force behind the change in municipal governance in Medellín. From a violent past, the city aimed to, and has in many respects, redefined itself, moving away from violence. In chapter seven I look to the security situation in Medellín, showing that continuing insecurities, including those generated by the current government's shift to a more militarised security focus, complicate this narrative. I consider the gendered political geography of the city's security apparatus and practices. I discuss the insecurities relating to the militarisation of space, securitised discourse and the ongoing dominance of gangs and other structural violences and their relation to gendered subjectivities. I show how certain spaces and subjects are designated as fixable, or not, relating to expectations of gender, race and class. Without undermining the many positive changes with regard to security, a consideration of the gendered structural aspects of ongoing insecurities further complicates the narrative of transformation.

In chapter eight, I illuminate the limitations of the changes, by shifting to focus to the everyday ongoing gendered violences that continue within the city. Paying attention to gender, and intersecting categories, I query the separation of gender and GBV from other forms of violence. This false separation can be seen as an example of where the transformation narrative relies upon downplaying continuing violence and insecurities. The continuing high levels of GBV within Medellín is a concern that directly juxtaposes the transformation narrative, but such violence also shapes gendered norms, and various other insecurities in the city. Through assessing the gendered nature of the lived experience of multiple ongoing insecurities in the city, I illuminate the ways in which they are influenced by and shape gender norms. Drawing together the limitations of the change and considering the continuation of many of the structural inequalities that have fed into and reproduced the extreme violence in the city (Brand and Dávila,

2011), rather than a shift from insecurity to security, we instead see a shift between two forms of insecurity, always underpinned by gender and other intersecting categories.

Chapter nine concludes the thesis, drawing together the above discussions, and outlining the contradictions and contestations within the gendered city and consequently within the narrative of transformation itself. I summarise the gaps that emerge between the promising rhetoric and the experiences of such policies, and highlight the limitations of urban change and innovation when failing to challenge the neoliberal, patriarchal and fundamentally unequal and insecure conditions and structures that underpin the city. In showing the gendered confines, I emphasise the limits of the urban change as a whole; gendered inequalities being one of many intersecting inequalities that the development approach leaves largely intact. I also highlight my contributions to existing debates surrounding gender, institutions, urban space and violence, alongside avenues for future research. I therefore summarise the complex and contradictory picture of the city that emerges throughout the thesis, highlighting significant moments of change, but also the continuing fight for transformative change to tackle gendered (and other intersecting) inequalities.

Chapter 2

Starting with the everyday: Gender, Violence and the City

Sitting on the balcony of my apartment in Laureles on a sunny Tuesday morning I slowly sipped a fresh cup of coffee. My days in Medellín often started like this, with a thoughtful pause and the day stretching out ahead. The fourth-floor apartment was positioned on the corner at the end of a neat row of tall buildings and the balcony looked over the crossroads below. Surrounded by apartment blocks, this was one of many wide planned boulevards within the wealthy *estrato* 5 neighbourhood. Looking down to the street level that morning, a woman dressed in white overalls scrubbed the pavement on the opposite corner of the crossroads, on her hands and knees. A bucket rested on the ground beside her as she worked, filled with water, that was opaque with the dirt her cloth had collected. She was one of the many domestic workers in this affluent part of the city. Female domestic workers often travelled from their own, usually poorer, neighbourhoods to care for and clean the homes of the wealthy. Her work seemed futile, cleaning a public footpath was surely a task that would never be fulfilled, this concern reinforced by the passers-by stepping across without a second glance as she cleaned. Sitting comfortably on the balcony, I felt uncomfortable to be glancing down at her from my privileged vantage point.

Laureles and similarly wealthy areas are serviced by those from other areas of the city, with domestic workers and other employees travelling from far and wide to reach their employment. A friend, who lived just a few streets over, told me that the doorman working at her building travelled for up to three hours each morning to get to work in time to start his shift at 5am. Leaving so early, he could not access the prized transport interventions, like the cable cars and metro, meaning that he had to walk for over an hour each day to reach the nearest bus stop.[25] Most of the buildings in this part of the city employ a security guard or doorman, standing guard at each entrance, they are usually dressed in formal attire and occasionally armed. It wasn't just those directly employed in the high-rise apartment blocks who travelled to the area, activity on the street was constant. Street vendors, predominantly men, would walk past pushing huge carts throughout the day, shouting to announce what they were selling (everything from avocados to flowers to cleaning supplies). At night, cars, motorbikes and many of Medellín's small yellow taxis sped across the intersection, engines roaring, and the whistles from security guards patrolling the nearby streets each night with baseball

---

[25] A critique that has been levelled at Medellín's urban development approach is that such transport interventions are limited in their accessibility and therefore improvements to mobility are not beneficial for many in the city (see Drummond et al., 2012).

bats reverberated around the neighbourhood. Without even leaving my apartment, the everyday, mundane moments brought insights into the workings and divisions within the urban landscape. Such moments create the urban environment, shaping both individual lives and the city itself.

Starting with such everyday moments, a number of themes emerge that provide insights into the central enquiry of this thesis; the integration and experience of gender within the transformed city. Learning from the so-called mundane, I pay attention to the political implications of the everyday interactions and dynamics in Medellín. The interactions seen from the balcony began to tell a story of a city defined by inequalities, insecurities and gendered roles and expectations. From the (working class) men protecting (middle class) urban inhabitants in their roles as doormen and security guards, to the female domestic workers performing caring roles for the same residents, familiar and opposing gendered roles, subjectivities and logics are lived and negotiated. Such moments are significant for noting the power imbalances and negotiations of gendered norms and roles (Enloe, 2011; Elias and Roberts, 2016; Chisholm, 2017).

The everyday refers to the routine, the minutiae connecting each moment and making up each interaction. Descriptive accounts of everyday activities, the 'mundane', or 'personal' illuminate political dynamics and structures (Enloe, 1990a; Tickner, 2003; Hanisch, 2006; Elias and Roberts, 2016). Often, the everyday is separated from 'higher activities', thus discrediting or undermining the significance of such moments (Hobson and Seabrooke, 2007; Davies, 2016). However, it is through questioning such hierarchies and examining the rhythms of routine moments that we see how they are imbued with politics that feed back into and reproduce hierarchies; they both represent and (re)produce broader social norms (Chisholm and Stachowitsch, 2016). In the urban landscape, such moments are plentiful (Jarvis *et al.*, 2009), and provide an insight into my research questions through examining the behaviours shaping policy-making and the experience of and gendered contradictions arising within it. Throughout the thesis I therefore note how the 'high' policy, such as official strategies for urban development, shape, and are shaped by, everyday encounters.

Focusing on the everyday, I note that Medellín is produced by the daily routines within the *Alcaldía*, in moments at a corner shop, or surrounding a high-rise building, and by the people who feel able to access, or are excluded from, particular spaces. Multiple lived experiences of the urban landscape, informed by intersecting social dynamics, can be noted in any one of these moments. In chapter six for instance, the restricted access of particular subjects to public spaces such as outdoor gymnasiums shows how lived spaces shape feelings of belonging and relations within the urban landscape

(Beebeejaun, 2017). This thesis explores how such moments feed into and are productive of culture, institutions, policies, space, and violence. Additionally, 'ordinary people' are not merely passive to their environments, urban planning brings them in as active participants. Noting everyday interactions can also therefore show active appropriations of space and cultures (de Certeau, 2011). As such, throughout the thesis I begin with everyday dynamics, and a grounded theorising (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) that has brought to the fore the themes of institutions, culture, space and security. Each of these brings into focus the understandings and shortfalls in consideration of the gender 'debt' outlined in the government policy.

In privileging the everyday of the city, my work developed in divergent directions. As a result, it speaks to various disciplines, including international development, international relations, urban studies and planning, and violence and security. As such, I weave theoretical discussions into each of my empirical chapters, recognising where each is most pertinent. That said, this chapter explores a conceptual frame I have drawn based on how my fieldwork spoke to the core themes of gender, violence and the city. This is underpinned by feminist epistemological understandings of social relations and a privileging of the everyday which emerged from moments like the one above. I first explore my understanding of gender, as the core priority and frame of the thesis. The everyday, however, also helps to frame both my understandings of and approach towards the urban, and to violence, the other core themes that emerged through scrutiny of the everyday. In this chapter, I show how I use each of these core themes to explore Medellín's transformation, through conceptualising a gendered urban everyday of violence.

2.1 Gender

Gender norms are (re)produced within the everyday and my central research question seeks to 'gender' the strategies and daily experience of Medellín's transformation. I first therefore breakdown the different aspects of gender that I will be interrogating, understanding gender as:

1. Structural hierarchies that are observed in different manifestations of patriarchy that positions men and women into specific roles.
2. An organising logic articulated in masculine and feminine binary ideas and values that tend to valorise the masculine over the feminine.
3. Embodied and normalised expectations of male and female subjects.

Drawing upon gender as a logic, structure and embodiment is useful in enabling me to answer my research questions, as it breaks down different elements of gender in shaping individual experience and gendered expectations, but also institutions and policy. I recognise gender as a social construct framed as an analytical category or a "meaning system" through which masculinity and femininity, as interrelated categories, are produced and reproduced (Lloyd, 2005; Peterson, 2005; Butler, 2006 [original 1990]; Hansen, 2006). Making visible and critiquing the structures and logics of gender, I examine how these structures and logics are shaped by and shape urban development policies and the everyday lived experiences of citizens.

Probing the categories and the naturalised logics that gender norms produce (tending to prioritise the masculine), has allowed feminist scholars to disrupt a variety of binaries and understand the gendered politics that create such distinctions, beginning with the dichotomy of male and female. While feminist theorists have demonstrated that gender is fluid, it is not an unrestricted choice; gender categories are produced and reproduced through "regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms" (Butler, 2006: 23). Patriarchy, through its varying expressions, is a regime that frames gender possibilities. Therefore, for this analysis I frame gender as socially constructed and regulated through naturalised logics and regimes. In noting the everyday experience of the city, the particular gendered practices become apparent, both gender and the everyday therefore weaving throughout the various other structures, institutions and practices that I discuss throughout the thesis.

Patriarchy is a structure of governance that rests upon particular gender logics (Enloe, 2017). Within a patriarchal system gender binaries are accepted as normal, even natural; "gender is, at its heart, a structural power relation" (Cohn, 2013: 4). Gendered divisions are hierarchized with value given to (straight) men and masculinities, and with femininity and women as inferior. Such binaries normalise logics that feed into cultural practices that divide embodied gendered subjects, for instance of protector(male)/protected(female) (Elshtain, 1982). The daily operation of this system results in the active production and legitimisation of certain (hetero-masculine) subjects, forms of knowledge, voices and actions (Connell, 1987; 2000). While feminist activists and scholars question the hierarchy attributed to these divisions, they do not necessarily reject the divisions entirely. Male-female binaries have been frequently utilised strategically by feminist activists, aiming to overturn the hierarchy to demand improvements for women, but leaving the gender binary largely intact (Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya, 2005). I note throughout the thesis the ways that a gendered binary is practiced and reinforced in approaches to governing the city. Throughout the various chapters we see the language not only of policy but also of civil servants, activists and

residents tending to associate gender with women, and simultaneously leaving men and masculinities unchallenged (Carver, 1996). While I understand the tactical benefits of emphasising the needs and demands of women (see for example; Alvarez, 1990; Jahan, 1995; Craske, 1999), in framing gender as constructed and relational, I am interested not only in women and/or men, but the constructions of particular gender roles and identities and their political implications (Hooper, 2012).

While gendered logics are socially constructed, they have real and significant material impacts on the everyday (Elias and Roberts, 2016). Gendered norms for instance are intrinsic to both formal and informal institutions (Cockburn, 1983; Kenny, 2014), meaning that challenging the reproductions of gendered power must be intrinsic to movements for change (Waylen, 2014). To understand the gendered dimensions of urban transformation, I consider how gender norms map onto and are productive of gendered subjects, institutions and policies. Such concepts are instrumental in my analysis of the policies and practices within Medellín's *Alcaldía*, where I explore the ways in which the local government continues to be defined by patriarchal norms and separates 'women's issues' from broader urban governance, relying on women to do this gendered work. Observing the daily experiences and everyday reproductions and understandings of gender logics, and their reproduction in policy, can therefore allow an insight into the gendered dynamics within Medellín.

While forms of patriarchy can be recognised in almost every part of the globe, the exact expressions of patriarchal systems differ. This is because patriarchy always intersects with other systems of oppression including colonialism, capitalism and neoliberalism (Spivak, 1988; Crenshaw, 1991). Taking account of intersecting structures of domination illustrates that 'women' and 'men', or the feminine and masculine, cannot be seen as homogenised categories. Rather they always need to be geographically and historically situated. Intersectional feminists remind us that feminist analysis is only useful when considering gender as one of a range of traversing systems of oppression (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Mohanty, 1988; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 1999; Lugones, 2007; Collins, 2009; Hancock, 2014; Korol and Castro, 2016). A context-specific analysis is therefore essential, and in Latin America must acknowledge the specific impact of colonial and neo-colonial relations (Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1988; Lozano Lerma, 2010; Lugones, 2010; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). The coloniality of power recognises the interconnected systems of modernity and capitalism (Quijano, 2000; Agathangelou and Ling, 2004; Capan, 2017) exploring the legacies of colonialism within the relation of knowledge and power in contemporary society and seeing the ways in which discrimination and exploitation rooted within colonialism exist far beyond the formal colonial period. Additionally, being connected to capitalism, neoliberalism and concepts

of modernity, (gendered) coloniality[26] emerges throughout concepts of development and urban development (Escobar, 2010).

In looking to Colombia, the legacy of colonialism[27] relates to gendered power, experienced through intersecting relations including race, class, age and sexuality (Viveros-Vigoya, 2013). Within the Colombian context gender and racial hierarchies are intertwined in colonial legacies (Viveros-Vigoya, 2007; Segato, 2014a; Connell, 2015; Motta and Seppälä, 2019) that have persisted through two centuries of republican history. The specific context within which gender roles are (re)produced also varies at the urban level. Within Colombia, Medellín is known for having particularly traditional gender roles and norms, alongside a socially conservative political character. Such norms and expectations are complex and cannot be generalised. Wealthy women living in Laureles have different experiences and challenges than the women they employ as domestic workers from other parts of the city. Many working class, and often racialized, women have long balanced responsibilities in the home and work due to economic necessities, with gendered ideals being experienced according to class and race (Murdock, 2008). Similarly, sweeping generalisations about machismo and Latin American men are rooted in colonial imaginaries (Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya, 2005). Particular and racialized masculine identities originating in European colonialism continue to have an impact around the world, and in this is observed in Colombia for instance with racialised working class men often denied citizenship and positioned as security threats (Wade, 2009; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016)

Medellín, as elsewhere, sees divergent expressions of masculinity (Baird, 2012a; Myrttinen *et al.*, 2017) that often tie into racialized colonial legacies. Complexity is therefore key to engaging with gender, with a nuanced approach considering intersecting categories and the multiple gendered performances and expressions that can be found, even at an individual level. Particular embodiments may differ, but the normalising gender logics and historical, geographic and political context-specific patriarchal structures can also be observed and are lived through the everyday. The understanding of gender logics, structures and embodiments thus enables me to make visible and critique how gender shapes and is shaped by the urban development policies, and the everyday lived experiences of the city.

---

[26] Latin America saw specific expressions of colonial legacies and theorising in response to them with a postcolonial or decolonial project, often framed as modernity/coloniality (see for example Domingues, 2009, Escobar, 2010, Mignolo, 2005).
[27] The region was colonised by Spain from the early 1500s until the wider region of Gran Colombia gained independence in 1819. The Republic of Colombia was later declared in 1886.

2.2 Urban Space

Gender is not only constituted through discourses and performances, but through geographies (Massey, 1994; Staeheli *et al.*, 2004; Jarvis *et al.*, 2009; Beebe *et al.*, 2012). The intersectional experience of gender can be seen in the fragmented urban landscape. The spaces of the city are gendered (and shaped by intersecting categories including class and race) with respect to which subjects can access them easily and safely, how such spaces are used and appropriated, and in the roles and performances that are accepted within them. While gender is the central component of this research project, I emphasise the need to understand the politics of gender within the social, historical and geographical context of Colombia and more specifically, Medellín, as cities are also products of their particular and historically-situated social practices (Salcedo Fidalgo and Zeiderman, 2008). In order to frame the discussion of Medellín I now turn to consider space, and my understanding of the urban.

Cities are dense sites made up of multiple flows and social ties (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Harvey, 2003). Everyday life in cities gives important insights into their multiplicity, and lived complexity; cities are made up of "the intermesh between flesh and stone, humans and non-humans, fixtures and flows, emotions and practices" (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 9), all of which can be acknowledged through an engagement with the everyday. A global trend towards urbanisation has contributed to multiple theorisations of the particularities of the urban environment. The complexity of urban space therefore demands multi-faceted interrogation. The architecture, and built environment, or the materiality of the city make up the focus of chapter six (Bondi, 1998; Minton, 2009; Coward, 2012). Urban economies (Harvey, 2000; De Souza, 2009) and divisions (Caldeira, 2000; Koonings and Kruijt, 2007; Mcilwaine and Moser, 2007) are also recurring themes throughout the thesis, considering the fractures and divides within the city that often relate to its economic organisation. Chapters four and five address the themes of planning and governance (Humphrey, 2013) in detail, with the thesis as a whole contemplating connections and contradictions between policy and the lived urban environment. Within urban space the inherent multiplicity of the environment provokes a consideration of local specificities and global connections, the material and the social. While cities undoubtedly constitute a material, planned and lived environment, urban spaces are also represented and imagined (Bridge and Watson, 2000; Silva, 2006). It is for this reason that probing Medellín's narrative, or imaginary, of the transformed city is so important.

Cities are defined by and productive of social relations including, but not limited to, gender (McDowell, 1983; England, 1991). As Doreen Massey outlines, space is an

inherent and central consideration for the social; the "spatial organization of society, in other words, is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in both history and politics" (1994: 4). Cities, as a specific and influential spatial configuration must therefore be probed for their productions of the social. Geographies of urban space, as often emphasised in Latin American cities, are significant markers of their fragmentations and divisions; rapid urbanisation, displacement, and vast inequalities have led to exclusionary cities, defined by inequality, informality and violence (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007; 2009). Medellín, as in many other cities in the region, has vast divides between the wealth and luxury of formal planned areas, in contrast with informal neighbourhoods that continue to be plagued by poverty and violence. Such spatial divides have gendered implications, relating to the interconnections between violence and masculinities for instance, that are explored in more detail in chapters seven and eight. However, the separation and expectations of particular areas of the city can also be seen in the urban planning approaches (in chapters four and five), and in community responses to the stigma attached to marginal areas (in chapter six). Medellín's approach to urban development, as mentioned, centres on inclusion and overcoming geographical and social divides; recognising their character within the fabric of the city is therefore significant.

In seeing space as socially constructed, we recognise that it reproduces social relations, including gender. How we relate to each other, and to the spaces around us, is constitutive of our gendered subjectivities (Massey, 1994). Feminist analyses of urban space have brought the gendered politics of space to the forefront, illustrating the ways in which access to the city and different spaces within it differ according to gender (and intersecting oppressions) (McDowell, 1997; Fenster, 2005b; Chant and McIlwaine, 2013). In the early contributions of feminist geography, attention shifted to focus on the experience of women, who had previously been omitted in discussions of space (Tivers, 1978). Dedicating attention to the way women experienced different spaces, for instance in their use of public transport (Greed, 2005), has attempted to rebalance a male-oriented outlook, but this also attracted criticism for the treatment of women as a homogenous group. I recognise that men and women frequently experience the city in different ways (Falú, 2009), but also acknowledge the significance of intersectional identity categories (Crenshaw, 1991), and differing forms of gender identity that are often privileged as well as resisted and challenged within the urban landscape. Embodied experiences impact upon access to particular spaces in the city, and acceptable gendered performances.

While the gendered embodied experience of space is significant, I also remain attentive to the numerous ways that space can shape the way gender relations are experienced

(McDowell, 1983; Longhurst, 2002). Returning to my conceptualisation of gender, I note how space influences the 'meaning system' relating to particular ideas of masculinity and femininity (Peterson, 2005; Butler, 2006) and how it contributes to particular expressions of patriarchal structures. One way in which this occurs is in the gendered divisions and separation of private and public spheres. As mentioned, gender has been constitutive of a binary separation, which defines not just expectations attached to gender identities, and masculinity and femininity, but also links to other significant binaries, including the distinction of public and private spheres (Fraser, 2016). Feminist scholars and geographers have helped to break down this distinction, instead seeing public and private space as interwoven, both equally laden with societal expectations and gendered performances (Fenster, 2005b; Tankel, 2011); in chapter six, I show how activists are also disrupting the separation of the public and private, and particularly the restriction of 'women's' work to the private sphere. Cities are comprised of both public space and private and domestic settings, a complexity which can be illuminated through engagement with the everyday. The remit of urban planners however, as explored throughout the thesis, tends to be limited to public space. Citizen Culture for example, focuses upon the need for cultural change in engagements with public spheres with an emphasis on the predominantly public roles of individuals as citizens[28] (see chapter four). Urban space, however, is made up of the public and the private (as well as some liminal or ambiguous spaces), each interacting with gendered embodiments, logics and structures.

Just as gender is fluid (although also remaining within rigid categories), the social fabric of cities is always unfolding and flexing, meaning that cities are incomplete, and therefore spaces of possibility[29] (Sassen, 2013). Such a conceptualisation is significant in a city that is so celebrated for change, both in formal institutions but also at a broader level in social movements and the everyday. Cities are important sites of change, creativity and protest, and activists, residents and civil servants all influence both government policy and beyond within Medellín (see chapters six and eight). Lefebvre (1996) outlined the 'right to the city' as a collective reclamation of urban space, particularly by those who are historically marginalised. The right to the city has been highly significant, with a huge influence on urban planners, geographers, and beyond. David Harvey (1988; 2003), for instance, builds upon the Lefebvrian understanding, seeing space, social justice and urbanism as intertwined, stating that the "[r]ight to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to

---

[28] There are also calls for a feminist citizenship that considers diverse ways of engaging in communities that challenges and redefines the public/private binary (Prokhovnik, 1998).

[29] Such possibilities are constrained by social relations and political and historical contexts, as shown throughout the thesis in the continuation of gender inequalities.

change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008: 23). [30] Others have called attention to where we can see 'the right to the city'; Mitchell (2003) for instance, seeing this right as rooted within public space (but often leaving divisions within the private sphere unchallenged). As Medellín's emphasis is placed in investments in public space, this again takes on significance in terms of how such a right is claimed, particularly in paying attention to the rhetoric mentioned in chapter one, surrounding the social debt to the historically marginalised. In my consideration of the infrastructure projects and government policies primarily focused on the public sphere I bear in mind connections to the private sphere and how such spaces are divided, often along gendered lines. The potential for fluidity within urban space, and the reclamation of the right to the city help to conceptualise the potential of both urban planners and residents for change within Medellín.

Recognising the potential for change within cities thus relates to the degree of fluidity of gendered constructions and categories (Peterson, 2005; Butler, 2006). England (1991) argues that we must consider the relationship and influence between the changing nature of both the spatial structure of cities and gender relations. As outlined, I understand gender and space to be interdependent; gendered roles are produced and reproduced within urban space, and both are, to an extent, in flux. Through this lens I consider the city's spaces themselves in addition to the capacity of actors to influence and shift the boundaries (Rose, 1999; Bondi, 2005). However, while this allows for flexibility, there are also regimes of truth (Foucault, 1991) which delineate the boundaries of gendered expressions (Butler, 2006). Saskia Sassen (2013) states that although there is potential within cities to claim space and remake the city, this does not necessarily alter structures of power. Therefore, despite seeing both gender and space as in flux, I also note that reclamations of public space are often negotiated through gendered norms, as explored in more detail in chapter six with the examples of hip-hop collectives and the women's movement for peace in *Comuna* 13.

A further dimension when considering resistance, appropriation and the 'making' of the city, is the neoliberal and colonial structures in which cities are generally placed. As Lefebvre (1996) acknowledged, the city is embroiled in relations of power. Defined by these relations, urban space also perpetuates them, and many influential scholars including Harvey (2007) and Marcuse (2009) argue that the rise of neoliberalism has only furthered the inequity of spatial development. Often, divisions in urban space are attributed to neoliberal modes of governance. As the context for urban transformation,

---

[30] Many of the theoretical proponents for urban social justice, such as the right to the city, have been critiqued for neglecting the gendered dimensions of urban space (Fenster, 2005b).

it is suggested that this can only be achieved when there is a challenge to the capitalist, neoliberal structures.

While Harvey (2007) and Mitchell (2003) amongst others are critical of the capitalist city and potential for transformation within it, others are more positive about incremental change. Susan Fainstein (2014) argues that city planning and reform within the current structure can contribute to justice, and while structural change cannot be achieved at a city-wide level,[31] planning can have a real impact on the creation of a 'Just City'. While I agree that local policy decisions do influence aspects of daily lives, Fainstein pins her hope for the Just City on a shift of urban policy from "competitiveness to a discourse about justice" (Fainstein, 2014: 14). Many cities however, including Medellín, combine both discourses. The two are seen as mutually beneficial, with a city that can compete on the global market and consequently bring benefits for all residents. I consider then, the placement of Medellín, treading the line between the Just City and the prioritisation of its place on the competitive global market, considering whether the latter ultimately compromises the supposed commitment to social justice. The focus on the everyday allows us to further appreciate the compromises and limitations in Medellín's dual attempts for justice and competitiveness.

Looking specifically to gender, feminist geographers have emphasised ways in which neoliberal urban spaces enforce gendered inequalities (Vargas, 2007; Tankel, 2011). Some of the characteristics that they highlight such as poor mobility and public provisions have been targeted in Medellín, where the city has focused, for instance, on transportation, public space development in marginal communities and investment in public services such as childcare and education. By acknowledging the space for diversity in the expression of neoliberalism I show that the development of Medellín undoubtedly retains neoliberal practices, prioritising individual responsibility and city rebranding above a shift to greater equality. The market-led development is based on a low-wage economy and the city has remained divided and unequal (Franz, 2017). As such, Medellín is understood within the framing of a neoliberal city as fragmented, divided and complex, and this also impacts upon the potential for change, and particularly structural change. Concurrently we see a reinforcement of the gendered experience of the urban landscape. Urban space is thus produced by and imbricated with cultural norms. Recognising the particularities that emerge through a consideration of everyday urban space therefore allows an understanding of Medellín's crisis, its approach to urban change, and the (gendered) power relations that both shape and (re)produce these ideas.

---

[31] Fainstein instead suggests that structural change needs to happen at a national level.

2.3 Violence

The final component of the conceptual frame, drawing together the themes that have emerged from prioritising the everyday, is violence. Leading on from the discussion of urban fragmentation, Latin American cities are often associated with violence (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). Medellín is an infamous example of a violent city. Violence in its most extreme forms has touched the lives of every inhabitant of Medellín. The city has been defined by violence, particularly from the 1980s onwards and more recently in its relative absence as it has supposedly transformed from its violent past. Even in completely unrelated discussions, the topic of conversation often wandered towards both the history of, and continuing forms of, violence which face those living within Medellín as it has such great significance for all related to the city. In that sense, violence continues to be part of the everyday fabric of the city. But it is not just direct violence that shapes the city; the inequality, poverty, and divisions all form a picture of structural and symbolic forms of violence. Continuing perceptions of insecurity and fear are themselves structured by gender, race and other categories (Pain, 2001). Everyday spaces within the city have become sites to be secured, usually by drawing upon the labour of working class men as the security guards stationed at each entrance.

Violence is seen not only as a challenge for individuals to negotiate, but also as a factor that inhibits regional and national development, as seen in the case of Medellín (Roldán, 2003). As such, there have been calls to acknowledge violence, and responses to it, within policy decisions (Moser and McIlwaine, 2006). Often discussions of security and justice centre around homicides,[32] as a marker of the extreme character of such violence (for example, UNODC, 2013). Homicide rates are easily captured (in contrast with other forms of violence) but only tell part of the story (Pearce, 2010). Instead, I don't look at homicides alone, or indeed only at direct physical harm, instead situating all forms of violence as part of a continuum composed of connected parts. Various forms of violence including economic, political and social violences are connected, and all forms are inherently gendered (Moser, 2001; Cockburn, 2004; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). Direct violence is consequently always connected to structural violences such as the unequal distribution of wealth and power according to race, class and gender, and cultural and symbolic forms of violence which render certain subjects less visible, homogenised or overlooked (Morgan, 2008).

---

[32] Press for instance, both local and international, tend to focus on homicide rates as a measure of security in the city. Local newspaper El Colombiano often reporting fluctuations in homicides in Medellín. Governmental responses to violence also tend to start with homicides.

Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) present the continuum of violence as both productive and reproductive, stating that the physicality of certain types of violence cannot be separated from their social and cultural aspects. Rather than seeing a binary separation between war and peace, a continuum of violence helps to comprehend the multiple forms of violence which shape our lives and spaces. In his seminal works, Galtung (1969; 1990)[33] extends the concept of violence to include structural and cultural violence, recognising the social patterns of violence. In conceptualising cultural violence, Galtung emphasises the ways in which such structures are legitimised. In Medellín, a city that continues to be vastly unequal, structural and cultural violences retain great significance. In keeping with my overall emphasis on the everyday, Scheper-Hughes (1993) outlines the violence of everyday life, emphasising the multiple challenges and violations experienced in daily life in Brazilian favelas. Through the everyday, she sees the connections between direct or physical harm or suffering and structural and symbolic violences. In urban contexts, and particularly those in Latin America, the fragmentations within the urban environment contribute to exacerbated forms of violence and insecurity (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007) and often directly link to the rapid urbanisation and the subsequent vast inequality found in most cities (Scheper-Hughes, 1993; Moser and McIlwaine, 2006). With violence as a core part of everyday life, it becomes routine, and can be normalised (Pécaut, 1999; Hume, 2004; 2007).

Medellín is exemplary of divided urban space, with clear separations along economic and social lines. Informal neighbourhoods packed with self-built precarious houses are located high on the steep mountain slopes, while clusters of tall blocks of luxury flats within gated communities mark the wealth of a limited number of areas; the geography of the city reflects the divisions of wealth within it. Koonings and Krujit (2007: 13) argue that poverty alone cannot account for the types of organised violence and crimes which influence certain urban spaces in Latin America, but that:

> persistent social exclusion, linked to alternative extra-legal sources of income and power, combined with an absent or failing state in particular territorial/social settings, will provide means and motives for violent actions, which contribute in turn to a disintegration of the social and moral fabric.

In Colombia, and in Medellín, it is an absent rather than failing state (explored further in chapter seven) that has shaped the marginal neighbourhoods, as acknowledged in the rhetoric of the social debt of neglect of such areas. Like many cities, violence is

---

[33] Galtung has faced notable criticism from feminist scholars for his failure to acknowledge the role of gender in his construction of violence, and his ideas have been expanded with this in mind (see Confortini, 2006; Sjoberg, 2013).

associated with actors including criminal gangs and drug traffickers, and primarily with recruits from the poor and marginal areas (Méndez *et al.*, 1999). Medellín's marginal neighbourhoods experience higher levels of direct violence, but additionally face connected challenges including poverty, stigma, and vulnerability to natural disasters. Rather than seeing certain people or places as inevitably or inherently more violent,[34] I draw upon a continuum of violence to acknowledge the connections between its structural and direct forms. Seeing the linkages between structural inequalities and symbolic divisions calls for a nuanced and multi-faceted approach to violence, and its reduction.

Intrinsic to all of the aforementioned forms of violence are a variety of social dimensions, underpinned by gender relations. Caroline Moser (2001) explains that the continuum of violence and conflict is gendered, as gender is entrenched in relations of power and powerlessness. Within the conceptualisation of the continuum of violence outlined by Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, gender too remains a key dimension. They state that "[b]ecause it is difficult to conceive of violence without addressing its almost inevitably gendered contours, a separate category for gendered violence risks obscuring the extent to which gender operates throughout all forms of violence" (2004: 22). The vast majority of those involved in criminal groups are young men, and this is the social group that are also the most likely to be victims of homicide in Medellín.[35] Mo Hume argues that "gender identities are intimately linked to the performance of violence and, in particular, address the issue of male violence" (2008: 60). Where many forms of violence are often removed from their gendered contexts, Hume draws attention to the need to recognise the ways that violence reinforces gendered hierarchies, and particular ways of performing gender identities. In this way, violence is productive of gendered bodies (Wilcox, 2015). Colonial legacies contribute further dimensions to dominant and subjugated masculinities, whereby marginalised men can perform masculinity through violence and domination of women (Hume, 2009; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016), and violence against women is racialized (Boesten, 2008).

When considering the urban development approach in Medellín, I consequently note who is framed as being involved in violence, and who is in need of protection from it. Linking directly to my research question of the framing of the 'problem' to be 'solved' in Medellín, I explore how violence often becomes the remit of supposedly problematic subjects, usually poor (and racialised) young men at the margins of the city, without a simultaneous examination of how such subjects are produced and maintained by forms

---

[34] Leading to conditions including the penalisation of poverty, see Wacquant (2003).
[35] More than a quarter of homicides in Medellín in 2016 were men between 18-24 years old (see Martínez and Marín, 2017).

of structural and symbolic violence that are also ongoing in the city. In chapters seven and eight, I explore the connections between violence and masculinity in more detail; with men dominating the spectrum of violence (Connell, 2002), and all forms of violence being part of patriarchal structures (Segato, 2003).

Seeing violence as a continuum connects symbolic, structural and direct forms of violence, all of which are therefore influenced by gender. Men are the most likely victims of direct violence in the public spaces of urban environments, in itself bringing a significant gendered dimension to urban fear and insecurities (Pain, 2001). On the other hand, women (generally speaking) remain more restricted in their use of this space (as explored in chapter six), which is also recognised as a form of violence (Vargas, 2007). Additionally, the private sphere, to which women have historically been confined, is also where they have much greater vulnerability to violence (Falú, 2009; Zanotta Machado, 2009). Again, the feminist breakdown of the private/public dichotomy is vital for understanding the specificities of violence, as well as of urban space, as they are intertwined within the same organising structure (Tankel, 2011). The gendered separation of public and private spheres prioritises insecurities in public spaces, and therefore overlooks the insecurities commonly faced by women (Segovia Marín, 2009). In this thesis, by examining governmental interventions such as infrastructure projects, I primarily focus on the public sphere, but keeping the commitment to breaking down this binary, seeing the public as directly linked to the private and relations within both.

Despite the feminist contributions to understanding violence, when considering the gendered dimensions of violence, I show that the topic is often discussed by policy-makers solely as violence against women (see chapter eight). A distinct categorisation of violence against women is intended to illuminate how this is a form of systemic discrimination occurring in a frame of unequal gender relations where women are the most likely victims (True, 2012). Despite strategic reasons for the separation of violence against women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979), it has also been critiqued for the way that it reproduces an essentialist understanding where women are reduced to the position of 'victim', denying their agency and defining them by their powerlessness (Radford *et al.*, 1996: 9; Shepherd, 2008). Instead, as Shepherd states, "[i]nstances of violence are one of the sites at which gender identities are reproduced. Thus, gendered violence is the violent reproduction of gender" (2008: 51). With domestic violence treated as a distinct concern, as outlined in Medellín in chapter five and eight, the debate surrounding the utility of this separation is significant. In separating out violence against women, there is a risk of negating the gendered dimensions of all forms of violence, and a simultaneous devaluing of violence against women as a marginal concern. Within the setting of a city plagued by years of violence, violence against women is informed by

structural inequalities, calling for transformation of those underlying divisions (Boesten and Wilding, 2015).

While the above discussion queries a separation of GBV, the term is prominent within gender-sensitive policy making in Medellín. Noting how I understand this form of violence therefore helps to identify some of the contradictions within the city's 'transformation', as explored in more detail in chapter five. GBV is broadly defined as violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender and covers a wide range of violent phenomena. Although men can be victims of GBV, when seen to subvert or challenge (hetero) masculine ideals (Myrttinen *et al.*, 2017), women and girls are overwhelmingly the victims of such abuse (True, 2012). Vargas argues that GBV exists in both public and private spaces, and can be summarised as "all violence and insecurity, whether real or imaginary - that restricts the full development of women, their mobility and autonomy" (2007: 22). Therefore, looking to the everyday gives us insights into GBV. Using Vargas' definition of violence allows us to appreciate the scales and geographies, of GBV, where structural violences such as limited access to economic opportunities or political expression are part of the same continuum as the more recognised understandings of violence as physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering. As a result, this research will consider a continuum of violence at varying scales, all underpinned by gender (and intersecting categories). The project therefore incorporates a broad understanding of GBV considering various forms insecurity that relate to gendered norms and expectations, in addition to noting the gendered dimensions of all forms of violence, including police and state violence, militarisation, and violence between men. I focus on spaces within the city such as key development interventions, which are predominantly in the public sphere, but with the understanding that insecurities in the public *and* private sphere are rooted within broader structural inequalities (True, 2012). Throughout the thesis, I consequently draw upon various concepts of violence, using the above understandings to show the ways in which violence (re)produces gendered entities and seeing the ways that violences are performed according to gendered identities and expectations.

2.4 The Gendered Urban Everyday of Violence in Medellín

Each of the above factors, gender, urban space and violence, come together in the everyday. Gender norms and roles impact upon the experience both of the urban space and the multiple forms of violence within it. While women are often the focus of gender sensitive approaches and policies, gendered expectations and logics spread far beyond the experience of women alone (who are, of course, not a homogenous group). Rather, they are integral dimensions of economic policies, political organisation, urban space

and violence. Furthermore, intersecting identity categories (such as race and class) also contribute to the experience of the city, and of violence. The urban everyday therefore begins to reveal the complexities of the urban environment in Medellín, as explored further in the following discussion of methods in chapter three. Such moments begin to query some of the narratives of change explored in chapter one and the privilege and hierarchies that are embedded within the urban environment become apparent. In considering the fragmented city, an everyday snapshot of the city can illustrate the structural and gendered violence of daily life.

Gender and place within the urban environment emerged as key themes from my prioritisation of the everyday. The critique and understanding gained from feminist geographers in relation to gendered urban space provide a frame through which to assess the questions of the 'problem' in Medellín, as well as illustrating continuing insecurities. With gender relations made intelligible and naturalised through patriarchy, neoliberalism and colonialism, addressing inequality and GBV must disrupt these systems (Young, 1993). An emancipation project that addresses "core structural roots", as seen to be central to the conceptions of gender binaries above, is key to any feminist research (Wibben, 2011). As such, the frame developed here is vital for considering the case of the transformed city of Medellín. In this thesis I therefore pay attention to the logics, embodiments and structures of power that reinforce gendered violence, in its various forms along a continuum, and the knowledge that perpetuates it, within the site of the 'transformed' city. Drawing together the themes explored in the above discussion, the conceptual frame employed within this thesis is attentive to the gendered urban everyday of violence in Medellín.

Chapter 3

Methodology: Critical Feminist Ethnography in the City

Given that my research is primarily concerned with the rhetoric and experience of urban transformation in Medellín, I prioritise the urban everyday. In paying attention to gender in the city, a feminist critical ethnography emerged as the most appropriate methodology. Grounded within the urban landscape I was immersed in, a sustained engagement across Medellín helped to frame and consider the central research questions and their provocation to assess the integration of gender within the policies and experiences of change in the city. As a feminist researcher interested in critical perspectives, I emphasise the need for context-specific research with a central commitment for change (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991). My work is informed by my own feminist political commitments to gender justice and my academic background. In the quest for objective knowledge,[36] certain voices can be prioritised over those of others;[37] instead I recognise that knowledge, and theorising, is subjective and undertaken at all levels of society (hooks, 1994; Giroux, 2001). Critical and feminist research therefore recognises participants as possessors of knowledge, not only of experiences, as well as appreciating their capacity for critical thought, ideas and theories. As such, I engaged with informants from across the city at varying scales. This included officials, both from governmental and non-governmental organisations and other city residents, always recognising the everyday of the city and its institutions as key sites of ongoing gendered political struggles (Elias and Roberts, 2016).

As a feminist researcher, I have a strong interest in the concept of transformation, with regard to challenging structures of oppression and violence. Research I have undertaken in the past has been concerned with transformation as a central theme[38] and within Medellín such discussions and themes were clearly prominent. The idea of the transformed city and its new security, as outlined in chapter one, rested on the reduction of homicides and other violent crime, but as I saw from my first weeks in the city, femicide levels were rising, and other types of GBV including domestic abuse were consistently high (discussed further in chapter eight). I was struck by the different

---

[36] Leander (2016) argues that ethnographic practice challenges understandings of objectivity, in fact bringing about more robust objectivity that recognises emotion and flexible engagement. Feminist researchers have affirmed that knowledge is always situated within a particular embodied experience. Recognising the agency of both the research and the participants allows for what is termed "feminist objectivity" (Haraway, 1988; Bach, 2010).

[37] Krumer-Nevo describes the way in which "'voice', especially of less privileged members of society is too easily dismissed as personal, subjective, emotional, ephemeral or informal" (2009: 289).

[38] My Master's thesis, for instance, considered transformational change within Citizen Awareness Centres in rural Nepal.

references to GBV, visible campaigns from activists against the 'humanitarian crisis of violence against women' in the city,[39] and a claim of gender mainstreaming in the city's urban development policy. By prioritising the themes and concepts that emerged from my daily interactions in the city, the juxtaposition within the discourse of both gender and transformation was illuminated, and provoked my feminist curiosity[40] (Enloe, 2004) to consider the explanations for such ongoing violence and inequality despite these changes in the urban environment. The innovative policies and the concurrent narrative of change alongside the contradictory and multiple forms of violence and insecurity I came across flowed throughout my time in Medellín and drew me to an embedded research focus, grounded in both the city and the concerns of gender within it (Schrock, 2013).

The urban landscape is rapidly changing, complex and multi-faceted and I do not aim to give a comprehensive account of the city as a whole, seeing this as a futile task especially given the practical constraints.[41] Instead, I connect with spaces and people that helped to build an understanding of gender and the city. The project, and its methods, are rooted in a political and feminist commitment that draws out the limitations of the urban changes in Medellín not merely to criticise, but to point to gaps and contradictions where improvements could be made. Through observing the barriers to, and limitations of, this urban transformation we can find ways to work with, and eventually attempt to overcome such barriers (Rinehart *et al.*, 2013).

In this chapter I discuss the motivations for my work and my methodological approach, taking into account my epistemological and ontological understandings, and ethical commitments. I consider ethnography and the city, and the embodied and partial nature of such enquiry, outlining the underpinning understandings of the broader research project. I then discuss the practical elements of the work and the analysis undertaken, and the underpinning conceptual understandings, connecting to the discussions from chapter two. The ethnographic details, the people I chose to engage with and the themes I selected all prioritised the voice and experiences of the respondents. A multi-scalar approach[42] to examining the city took into account a range of spaces and perspectives I explore throughout. I therefore outline each of the sites that were engaged, discussing

---

[39] Having previously worked on GBV, including research with Women's Aid and survivors of domestic violence in both the UK and Nepal, the project was sparked by my commitment to understanding and reducing GBV.
[40] Referring not only to the answers given but also that feminism shapes the questions asked, starting with taking all women and their experiences seriously and as valuable and worthy of enquiry.
[41] Working on a PhD project always encounters constraints, as a lone researcher with a restricted timeframe and budget.
[42] Referring to not just multiple sites but how the urban change is constituted at different scales by multiple actors, multi-scalar ethnography therefore becomes a "means of engaging with ongoing social changes" (Xiang, 2013: 285).

my approach in *Comuna* 13, the *Alcaldía*, and with NGOs and other actors. Finally, I discuss the ethical implications and limitations of the project, highlighting the implications of power, positionality and always striving to be better, whilst also acknowledging and managing the unavoidable implications of such social research.

3.1 Ethnography and the city

There are multiple variations of how ethnography is practiced methodologically; my work is influenced by feminist urban critical ethnographers, who understand research as embedded, co-produced and with a particular curiosity relating to gendered roles and relations. As cities continue to grow and gain importance across the world, urban ethnography has similarly expanded, and ethnographers have helped to draw out the variances of particular spaces and environments (Prato and Pardo, 2013). Urban ethnography, not just in but *of* the city, can illuminate the impacts of urban governance and planning, alongside the inequalities of the urban landscape, providing an "empirically based, holistic analysis [that] has a unique contribution to make to our understanding of our evolving urban world" (Pardo and Prato, 2018: 7). It is therefore an ideal method for tackling some of the inherent complexities of urban life, particularly when these two central areas of policy and experience within urban space are so central to the research questions addressed in this thesis.

Ethnography privileges the richness of everyday life, and demands scrutiny of the mundane moments in ways that illuminate gendered norms and constructions of space (Jarvis *et al.*, 2009). It provides the sustained and situated research that is fundamental for informing instances of gendered space, insecurity and gender violence. My commitment to feminist research led to an emphasis on situated knowledge, recognising that research is embodied. Ethnography helps to acknowledge such dimensions, noting the not-said, the gestures and body language, alongside the perceptions and experiences of the city that inform and produce daily life (de Certeau, 2011). Complexity, nuance and contradictions all emerge within the "rich description and detail, messiness and the ordinary" (Montoya, 2018: 13), with ethnography being well placed to engage with and probe urban space, the impact of development policies, and how such policies are felt and experienced.

Feminist geographer, Brenda Parker (2016), highlights the value of combining the insights from urban residents with that of city planners, to better understand the practical experience of such policies, and the interconnections between the two. I agree that this is an important combination, and add that social movements also require attention, acknowledging their influence on the experience of urban space, as is

particularly emphasized by scholars considering Latin American contexts (De Souza, 2006; Maclean, 2014). Ethnography within the urban environment therefore permits movement "from micro levels to macro levels of analysis, to see significance in the mundane, and to monitor structural and cultural processes simultaneously" (Enloe, 2010: 1110). Such movement allows for an analysis of the ways that gendered relations interact at interrelating scales and spaces (Chant, 2013; Chant and McIlwaine, 2013). Combining my own observations and experiences with detailed interviews allowed me to answer my research questions by exploring how gendered violence informs everyday life, the social fabric of the city, how urban spaces are used, and how 'success' is measured both within the official policy and in everyday life. I draw upon my experience at a range of relevant events and protests, in addition to my own experiences of the city. I therefore engaged with and noted everyday interactions and dynamics throughout the city in a range of spaces and scales, including those within institutions, activist groups and various civil society organisations.

3.2 Getting to know the city: ethnographic practice

My fieldwork took place over 12 months in Medellín, Colombia, from July to September in 2016, and January to November in 2017. Participating in city life, I explored a range of spaces within it, and over the course of the year my network of contacts within the city grew and evolved.[43] In using ethnographic methods, I prioritised holistic engagement in the city, considering different spaces, voices and experiences contributing to and shaping the urban landscape. I took detailed ethnographic notes, contributing to my understanding of the urban environment. I took public transport, walked endlessly around the city and attended events, protests and talks on a range of topics. Additionally, I analysed a number of documents ranging from official government reports and policy plans to publications from NGOs and a range of social media posts, as well as artwork, images and photographs.

Further to the above, in-depth semi-structured interviews provided rich and detailed perspectives from those living and working across the city. Using a purposive sample, I selected interviewees based upon their roles and positions within the city. This sample was not aiming for representativeness in terms of the whole urban population, instead I aimed to cover and include the perspectives of various individuals from a range of backgrounds and positions within the urban transformation story. This included government employees, residents and representatives of social movements and NGOs. It also included representatives of various ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexualities and

---

[43] Most of the interviews took place after I had been in the city for some time and developed networks and relationships.

ages, in order to examine some of the impacts of diverse positionalities within the city. In particular, I interviewed both men and women in order to examine the experience of gender as a relational category, seeing how gender identities and particular femininities and masculinities are lived and understood. However, I also note that my access limited the participants, and that I was unable to speak to the most marginalised within the society, resulting in limitations in the insights I am able to provide.

In the interviews I was able to examine the implications of the dynamics I noted in my field notes and wider research, probing opinions of the urban environment and narrative of change. In total, I conducted 38 interviews, the majority being one-to-one semi-structured interviews[44] (see Appendix A). In interviews I began with a list of themes and questions, but encouraged the conversation to flow in different directions, recognising the individuality of those I spoke with. In addition to formal semi-structured interviews I also completed shorter and more focused interviews in a vox-pop format[45] with street vendors, although some of these also ended up being substantial conversations. As part of a multi-scalar approach to the urban environment, I worked primarily within *Comuna* 13, as a key area of change in the city, as well as engaging with various departments within the *Alcaldía* and finally NGOs and activists working across the city. I turn now to outline the detail of the engagements within each of these.

3.2.1 *Comuna* 13

Due, in part, to practical constraints I focused primarily on the area San Javier, commonly known as *Comuna* 13, due to its position as a core site of urban intervention. Within the most violent city, residents often told me, *Comuna* 13 had been the most violent neighbourhood, with various armed and violent actors holding sway within the community for decades. *Comuna* 13 is a large area, spreading across many hillsides on the western outskirts of the city. The urban development approach, and particularly the infrastructure projects, have changed the reputation of *Comuna* 13. It has received a great deal of attention from the *Alcaldía* in the form of a variety of innovative development projects including the outdoor escalators, the Metrocable and a library park. *Comuna* 13 has therefore benefitted from principal developments of Social Urbanism including transport and mobility, public space and education, all exemplary of the conspicuous investment in the poorest parts of the city. However, there are limits to the 'transformation' and the area continues to face numerous challenges including

---

[44] Two exceptions to this were with 2 and 5 people respectively, responding to the preferences of the participants.
[45] Referring to short, focused interviews, of 4 or 5 questions, with members of the public on the street.

continuing poverty and violence which (as explored further in chapters six, seven and eight) has altered in some ways, but not disappeared (Doyle, 2016). As such, the area provided an important insight into the impacts, experiences and limits of the urban development interventions.

In order to better understand the space and neighbourhood, I wanted to find ways to work within and collaborate with the community. In prioritising the sustained and meaningful commitment often described by feminist ethnographers, I began working with a community group that is based near the escalators and this experience allowed for rich engagement with the area through participant observation. The organisation was made up of English language teachers and volunteers from the local area and various other countries. They ran free and informal English language classes for anyone in the local area, using a government-run building at the top of the escalators to do so. Through these classes, I met a number of people living in the area who became key to my research. As the classes and community projects were free and open to all, I met a diverse range of people[46] mostly living across *Comuna* 13.

While I acknowledged the ethical dilemmas inherent to this engagement, for instance linking to the questionable impacts of language teaching and volunteer tourism[47] (Barbara and Rivke, 2011; Mostafanezhad, 2013; Becklake, 2016), it allowed me to engage with residents from around the escalators, with plenty of opportunities to talk to them about their experiences of urban change. The role provided access to the space and an opportunity to build relationships and networks with residents local to the area. The group also supported a number of community-led projects, decided by vote during classes. Working within the group, I was able to contribute to various community-led projects, for instance creating a community garden. Such experiences gave me the time to meaningfully engage within the neighbourhood and with a variety of residents.

Having a sustained local connection also helped in accessing and engaging with local groups and street vendors, in addition to those I worked with directly in the project. On numerous occasions, after discussing my research with students in the classes they introduced me to people they thought would be keen to talk to me, such as their contacts at community organisations.[48] When I contacted local groups independently,

---

[46] The majority of those attending English classes tended to be young people, but over the year the students included people of different ages, races, and from different locations within the *Comuna* and further afield. There were also a mix of those who had spent their whole lives in *Comuna* 13 as well as new arrivals from elsewhere in the city and beyond in Colombia and some from neighbouring countries including Venezuela.

[47] Highlighted by the fact that a number of former students have since started their own tour guide companies, as discussed in more detail in chapter 6. It is also worth noting that not everyone used these skills to work in the tourist industry and participants were keen to learn English for a number of reasons.

[48] Resembling an organic case of snowballing sampling.

the first question I was often asked was about who I had spoken to in the city so far, and what involvement I had in the community. People were interested to hear about who I was working with, and that I had been there for some time, demonstrating my commitment to get to know the area and its residents. Often, my work with the community group acted as a starting point for my conversations with local residents, and they seemed to open up as a result. One man, for instance, seemed to visibly relax, unfolding his arms and smiling, as I recounted my connections to the neighbourhood. In an area that has attracted attention from both the media and the academy, there was a sense of researcher fatigue[49] (Clark, 2008), and the information about what was seen as my commitment to the neighbourhood helped substantially (albeit not every time) with gaining trust, and in the willingness of contacts to speak to me.

Working in the *Comuna* allowed me to be within the space and observe people's daily interactions, giving opportunities for detailed ethnographic observations of how the space was used, by whom and some insights into the types of everyday engagements. I observed the spaces around me, and recorded my experiences, thoughts and feelings in an ethnographic journal. Having visited *Comuna* 13 several times each week for the classes over twelve months, I became familiar with many of the informal vendors working from the escalators. Visiting the escalators regularly helped me to see and comprehend the gradual but sustained increase in informal employment around the escalators and the way in which this built upon and tied into gendered labour practices, for instance being complementary to women's domestic responsibilities (discussed further in chapter six). The landscape altered each time I made the journey up the steep single-track road to the foot of the escalators with an ever-growing number of shops, cafes and stalls, as well as an increasing number of tour guides and groups of tourists.

Towards the end of the year, I became involved in the project *Mujeres en la 13* (Women in [*Comuna*] 13), a research project funded by the local governments participatory budgeting and run by a small local NGO. The project aimed to discover more about the role of women in the neighbourhood. I attended a number of events run by and as part of this project, participating in and observing their focus groups, meetings, and a number of their events. They were open to share their research opportunities with me, and I met a number of community leaders through the project. The willingness of those I met to help and widen my understanding of the community was incredibly significant. Being part of this project helped me to gain a better perspective of the connections between different community groups, which often make up networks across the neighbourhood, as well as seeing some of the challenges of participation. It also gave a

---

[49] One group for instance turned down my request to speak with them, stating that they didn't speak to researchers anymore as a policy.

greater insight into the geographical distinctions within the *Comuna*, as a large and diverse area made up of nineteen *barrios* each with distinct histories and demographics.

My time in the neighbourhood benefitted from the guidance and generosity of those within it. In addition to participating in various aspects of life in the neighbourhood, I also conducted nineteen semi-structured interviews in *Comuna* 13. The interviewees included local residents, activists and representatives of social movements, a member of a hip hop collective, the leader of the local YMCA, members of the local *Junta Administrador Local* (JAL)[50] and various people involved in the *Mujeres en la 13* research network. I also conducted shorter vox-pop interviews with a number of the street vendors, recorded as people worked on their various stalls around the escalators. As mentioned, a number of these conversations ended up being substantial conversations due to the willingness of the respondents to share their thoughts and experiences.

3.2.2 *Alcaldía*

Medellín's *Alcaldía* (local government) provided important context and perspectives on policy and planning in both *Comuna* 13, and across the city more broadly. Both policy documents and conversations and interviews with civil servants gave invaluable insights into the official discourse of the transformation of the city, illuminating the integration of gender within decision-making, planning and their markers of success. I observed how gender sensitive planning is incorporated within the cities development plans and considered how it measures the success of such policies. Integrating policy analysis within ethnography placed the policies within the contexts they were developed and applied within and allowed for greater understanding of both the policies and the experiences of them. I looked primarily at five versions of the *Plan de Desarrollo* (development plan) from the *Alcaldía*, spanning the period from 2003 - 2019 (focusing on the cities 'turning point' with the election of Fajardo[51] to the current report while I was conducting my research). I analysed how gender was presented and constructed in these reports as both 'problem' and 'solution'. In addition to the development plans, I gained access to documents from various departments, including policy documents, training resources and publications, which all informed my understanding of the *Alcaldía* and how it presents particular issues, such as Citizen Culture, as explored in chapter four.

---

[50] These groups are civic organisations that act as a bridge between local government and community groups.
[51] Many of the changes had begun earlier than Fajardo and are commonly associated with Social Urbanism, referring to the urban policies of the late 1990's and early 2000's. However, Fajardo's Mayorship are often a focal point of these policies and are a core component of the city's transformation (Maclean, 2015).

In order to better interrogate the policies and practices of the various departments it was important to hear from those working within the *Alcaldía*. I conducted thirteen semi-structured interviews with civil servants across eight departments in the local government. Five of the interviews were with members of staff in the women's department, speaking with staff in various sub-departments across the *Secretaría de las Mujeres*. Interviewees also included staff from other government departments including the departments for Inclusion, Participation, Citizen Culture, Security, Education and the Centre for Sexual Diversity. I targeted departments that were key to the city's development, with particular relevance to gender, and innovation in urban planning. Generally, I interviewed staff leading sub-departments with a direct role in planning and policy-making within each of the *Secretarías*. I also spoke with civil servants doing front-line work and research, for instance, with a psychologist working in one of the domestic violence response units. The interviews uncovered the everyday of the institutions, including some of the ways that staff understood and negotiated their roles and the bureaucratic machinery they work within, and exposed gaps between the official policy documents and the experiences of those working within the *Alcaldía*.

While it took time to build relationships with many of those in *Comuna* 13, benefiting from proving my interest and commitment, staff at the *Alcaldía* were, on the other hand and on the whole, very open to meet and talk with me. This wasn't always the case and certain departments were particularly difficult to get hold of, but those experiences in themselves proved to be illuminating. In noting and exploring the difficulties that I faced in accessing certain people or departments, I found significant limitations in the way that gender was incorporated in the local government. Having outlined my topic, those who didn't feel able and/or willing to discuss the themes of gender were therefore significant within a government claiming to mainstream gender (the implications of such interactions are further discussed in chapter five). It was not just the conversations I had in and of themselves, then, that were significant, but also my access to different departments and their willingness to speak to me. I also interrogated the institutional everyday and underpinning cultures, showing how they are significant in understanding policies and development strategies. Within the *Alcaldía*, in addition to formal interviews, I visited a range of government buildings, attended public meetings and spent time in a number of governmental projects and provisions including the *Casa de Justicia* (House of Justice) in *Comuna* 13, the *Centro de Diversidad Sexual* (Centre for Sexual Diversity), library parks and a number of other government-led infrastructure projects across the city.

3.2.3 NGO's and other urban actors

Finally, I also prioritised engagements with NGOs and social movements. While some of these were in *Comuna* 13, others worked at a city-wide level or in other areas of the city. I followed a range of connections and contacts in the city[52] and conducted a further six in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives from NGOs, social movements, academics, activists and former government officials. Additionally, I had informal conversations with people across the city, including staff at NGOs, artists, taxi drivers and friends, all of which contributed to my understandings of the urban environment. I also collected documents and resources including campaign materials, publications and materials from NGOs and social movements, and local media publications and social media posts.

A final and significant part of my work in Medellín was my role within a local NGO, volunteering with one of the oldest feminist NGOs in the city. Working on a research project I collected and compiled a resource that summarised media depictions of violence against women within the city and across the country. Working within the organisation afforded me another route to engagement and participation within the city's NGO sector – giving me in an insight into work at another level and a chance to engage with staff in the sector, as well as see first-hand the types of work they were doing. In addition to the research project, I attended organisational meetings, events and recordings of their weekly radio programme,[53] and therefore had lots of opportunities to talk informally with staff, and to contribute to their work.

3.3 Language and translation

As the project developed, I dedicated myself to cultivating both my language skills and confidence and proficiency in using Spanish professionally, and my first trip to Colombia focused primarily on this task. I undertook all of the interviews in Spanish and, particularly at first, found this challenging, being fairly reliant upon an interview schedule and pre-planned questions. Most of the interviews were conducted later in the year, meaning that I had time to develop relationships and networks, as well as allowing time for increased familiarity with the local accent and dialect. I note that in conducting the interviews in a second language that I am consistently developing, I may have missed some of the intricacies that a native speaker would have picked up on. In

---

[52] Social media was key to contacting organisations and therefore proved to be a valuable tool within the research process.

[53] The show is a weekly half hour radio show dedicated to exploring issues pertinent to women in the city and more broadly across Antioquia.

addition to the limitations it brought however, being an 'outsider'[54] both in terms of my background and language skills allowed me to probe further the meanings and use of particular terminology and phrases, asking respondents to explain what they meant by their expressions in ways that were often enlightening. Assuming my ignorance, I found that respondents were keen to add in additional context for their statements, explaining the situation and their position clearly. I also employed a local research assistant, who attended a number of meetings with me in order to support the research process. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and quotations included in the thesis using my own translations. I recognise that translation brings its own dimensions of power and politics (see for example; Gent, 2014), and therefore further contributes to ethical considerations. In order to mitigate such problems, I employed a translator in Medellín to review interview recordings and clarify my own transcriptions and translations. This assisted with important quotations and anything I was unsure of, aiming to avoid any accidental misrepresentations of the respondents when I was not able to return to clarify with them directly.

3.4 Analysis

Recognising gender as an analytical category demands an engagement with the ways in which gender logics and binaries are (re)produced, questioning normalised gendered relations of power (Lazar, 2007). These priorities informed my approach to the analysis of interview transcripts, documents and everyday experiences as recorded in my field notes. Within the 'success story' of both the broader city and *Comuna* 13 specifically, my analysis observes how gender is used as a measure of success, how gender has been integrated into the planning and developments, and what contradictions arise within the changes in the area through the everyday experiences of gender and gender violence. Vargas suggests that, in engaging with gender and the city, we must consider the relations between "gender-based violence, public space, and the security and peaceful coexistence of citizens" (2009: 55). The triad of analysis Vargas outlines has been vital for my understandings of the city of Medellín, due to the centrality of all three themes. Returning to her definition of GBV, as outlined in chapter two, the analysis requires an engagement with the ways that the city of Medellín, in both structural and embodied ways, constrains the autonomy and full development of anyone according to their gender identity. In addition, I note the ways in which gendered structures and logics are reinforced and/or challenged within the various research sites. Using discourse analysis, I interrogated the ways in which meaning is "discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged" (Lazar, 2007: 142), while considering the limited

---

[54] I recognise that the insider/outsider dichotomy and its impacts are contested and complicated (see for instance Corbin and Buckle, 2009, Lunn, 2014)

"interpretive possibilities" particular discourses provide (Doty, 1993: 302). Critical discourse analysis aims to uncover how discourse reflects, represents and reproduces certain identities and power relations. At times it also challenges such identities. I therefore consider how reality is produced "in and through discourse" (Cameron, 2001: 51), combining this with ethnographic details and insights, and drawing upon a broad understanding of what is encompassed within discourse.

I transcribed the interview recordings and coded both these and the policy documents using NVivo software.[55] Within the programme I used inductive content analysis to code the interview transcripts, allowing the categories to emerge from the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). In embedded research, the themes were therefore established during the coding process, drawing inductively from the transcripts. For instance, themes including stigma, gang extortion, and social movements were repeated across interviews, and consequently took on greater significance within the research project. That said, my own research priorities also informed the types of codes that I pulled out from the interviews, and the questions I asked. As such, the nodes drew upon the core themes of interest including security, gender identities and the presentation of gender, as well as other recurring themes. These categories were then further broken down to more specific 'child' nodes, identifying key themes and connections between different presentations and mentions of the core themes. I pay attention not only to instances of violence, or insecurities, but the way in which such themes are approached and understood by those I am talking to. I note the language used, but also draw upon my observations and field notes, understanding the language within the context of details including the interview dynamics, body language and the willingness of participants to talk about particular themes.

3.5 Ethics, Power and limitations

One afternoon I was helping a group from *Comuna* 13 with work on the community garden, located at the side of the main road up to the escalators. The residential road is now a popular thoroughfare for tourists and tour groups[56] heading up to visit the success story of urban transformation and passing the small houses, shops and public spaces on the way. The walls on either side of the road are covered in graffiti and the many tour groups usually pause on their way up the steep hill to admire the artwork and take photos. As I crouched down with a paint brush in hand, decorating an old toilet bowl that had been repurposed as a plant pot as part of the community garden project, a

---

[55] I conducted most of the analysis upon my return to Newcastle, following the fieldwork period, with geographical distance and time to consider the work (Chisholm, 2014).

[56] It is now a popular site of tourism and a local tour guide who takes visitors to look at the neighbourhoods' transformation told me that there were around 4,000 tourists each month in 2017 (see also, Naef, 2016).

tourist with a huge camera crouched next to me and took photos of me while I worked. The young woman's lens rested merely a foot away from my face as she snapped photos of me while I looked at her, surprised. Without a word or even making eye contact, she stood up and returned to her tour group, walking away towards the escalators. In moments like this, I had some, albeit limited, insight into the impact of tourism in the area and the influence of the tourist gaze, and indeed the researcher's gaze. Such everyday encounters were a result of my immersion within the community and urban landscape, but my position within the city was complicated to navigate. Within the story of Medellín as a "hipster holiday destination",[57] I was directly implicated in the narrative of change, especially given the often blurry line between tourism and research (Becklake, 2016).

The ethics of social research are complex. The rights and responsibilities of a researcher and their relationships with those in the 'field' are interpreted and navigated individually, with ethics extending far beyond the guidelines from institutions and funding bodies.[58] As a feminist researcher, and a British woman in Colombia, I was conscious of the ethical dilemmas inherent to my research project; not least my status as an 'outsider' and conducting research in a region that had suffered severe violence. Ethnographic methods, as shown by experiences above, can provide insights into urban dynamics that may be harder to see with other methods. However, every stage of the research remained steeped in ambiguous ethical implications and concerns. Here I discuss some of the ways I navigate what I recognise to be imperfect ethics. Ethnographers are embedded in the places where they work, and I was conscious that I left a trace as I moved around the city (Scheper-Hughes, 1993). I strived to adhere to my own ethical principles and responded to situations as these guided me to, but the inherent messiness of social research requires ongoing ethical reflection.

3.5.1 Reflexive practice

Ethnography has been defined broadly as a reflexive process (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1995). Due to the long term embedded nature of ethnography, I need to continually revisit and reassess my position, power and biases. My background and beliefs have shaped my decisions and preconceptions of the field, my expectations of others and the direction of the research. The influence of such factors is unavoidable,

---

[57] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/south-america/colombia/articles/medellin-murder-capital-to-hipster-destination/
[58] The ESRC define their ethical principles as; maximising research benefits and minimising risk and harm; respecting the rights and dignity of individuals and groups; voluntary participation (where possible) and appropriately informed; integrity and transparency; clearly defined responsibility and accountability; independence of research.

and feminist methodology encourages active engagement with the partial nature of our enquiry[59] (Ackerly, 2008). Sangasubana (2011) warns that the researcher must be aware of the reactivity, reliability and validity of the research. In this sense I was conscious of the potential impact of my own presence on the behaviours of others and the shape of conversations.[60] Central to reflexivity is a discussion of power and privilege. As a white European researcher; I was consistently aware and conscious of my own privilege. From the research focus to the selection of research participants, I navigate "an act of epistemological power that [has] a definitive impact" on findings (Ackerly, 2008: 34). Whilst recognising this, however, it is also important not to overstate the power researchers hold as such privilege does not bring with it inherent power to make change.

Using ethnographic methods, I acknowledge that my research is always limited, partial and selective; Hammersley and Atkinson for instance state: "the ethnographer acquires a great deal more tacit knowledge than is ever contained in the written record" (2007: 147). In recording the rich detail of spaces and experiences in the city, I aimed to capture some of the complex and multifaceted character and essence of the urban landscape. I also note that my records and research are inevitably limited by what I chose to include or leave out. My perceptions and experiences are not objective facts, but rather an interpretation of dynamic and changeable events. Within my work, I am interested in the presentations and experiences of certain themes, as they emerged from the research in line with my research priorities of gender, violence and urban change. While I aimed for diverse perspectives and insights, my access, both in practical terms and as a newcomer to the city, was limited, and I therefore make no claims of my research being representative of the city as a whole. The detailed multi-scalar and mixed methods approach, instead brings together varied and complex insights that begin to illuminate contradictions and experiences within the urban environment.

The temporary nature of my time in Medellín meant that I also negotiated leaving the city. It was important to share the research and keep in contact with people in Medellín, trying to avoid an entirely extractive research process. However, the geographical distance can make contact difficult. I have kept in touch with a number of people, and the work of organisations using social media, although this has limits.[61] In a commitment to share my work with research collaborators, I have agreed to share a report in Spanish, summarising some of the key findings, and collected contact

---

[59] Recognising that those in the 'field' are also partial (Cook and Crang, 1994: 91).

[60] Along with the ways in which I may be complicity in the ongoing oppression of others (Washburn, 2007; Chisholm, 2014).

[61] Not all of my contacts were active on social media or had consistent access to the internet for instance, and in these cases keeping contact has been much more challenging.

information for all of those who were interested in accessing this resource. The production of various types of document to present information can be part of a commitment to provoke change, seeing where public audiences for the research are relevant and finding new ways to engage with a wider audience (Phillips and Cole, 2014).

3.5.2 Researching violence

Working within a city with a complex history of multiple violences, a particular and ongoing concern was the research topic and the city of focus in and of itself. Researching violence and researching within violent settings is a sensitive process (Lee and Stanko, 2003; Skinner *et al.*, 2005; Hume, 2007; Tomei, 2014). While I wasn't asking about people's specific experiences of violence,[62] in a city that has been so defined by violence it was often present in conversations and interviews, as a key part of Medellín's urban fabric. As a result, I encountered ethical challenges in encounters about pain and violence at a personal and community level, with many in the city disclosing information about friends, acquaintances and loved ones that had been lost or disappeared, and the pain of injustice surrounding a lack of accountability for such crimes. Researchers have discussed their difficulties managing the expectations of participants, particularly when dealing with issues which are causing ongoing trauma in their lives (Checker, 2014, Schuller, 2014). Often there is an anticipation for research to have a direct impact. As a social researcher, however, my remit was limited, and in bringing up painful moments, even when this was not my intention, the conversations I had were sometimes difficult to navigate and respond to. While I didn't generally find that respondents had any expectations from me, my feelings of helplessness and privilege were particularly acute at such points. Violence, in its most extreme forms, has touched the lives of almost every person within the city of Medellín and continues to be integral to the lives of many in the city, in a number of ways, as I explore in detail in chapters seven and eight.

My research project queries Medellín's reputation as a model city, highlighting that while the city is lauded for its reduction in violence, there are at the same time continuing and multiple violences. Again, while personal accounts of violence or GBV were not my focus, I did ask about both gender relations and security in my interviews, as core themes of the research project. Having undertaken research with survivors of domestic violence in the past, I was aware of the sensitive nature of the topic (see for

---

[62] Concerns surrounding the ethical implications of asking specifically about experiences of violence (including GBV) can reinforce researcher fatigue with specific ethical implications for survivors including further trauma and exploitation (see Boesten and Henry, 2018).

example; Lee and Stanko, 2003; Skinner *et al.*, 2005). The emotional wellbeing of those sharing their experiences and thoughts with me was paramount. As a result, I made it clear I was there to listen, that I only wanted people to disclose things they were comfortable sharing, and I followed my instincts when it came to stepping back from particular themes or conversations that were difficult or emotional for some respondents. Mostly, the experiences of violence that were disclosed to me were second hand, rather than personal accounts. People seemed to be more comfortable sharing non-personal accounts of the types of violence that was experienced in the city, keeping some distance from it. Rather than looking to discover specific experiences of violence therefore, these conversations instead considered how types of violence and violent subjects are understood and presented. As such I was interested in the concerns and framing of instances of violence. This included how such violence was interpreted and presented by those within the city, who was considered secure/insecure, and what types of gendered relations and expectations such interpretations can reveal.

As well as the ethical concerns for the wellbeing of respondents from the themes that emerged during conversations and interviews, I also felt an emotional toll from hearing these stories while powerless to help in any way, beyond listening to such accounts and taking them seriously. Additionally, the work with the NGO where I collated instances of GBV had an impact. I was searching for and summarising these findings week upon week, often looking at graphic images of violence against women that are published by online newspapers in Colombia. Researching violence can be difficult both practically and emotionally (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2009). I made sure I kept regular contact with my supervisors and found the support of my family and friends to be invaluable.

One final theme of importance within a city known for multiple violences concerned the ongoing security concerns in the city. I guaranteed anonymity to all participants,[63] an issue that was of concern to some, specifically when talking about being critical of the government, gangs, or talking about experiences of violence or threats of violence. In a city where violence has come from a number of actors, there was some hesitance to speak about certain themes without the guarantee of anonymity. There was also a great deal of concern often expressed in reference to my own experience in the city, and how I would keep safe. As a relative newcomer to the city, I was often informed about security concerns, with locals apprehensive that I wouldn't be aware of the required measures to keep myself safe. Such interactions were interesting, and often told me a great deal about the continuing spatial inequalities across the city. One friend, for instance, quizzed me every time I saw him about my work in *Comuna* 13, insisting that he would

---

[63] Although anonymity itself can bring ethical concerns, potentially silencing and denying agency for those who prefer acknowledgement (see for example, Gordon, 2019).

not feel safe there. He was continually concerned for my own safety in that part of the city, despite the high numbers of visitors there and relative safety that was reported and emphasised there now. In itself such concern made the limits of the narrative of change clear, showing the extent to which the area continues to be stigmatised by some as a result of its violent past.

3.5.3 Representation

One of the most difficult ethical dilemmas, requiring continuous navigation, is the way to represent those I spoke with and the city more broadly. Representation always has consequences and as such is a vital consideration within all research and particularly for critical ethnography (Hall, 1997, Madison, 2005). With ethnography, Rinehart et al (2014) assert that we are "writing culture", not simply recording experiences but building collective stories. The understandings we develop during fieldwork must be fair to the contributions of participants and this consideration is key throughout the process of conducting research and analysing information. Conversely, rather than aiming to transmit 'the truth', ethnographers are transmitting perspectives which have been interpreted by and, as Neil Drew (2014) states, 'gifted' to the researcher. Such perspectives are complicated by the fact that multiple narratives of the city are often presented. While some were extremely critical and drew my attention to ongoing inequalities and violences, others were much more concerned with furthering the narrative of change in the city, seeing my own role as a way to highlight such presentations of the city.

I therefore encounter tensions, between a desire to note the change and improvements within Medellín, alongside the responsibility to indicate the contradictions and limitations of the change, as illuminated within my research project. While I analyse and engage with the language used in interviews, the policies and a range of aspects of daily life, such analysis pays attention to and draws out some of the implications of the things I was witness to, and the experiences that I had, and that were shared with me. Connecting to themes of researching violence and in violent contexts, I was conscious of how I portrayed a country, and city, often depicted as exclusively violent and *machista* and riddled with a whole host of problems including gang and drug violence.[64] In critically assessing the narrative of change I am wary of contributing to a narrow, simplistic and problematic presentation of the situation in the city, representing violence at the expense of all else. My research critically engages with concepts of transformation, but in many cases the stories and experiences that residents shared

---

[64] Depictions in popular culture including the global success of television shows such as Narcos have furthered this fascination with the violent past of the city (see Naef, 2017).

with me instead emphasised the multitude of positive changes in the city and in their daily lives. One interviewee, who lived in *Comuna* 13, near to the escalators for example, thanked me for telling the story of change in the neighbourhood, for sharing their story of success, saying that I had an important part to play in changing the narrative of the violent city. I therefore aim to treat all insights that were shared with me with respect, acknowledging and celebrating the ways in which their lives have changed but also noting the constraints of that change and the significant impacts those limits have had.

In order to navigate the imbalances of background and power, I was clear with participants about the expectations of the project. While I may have personal aspirations for the impact of the project, I was clear with participants about the main focus of my PhD research, the purpose of the project, and the likely research outputs. Such honesty was important for establishing trust and rapport, in order to foster an open research environment (Oakley, 1981; Thwaites, 2017). I briefly outlined my research motivations and always prioritised opportunities for clarification and questions about the research project, in addition to a realistic assessment of the research scope and outputs. It is important that the impact of such research is not overstated as the researcher usually remains the primary beneficiary of the research (Davis, 2014).

Relationship building is central to ethnography. Within ethnography, the researcher is part of the world they are studying, and therefore both observer and participant (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998; Sangasubana, 2011). Representation, then, does not just apply to how to present accounts of respondents or the 'field', but also to the ways in which I, as a researcher, presented myself and my project during the research process. Smith (2014: 19) states that "the onus on performing well is more with the researcher than the researched", relying on the researcher's ability to respond to each situation. Semi-structured interviews aimed to leave the conversation with a degree of flexibility, allowing space for different manners of response and for interpreting the questions in a number of ways. The openness allowed for rich and diverse conversations, but also meant that conversations often drifted in new and interesting directions that could not be included within this work. I hope to revisit such information in future projects. Drawing upon a number of interviews, a multitude of documents and a year's worth of ethnographic field notes provided a great deal of information, all of which has informed the project. However, I note that I have also taken decisions on what to include, and leave out, and therefore acknowledge a further dimension of my positionality and partial enquiry.

3.6 Conclusion

Immersion within the city and a multi-scalar approach that considers policy-makers, NGOs and residents, has given rich insights into where gender (and intersecting identities, primarily within this discussion relating to race and class) were placed in urban planning, as well as experienced, and resisted, in the everyday. Using feminist ethnographic methods, I explored the ways in which the city is defined by gender logics, and how those logics have, or indeed have not, changed in the 'transformation' of Medellín. With a range of informants, and sources, I combined an overview of city-wide policy with the everyday experience of the specific site of *Comuna* 13, while drawing inferences for the implications of this area across the city more broadly. Throughout the thesis I draw upon examples, quotations and ethnographic insights that are illustrative of broader trends and themes encountered during the fieldwork. The complex and imperfect ethics underpinning the project require continuous negotiation, but in prioritising the respondents and recognising my own partiality and positionality, I draw back to the implications and insights of the everyday, as both the methodological and theoretical basis for this research project.

Assessing the narrative of Medellín's change as a change in culture

An emphasis on the city's culture is the starting point for many of the urban development projects; it can be seen in the choice of locations for the infrastructure projects, in the designation of government resources, and throughout the efforts to reduce the high levels of violence that were synonymous with the city. However, while the urban development approach is often seen to be innovative, inclusive and progressive, Medellín is concurrently characterised as unequal, conservative and *machista*. These two characterisations of the city were mentioned as constitutive of the city's culture by residents, activists and government officials. While the former conjures a vision of a transformative environment, the latter provokes doubt about such a change. In this chapter I therefore aim to make sense of the narrative of transformation within the institutional culture and environment from which it has grown.

Within the innovative urban development approach for transformative change, the local government has prioritised culture, and this is most apparent in their concept of *Cultura Ciudadana,* or Citizen Culture. Citizen Culture, as a novel thread within social urbanism, is primarily a pedagogical project that has been at the core of the *Alcaldía*'s approach since Fajardo's mayorship began in 2003. It is also the first of seven development strategies in Medellín's 2016-2019 development plan (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016). The city government proposes to lead cultural change, under the guise of inclusion and co-responsibility. However, in practice, as explored throughout this chapter, the proposed cultural change, in the form of Citizen Culture, emerges from the top-down, with prescriptive conceptualisations of good and largely decontextualized citizens. Emerging from leadership that is concerned primarily with producing a more economically competitive and productive city it is not, I argue, part of the radical and necessary social transformation that must involve an overhauling of gender relations and other inequalities.

This chapter first draws upon ethnographic insights to consider how the cultural change in the city is framed and understood, before moving on to consider the conceptual tools I use to make sense of these ideas of culture and citizenship, noting the specific context of each with regards to Colombia. I will then explore the emergence of the concept of Citizen Culture from its beginnings in Bogotá through to its current iteration in Medellín. Finally, drawing primarily upon policy document analysis, I examine the institutional narrative surrounding Citizen Culture. Illustrating several limitations of Medellín's approach to Citizen Culture, I reveal the policy to be

individualising and firmly framed within the city's neoliberal agenda. It also mistakenly separates citizen's cultural norms and practices from intersecting factors including gender, race, and class. This speaks to my overarching research questions to interrogate how gender roles and relations are understood within Medellín's urban crisis, and how it is consequently integrated within the policy changes. The separation of individuals from their context is significant as social and cultural norms cannot be separated from wider social, political and economic contexts, all of which are gendered (True, 2012).

Within the Colombian context, where there are high levels of inequality, the discussions that follow query what constitutes change under neoliberal governance, arguing that cultural transformation cannot be achieved without a meaningful engagement with, and ultimately a challenge to, entrenched gender relations (and other structural inequalities). I therefore argue that without including gender norms within the idea of Citizen Culture, the change it aims for and understands will always have a restricted impact, as opposed to the claimed transformational results. In other words, Medellín's own gendered cultural underpinnings both produce and restrict the city's transformation; the failure to challenge them within the cultural change therefore demonstrates limits of the supposed transformation.

4.1 Presenting a city that values all

Engaging with, and including, residents across all parts of the city was part of an active change that aimed to show that the city valued the contribution of everyone living within it. This can be seen in the policies, and also in the urban space itself. On my first visit to the centre of Medellín in the middle of the valley I wandered slowly through the Alpujarra administrative centre. It is a modern and pristine area, developed as part of a shift to attract international business and improve the city's reputation (Acevedo and Carreira, 2010). Between the tall and varied architecture of government offices, the central courthouse and the town hall, is a large square. As I walked through on a bright morning it hummed with quiet activity. Unlike the more chaotic streets surrounding the square, it is a site of relative calm. In formal clothes people rushed between meetings while others sat on small benches sipping coffee, talking on their phones or reading papers. Security guards slowly patrolled the square and a group of tourists stood in front of a city guide listening to the historical significance of the large and imposing central sculpture.

Figure 4: Street vendor statue, Alpujarra

Statues and sculptures are found throughout the square paying homage to the history of the city and its people. While you don't find the informal workers that are in almost every other corner of the city here, their presence is not completely ignored. Along the edge closest to the town hall, several statues commemorate the traditionally undervalued and overlooked. A life-sized statue depicts an older woman with a walking stick in one hand, holding out a handful of sweets in the other, with a tray of sweets and cigarettes hanging around her neck (Figure 4). To her left, a statue shows a man sitting on the floor with a cloth held between his hands above a block, ready to shine shoes, while another portrays a young man holding a newspaper up in one hand with a bundle of papers tucked under his other arm, his mouth open, mid-shout to passers-by. These statues are small, lifelike and understated, especially in comparison to the grandeur of more artistic sculptures, the largest of which stretches nearly forty metres into the sky in the centre of the square. The street vendor statues are located at the edge of the square in the shade, amongst the benches and trees. No one paid much attention to them, they aren't noted by the tour guides, and those walking past barely offer them a passing glance. Just as throughout the city, the informal workers contribute to the square from the margins. Made by Olga Inés Arango, a sculptor from Medellín, and erected in 2002, the statues are lasting monuments from the early years of social urbanism. Their placement here amidst grand official buildings and in such a prominent

position reminded me of how the city wants to portray itself, proclaiming to be a city that values and commemorates the traditionally overlooked.

In addition to formal statues, the official square had also been claimed by activists. In the centre lay the simple but varied outlines of women's bodies cut out of paper and pasted to the paving slabs making a large circle (Figure 5). The paper attached to the ground was slowly wearing away and had clearly been there for some time, with parts of the shapes missing. You could still make out many of the names and ages printed onto the simple outlines. This was part of a national project to raise awareness of femicide, each outline representing a woman or girl who had been killed, including the hashtag *Ni Una Menos*[65] (Not One Less). Most people walked briskly by or over the artwork, without noticing or acknowledging the creative display that marked in a very large and visible way the lives of the women that been lost.

Figure 5: Ni Una Menos, Alpujarra

A young man wearing a lanyard and government ID card paused to read a name, before continuing to stride across the square. It was a reminder not only of violence against women, but the continuing and silent presence of such violences within society. Despite the prominent placement of such a protest it had been allowed to wear away organically over time. At the very least, this suggested that such a crime, and the activists campaigning for its awareness, were not being hidden away or completely ignored. Just as the commemoration of informal workers seemed to position the government as

---

[65] The feminist movement *Ni Una Menos* began in Argentina and the slogan has since been used across the world, and is particularly popular in Latin America, in protests against GBV. Improved communication such as social media has been key in its dissemination and the collective action has gained traction since it began in 2015 (see Accossatto and Sendra, 2018).

recognising those usually overlooked, this similarly provoked an idea of a progressive government. The shift to Social Urbanism meant working closely with social movements and listening to them as legitimate voices within the city, explored in more detail in chapter five. Here, in their act of marking the physical terrain, the social movements' presence in the space was undeniable. In this pristine and sedate site, the *Alcaldía* represented its notion of the culture of the city by including activists and vulnerable actors alongside formal attire and expressions of stateliness. In short, the Alpujarra's physical space embodied the narrative often presented of social urbanism, that the culture of the city incorporates the voices and needs of people at all levels and from all backgrounds; that everyone within the urban boundaries is a citizen.

4.2 Culture and Citizenship

Within the urban sphere, culture is interconnected with the material environment, which together and inseparably constitute "the flow of meanings in the city" (Scorer, 2016: 2). As the above representations in the physical space signify, cultural change is a central focus of urban planning in Medellín, claiming to incorporate everyone within the frame of citizenship. As the cultural emphasis from the government combines two key ideas of culture and citizenship, I first outline some relevant conceptual underpinnings of each, before moving to outline concepts of culture within Colombia, and Medellín. Both of these are huge areas of literature and debate, and further dimensions will be brought in throughout the chapter, so here I briefly consider each theme and how they relate to the case of Citizen Culture in Medellín.

Culture is a contested concept. However, in order to emphasise cultural change, cultures must be understood as being in flux, with potential to shift cultural norms, to change the daily practices and shared ways of being that are shaped by each historical context (Gramsci, 1971; Crehan, 2002; 2016). Culture also shapes a shared sense of meaning relating to particular ways of life and understandings (Williams, 1981). Gramsci's concept of common sense, as part of a wider understanding of culture, is useful here, as it considers self-evident truths and the accepted knowledge within a particular culture, seeing this not as "something rigid and immobile, but continually transforming itself" (1971: 326). Seeing common sense as composite, rather than coherent, allows for the influence of different actors, although tending to sway towards conservatism and tradition. Hall draws attention not only to shared meanings but also to how such meaning is produced and circulated in ways that allow those within any said culture to "interpret the world in roughly similar ways" (1997: 18; see also, Du Gay et al., 1997). In this chapter I identify and pay attention to accepted truths within Citizen Culture, demonstrating the underlying assumptions they are based upon and how they become

common sense. Using this frame for cultural change is useful in Medellín, where such change is celebrated in the official government narratives, external reports and the explanations given by residents themselves for the changes. In a language of inclusion, the concept of culture appears to be manipulated and used to extend benefits for marginalised populations, with culture as a project to build collective citizenship. Cultural transformation is promising for transformative change, suggesting a potential for "new popular beliefs, that is to say a new common sense and with it a new culture" (Gramsci, 1971: 424). However, I show that rather than a potentially transformative cultural change, the change in Medellín relates to a prescribed conception of culture, therefore being a top-down construction that remains restricted in scope and impact.

In framing its cultural change, Medellín claims that it now works for all of its residents, valuing the contributions of each and every citizen. Those previously overlooked are central to the payment of a social 'historical debt' from years of neglect (Maclean, 2014); their incorporation within the frame of citizenship, and ultimately of all residents within the formal process of the urban development project, is key to this rebalancing. Citizenship, while a similarly contested topic, refers to those included within a political community (Staeheli, 1997). It not only encompasses those who enjoy particular privileges (such as access to rights, access to justice and application of the law),[66] but can also include, as is pertinent to the discussion here, a particular sense of expected behaviour (Lister, 1997; Staeheli, 2003). In the Colombian context it is thus a status that, at least theoretically, automatically applies to all within the national boundaries (LaRosa and Mejía, 2013).

Citizenship does not only refer to national boundaries however and has been of increasing importance to the construction of the urban (Holston, 1999; Staeheli, 2003). In presenting an understanding of citizens that includes everyone within the urban environment, citizenship connects to inclusion, belonging, protection and dignity (Uran, 2010; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). Citizenship can also, potentially, shift political dynamics and gendered roles and expectations. Thomas (2015) for instance, suggests that changes in gender relations and roles can present new citizens and modern parameters of citizenship where women are autonomous political subjects, not just recognised for their roles in the home. While she sees this as a slow and difficult process, new voices can lead to different ways of being political, participating and constructing citizenship. However, as will be explored in the following discussion, citizenship continues to be unequally accessed, and is gendered, classed and racialized, thus requiring a challenge to such entrenched ideals.

---

[66] Formal inclusion may not mean that such rights are equally accessible to all (as discussed in more detail later in the chapter).

4.3 Culture and Cultural Change in Colombia

Before moving to discuss the implications of cultural change within Medellín, it is important to trace some of the debates surrounding cultures in Colombia. Colombia is defined by multiplicity and contradiction (Farnsworth-Alvear *et al.*, 2017). Despite the diversity within the nation, it has had a homogenising cultural narrative that has downplayed difference (Rappaport, 2005).[67] Politically, and relative to its regional neighbours, Colombia has had a consistent democratic political model. Until recently, two parties, the liberals and conservatives, dominated the political landscape in Colombia from the nineteenth century (Williams and Guerrieri, 1999). These parties have been superseded by a vastly diversified political scene and the integration of alternative political voices as in Medellín, such as Fajardo, has been a key dimension of such change. Despite this, the political culture in the country has retained clientelistic and transactional relations as opposed to being ideology led (Vieira Costa, 2018), and the existence of a democratic political system has not resulted in a nation free of turmoil. In recent years (largely since the 1991 Constitution), citizenship in Colombia has become more inclusive and diversity has been formally recognised (LaRosa and Mejía, 2013), however, unequal access to citizenship continues (Vieria Costa, 2018). Escobar (2002), for instance, argues that the continuing political culture of clientelism in Colombia is in direct contradiction with democracy, and with citizenship itself. A further concern is that politics has also been imbued with violence in Colombia, not only in the decades-long civil conflict, but in everyday political violence (Pearce, 2013). One result of this is high levels of institutional distrust, impacting upon the way people engage with political systems and with state structures and institutions (Vieira Costa, 2018).

Colombia is regionally diverse, with each region defined by varying geographies, histories and cultures. Alongside its international reputation, Medellín, and Antioquia more broadly, have a specific cultural identity within the Colombian imaginary. When in Cali, Colombia's third largest city, Pedro, a local businessman, was talking to me about my time in Medellín. He assured me that Medellín was the best city in Colombia, and that I had made the right decision to spend my time there. He had lived in Medellín for over a decade before returning to Cali to be closer to family, but he clearly favoured Medellín. He repeated that the city was "just like Europe", going on to explain that it was organised and that people there knew how to behave. His comparison with Europe brought to mind discussions of modernisation, alongside complicated colonial

---

[67] The concept of the mestizo nation for instance, tailored towards colonial logics of progress and modernity, prioritised the idea of a dominant mestizo race, idealising and unifying those with mixed racial heritage (although simultaneously prioritising lighter skin) (Wade, 1995; Olarte Sierra and Díaz Del Castillo Hernández, 2014).

discourses (Domingues, 2009; Escobar, 2010). He emphasised public transport and infrastructure investments, but also the culture of the city. From its early days Medellín was known for being hardworking, with strong (traditional) family values (Reyes, 1996). *Paisas*, a term that refers to those from the department of Antioquia, have a reputation for their cultural identity. Hylton for instance suggests that *paisas* are "united by a tenacious regional-chauvinist ideology: hard-working, light-skinned Catholic conservatives, identified against the 'lazy' and undisciplined indigenous and Afro-Colombians in the south." (2007: 72-73). There is a racialized dimension within *paisa* ideology then, alongside being (predominantly) socially and politically conservative. Antioquia's identity is not solely captured within this picture however, containing its own multiplicity having also been an area of resistance, historic labour activism and leftist guerrilla and militia[68] activity. There is consequently a tension whereby the region, and the city's conservatism coexists with more progressive forces, both with significant sway, as explored further in chapter five.

The city has changed significantly since its early years and the industrial boom around the turn of the twentieth century brought people from around the country. Tensions were reported between the pre-existing wealthier residents of the city and the new arrivals, who were seen to be contesting the myth of the united regional *Antioqueño* identity (Riaño Alcalá, 2006). A distinction, as highlighted by Hylton (2007), between *paisas* and new arrivals from outside of the region and the increasing diversity caused problems with coexistence in the city, often tying into the aforementioned racialised stereotypes. The problem was emphasised in interviews with members of staff from the *Alcaldía*, for instance Carlos in the department for Citizen Culture who described all from Antioquia as 'cultural cousins', but as distinct and separate from those from Chocó for instance, the department in the west of the country known for its large Afro-Colombian population. The bringing together of such culturally diverse groups was seen to bring tension and unrest. With a distinct historical trajectory and increasing challenges in recent years, the cultural framing also aims to once more bring a cultural and political unity. Politically, the city is still generally thought of as socially and politically conservative, but such assumptions exist alongside the progressive ideals and innovative approaches to development.

The framing of cultural change and citizenship within Medellín has been a response to prior crisis in the city. Similar to the national context (Uprimny, 1989), the city's political culture has also been characterised by trends including clientelism, distrust in

---

[68] The militia groups are a hybrid of guerrillas or armed leftists and common criminal gangs (Ceballos Melguizo and Cronshaw, 2001).

institutions and corruption scandals.[69] In addition to weak political structures and national concerns, Medellín's international reputation as a city of extreme violence grew steadily throughout the 1980s and 1990s; homicide levels were seemingly out of control[70] (see Figure 6) and the city was becoming economically stagnant (Maclean, 2014). In 1990, Colombia's President, César Gaviria, demarcated the violence in Medellín as the biggest challenge facing Colombia at the time (Garcia Ferrari *et al.*, 2018). Previous responses to the violence had focused on what was framed as a problem of violent groups including the powerful narco-traffickers and guerrilla fighters, resulting in a militaristic approach. In the following year a report entitled *Medellín: Reencuentro con el Futuro* (Medellín: Re-encounter with the Future), identified structural inequality and poverty as the primary causes of the city's problems and as such a core factor influencing the high levels of urban violence.[71] In making this connection the violence was linked directly to the lack of opportunities for young people, to high unemployment, to precarious housing and other difficulties experienced by large numbers of Medellín's residents. In other words, exclusion was highlighted as a core problem within the city.
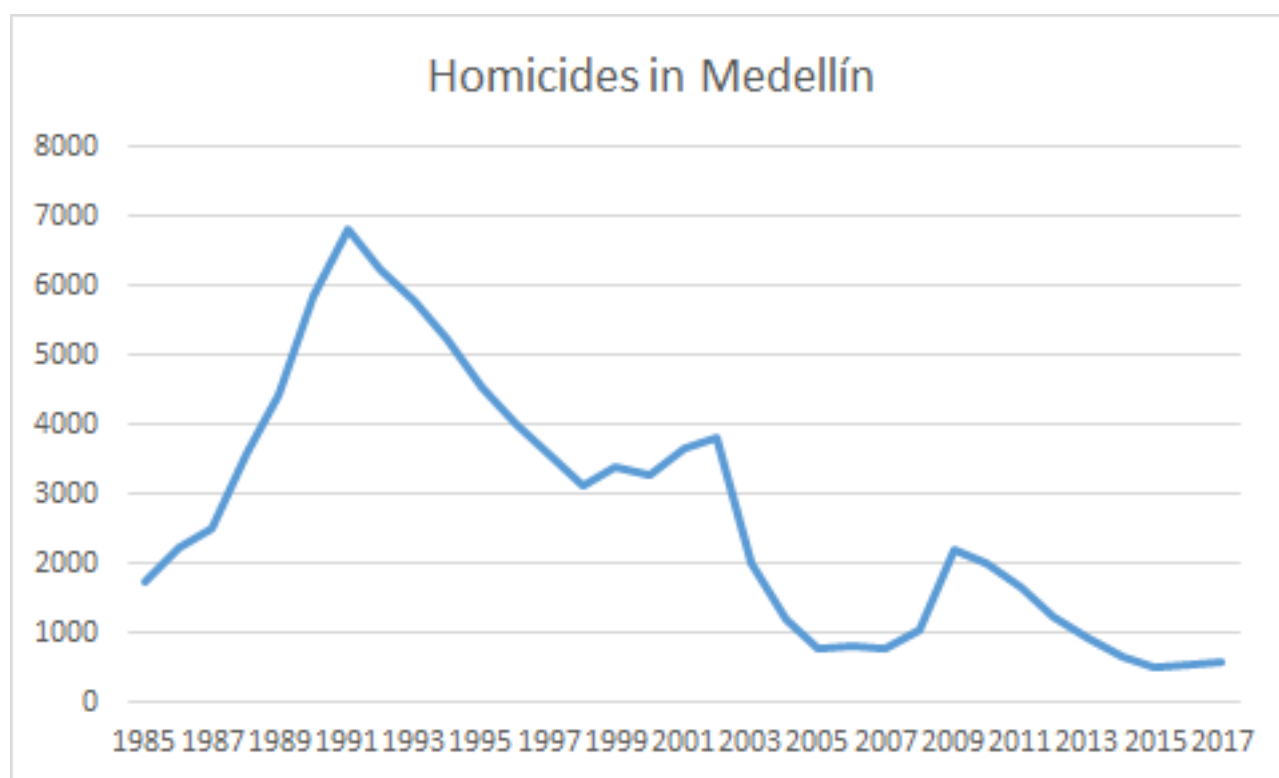
Figure 6: Total Number of homicides in Medellín, 1985-2017[72]

---

[69] As outlined in the Citizen Culture report (2016, see also, Bedoya, 2006)
[70] Homicide rates give limited insight into violence (Pearce, 2010) but I note their utility in being the most consistently used and comparable data source.
[71] The 1991 Constitution also extended far greater autonomy over city leadership, shortly after the first popular elections of Mayors in 1988 and was a ripe time for experiments over city planning and leadership.
[72] Source: http://www.scielo.org.co/img/revistas/crim/v58n2/v58n2a03g1.jpg and SISC.

Increased public spending followed, with investment in schools and educational facilities, sports and projects aimed at community building, alongside a more participatory approach to governing with consultations held across the city (Orlando Melo, 1994). Community organisations and movements started to be included in conversations with previously protectionist political elites, giving a formal voice to other actors within official political structures (Maclean, 2015: 5). This can be seen as the start in a shift in the political culture of the city, towards a very different, and inclusive, approach to improvement and reducing violence. In 1997, Medellín and Antioquia outlined a fifteen-year development plan, aiming to make the area a competitive global city with rebranding and investment in areas including tourism, public space and culture. In the following years this discussion grew and Medellín, which had always been firmly affiliated with traditional political parties, shifted away from this with the election of the *Compromiso Ciudadano* led by Sergio Fajardo in 2003. With his election the above priorities of inclusion and cultural change were further entrenched within the approach to improving the city and overcoming the continuing problems of violence.

The voices and influence of various actors were acknowledged (at least symbolically) within the city from the early 1990s. Further than this though, citizens are incorporated as core actors playing an active role in the urban transformation. The engagement and acknowledgement of a range of voices is part of a movement to foster an inclusive political culture, with citizens claiming ownership of the changes and seeing it as a change in their own mentalities and ways of thinking. This was a narrative I often heard, from within policy documents, but also in different individual narratives of the urban change, from civil servants to community organisers and the wider population. The following quotes are all from residents describing the change:

> A switch has flipped in the mind of the people. People have started to think differently. Jhon

> There are changes, but it is changes in the people, in the society. Colombian people who are building a collective conscience where the people want to say no more conflict. Mateo

> Transformation means renewal, it means change… it means changing your approach, your ideas, your way of thinking. Angela

Not only therefore had the city incorporated different voices, but the narrative of change had been accepted and internalised by various actors in the city. The change was

seen to be a change in culture, not only of the city but of the residents own ways of thinking. Cultural identity became a shared conceptual map, the meaning of how these individuals relate to the city had become one of ownership, the citizens therefore shaping the culture of the city itself (Hall, 1997). In the remainder of the chapter I probe who and what is included or conversely left out of this narrative of change. Analysing the cultural change, and specifically Citizen Culture, with an emphasis on gender aims to consider how such change has been understood, and its limits within ongoing cultural boundaries.

4.4 Citizen Culture: exploring an innovative pedagogical approach to urban governance

Tying the ideas covered above together, the idea of Citizen Culture contains a specific civic responsibility and an attempt to include everyone within the broader urban community. Citizen Culture sees the implementation of specific cultural norms as part of the government's strategy to improve and transform the city. During his time as Mayor of Colombia's capital city, Bogotá, from 1995,[73] Antanas Mockus pioneered a new emphasis in local government. Previously an academic and rector at the national university in Bogotá, Mockus denounced traditional politics and political parties, and broadened the role of the state. He aimed to increase the remit for the relationship between the state and wider society, seeing the state's role as one that should actively intervene in understandings of culture. He has since written:

> As mayor I felt that I assumed a fascinating pedagogical task… I decided to confront the culture of the city, its languages, perceptions, customs, clichés and especially people's excuses… The term "citizenship culture" reflects our efforts to strengthen and harmonize the three regulatory systems of human behaviour: law, morality and culture (Mockus, 2012: 144-145).

Mockus proposes the alignment of moral and cultural norms, with the legal frameworks and laws, but not recognising that these are never separate rather that laws, morality and cultures are always intertwined. The approach responded to and aimed to challenge the problematic elements of Colombia's political culture, namely a strong distrust of those in power and a prioritisation of individual survival and personal well-being rather than collective welfare (Berney, 2011). In Citizen Culture, Mockus addressed the crisis of distrust of politics, reacting to demands for transparency emerging from corruption scandals and the long-held power of a small political elite. It

---

[73] Mockus was first elected as Mayor between 1995-1997 and become Mayor again between 2001-2003.

therefore aimed to build democratic principles and participation through an emphasis upon transparency and efficiency within the government (Hunt, 2015).

Bogotá appeared to escape from the worst moments of violence of both the civil conflict and drug trafficking networks, even when such violence moved to urban areas, for example in Medellín and Cali. However, it was not completely unscathed. Multiple forms of violence impacted the city, which as with many Latin American cities, is vastly unequal and divided (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). Through framing the problem as one of a problematic culture, Citizen Culture became the solution. It is a multifaceted concept, including an innovative crime reduction policy that suggests that the state is unable to improve security without challenging a so-called culture of violence and distrust in society[74] (Stacey, 2015). The state's pedagogical role was emphasised, teaching individuals to be 'better' citizens and shifting the onus for change and improvements towards individuals.

The implementation of Citizen Culture in Bogotá used unorthodox means. One example of this was the use of mimes to encourage better adherence to traffic laws. Mimes would mock those who failed to follow traffic laws at crossroads, ridiculing drivers who didn't stop at pedestrian crossings and holding large thumbs-up/thumbs-down cards for all to see, clearly displaying approval or disapproval of the behaviour of citizens. When speaking about the use of mimes Mockus stated: "With neither words nor weapons, the mimes were doubly unarmed. My goal was to show the importance of cultural regulations" (Caballero, 2004). The government innovated with public investment to promote social and artistic activism in ways that aimed to perpetuate certain cultural norms, as part of a different approach that also built trust and a new relationship with those in government.

Attempting to improve the political culture within the city, Mockus therefore encouraged citizens to follow the city's laws. He saw the use of violence as a departure from the laws, suggesting that violence could be reduced through shifts in perceptions and cultural norms. Disagreements could be resolved peacefully if the laws were followed and respected by all. Mockus emphasised the role of public space as the site where strangers interact in the city (Tubb, 2013); in targeting public space he aimed to improve *convivencia*, or coexistence, and the notion of sharing such space peacefully.[75]

---

[74] Such an approach to violence and security is reminiscent of the public health model, whereby a transformation of social norms, education and welfare are prioritised. However, this has been critiqued for obscuring structural causes (See for example, Mitton, 2019).

[75] This narrative overlooks major critiques of the Mockus approach. He was also for instance strongly criticised for the violent measures that such controls in public space often included, for instance the relocation of informal street vendors (Berney, 2011).

Significantly, Citizen Culture was intended to foster the idea of the shared responsibility over the urban space, seeing behaviour in public space as directly linked to broader urban trends and the city's image (Mockus, 2012; Moncada, 2013). In doing so, Citizen Culture combines "cultural engineering and the creation of an 'urban-citizen culture'" (Gutiérrez Sanín *et al.*, 2009: 2), as a top-down approach to governance that defines what that culture *should* be. The approach taken by Mockus in Bogotá has been largely celebrated, despite its lack of engagement with strongly entrenched inequalities in the city. The approach has been celebrated for changing perceptions in, and of, the city (Hunt, 2015) and Mockus has been praised for innovating with cultural agency and putting "culture to work" (Sommer, 2006). As he encouraged (2012) his approach has been adopted by other Colombian cities including Baranquilla, Pereira and Medellín, as well as further across Latin America and beyond (see for example, Correa and Acevedo, 2007).

The exact approach and implementation of the concept of Citizen Culture varies according to each city and government. Despite Medellín's tendency to have a stronger affiliation with traditional politics, the city followed in Bogotá's footsteps (although over a decade later) in 2003, electing Sergio Fajardo, another academic with no previous experience in traditional politics, as Mayor. Following his election, he too adopted the concept of *Cultura Ciudadana* for Medellín, drawing upon many of the themes and policies from Bogotá. In a summary of Fajardo's Mayorship entitled "From Fear to Hope" a culture of distrust and distance between institutions and communities is highlighted, stating that:

> The way to build trust in Medellín is through a style of government that is transparent and close to the citizens, it is the principal of Citizen Culture. From this emerges the willingness of people to become co-responsible, to comply with the rules with conviction, to appropriate the public both in its physical form and in politics, and to regain faith in participation and transparency.
>
> (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2008)

Here, the core aims underpinning Medellín's conceptualisation of the Citizen Culture approach are defined as co-responsibility over the city and active citizenship, where each and every citizen contributes to the construction of an improved urban space. Following a crisis of political legitimacy, just as with Mockus, the government of Medellín wanted to develop its relationships between the citizens and institutions. Co-responsibility and an emphasis upon a sort of contract between the government and the governed therefore becomes a key element of Citizen Culture present from Mockus through to its adoption in Medellín.

As part of the suggested change in culture, Citizen Culture shifts the responsibility of security to individuals (Hunt, 2009), seeing violence as an outcome of problematic cultural norms. Carlos, the leader of one of the central programmes within the department for Citizen Culture reported that a significant problem in Medellín is that disputes can intensify quickly. A disagreement with a neighbour about something as benign as a failure to clean up after your pet can escalate to physical violence, he reported, in some cases, even ending in homicides. He saw a reliance on violence in problem-solving, that emerged from both anger and a lack of responsibility. Citizen Culture could address such problematic cultures and instead promote and build tolerance in order for citizens to coexist peacefully (Rivas Gamboa, 2005). According to the department of Citizen Culture, an ideal society is a "normative vision of a city where conflict is peacefully resolved, the law is respected, agreements are respected, victimization levels are low and public goods are valued" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 17); improved security, as in Bogotá is at the core of Medellín's vision of Citizen Culture (Hunt, 2015).

Citizen Culture has remained as a core commitment of subsequent mayors in Medellín since Fajardo. At the end of Alonso Salazar's time as Mayor in 2011 a report detailing the successes of the government policy claimed: "Medellín is now a dynamic city, with an amazing transformation that is recognised across the world. It is a transformation that is evident in its' architecture, and additionally, less visibly but equally importantly, in its culture" (2011: 13). The pride in this cultural change is therefore central to the presentation of the city and its urban transformation. Citizen Culture has remained a core strategy in Medellín; as mentioned the 2016-2019 administration include it as one of seven core strategies of development in the present development plan (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016) and a popular hashtag for the Mayor of this period, Federico Gutiérrez, is #creemosenlaculturaciudadana, or 'we believe in Citizen Culture'.[76]

In order to assess Medellín's approach to Citizen Culture in more detail, I assess the report published by the department of Citizen Culture entitled "Challenges and Opportunities of Citizen Culture in Medellín" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015). This is a biannual report from the Citizen Culture department, charting the reception and impact of Citizen Culture initiatives within the city through a consideration of various indicators including mobility, participation, trust, security and corruption. Recognising this document as a product of the institutional everyday, I acknowledge the negotiations and tensions at play as the key ideas circulate and

---

[76] For example;
https://www.facebook.com/FicoGutierrez/videos/vb.241499431662/10154194001931663/?type=2&theater

develop. The report also details the theoretical underpinnings of the idea of Citizen Culture and some of the key myths and challenges inherent to this work, making it a key document through which to assess the presentation of their approach to Citizen Culture and urban planning. The department for Citizen Culture describes the approach as encompassing both a vision of an ideal society, and a tool for measurement (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015); it therefore helps both in the planning of the future direction of the city, but also in monitoring changes within it. Carlos, the project lead within the Citizen Culture department, described the job of his office as ensuring:

> basically that [we follow] the rules of the game, in the formal and informal institutions… the interpersonal relations in the city. Within the agenda of Citizen Culture is seeing how we are able to accompany, promote and build our institutions to help with *convivencia* (coexistence).

In accordance with the outlined dual function of Citizen Culture, I first consider the vision it presents for the 'ideal society', before moving on to analyse the way it monitors the implementation and spread of the concept.

4.5 Constructing the ideal citizen

At the heart of Citizen Culture is an understanding that engaged, improved citizens will advance the city as a whole. However, these terms can be interpreted in different ways, and as such it is important to consider what exactly this 'ideal' citizen looks like, and how the norms are being promoted. The Citizen Culture department's 2015 report draws upon Bicchieri's social norm theory. The theory relates to the expectations placed upon others within the stated reference group, where individuals prefer to conform to norms that they believe most people within their network adhere to (Bicchieri, 2006). Through Citizen Culture the government are aiming to operationalise the premise of conforming, by shaping the norms to be followed by the city dwellers.

Citizen Culture is seen as divisible from, although complementary to, culture on a broader scale; it is seen to be the furthering of a distinct political culture through "transforming the narratives and cultural codes, these are not objective facts intrinsically true or false, good or bad, but rather depend on social practices and our symbolic construction around them" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 17). As with social norm theory, they aim to shape norms and practices to suit a particular idea of citizenship[77] seeing these as changeable and consequently susceptible

---

[77] The use of the term Citizen or Citizenship is not fully defined in the document, although there are references to promoting the values and recognition of diversity and multicultural character of the city's inhabitants which

to being moulded. Rather than incorporating and including a range of voices, as part of a participatory or redistributive conversation, the government dictates a precise political culture. Citizen Culture consequently resembles social, or cultural engineering, with a narrow set of norms that are believed to improve individual behaviour and ultimately social cohesion. While the malleability of the human condition is noted here and is a central component in working towards transformative change, the direction of such change is top-down as it is fixed in place by the government.

Despite the prescriptive conception of an ideal citizen, the *Alcaldía* also foster an idea of intimacy and inclusivity, exemplified in Mayor Federico Gutiérrez's, campaign slogan, *Cuenta con Vos*, or 'counting on you'. '*Vos'* is an alternate form for the informal 'you' therefore connoting familiarity. It is found in various regions of Latin America and is commonly used across Antioquia. In employing a slogan particularly familiar to *paisas*, it demarcates a unifying marker within Medellín, including every citizen, as every resident of the city[78] and breaking down boundaries within the urban area, including between the state and the wider population (Weyers, 2016). Travelling around the city I often saw the words *Cuenta con Vos*. They appear on billboards, on traffic furniture, in leaflets, on information boards, social media posts and on a multitude of government documents including the title of the 2016-2019 urban development plan. This group identity is portrayed consistently, assuming belonging and commitment of the citizens who identify with it, acting as a cue to reinforce the message of a shared cultural narrative.

The extension of Citizen Culture in this way not only shapes boundaries for inclusion within the urban community, it does so while simultaneously individualising citizens; placing the onus on the individual for learning to share space and cohabit peacefully and internalising the responsibility for change. In the slogan *Cuenta con Vos*, the government directly states its reliance on 'you', on each individual citizen while reiterating an intimacy and familiarity between the government and the people that challenges a separation of 'high politics'. The dual focus on individualism, and more transparent and relatable governments are exemplary of Medellín's neoliberal approach to development and governance in the city. As introduced in chapter one, neoliberalism refers to the dominant global economic model, which primarily claims that societal advancement requires free markets, free trade, and private property rights; the position of the state within this framework is to facilitate the smooth free-running of markets (Harvey,

---

suggests that they use the term in an inclusive way and that it is an automatic status for all residents. A similar emphasis upon inclusion and Citizenship also emerged within the country's 1991 Constitution.

[78] Weyers suggests that the written inclusion of the colloquial vos, moving from its predominantly verbal usage, connects to the transformation of Medellín as the city's "linguistic norm... may likely enjoy increased prestige as a marker of its enhanced standing" (2016: 69)

2005; Peck, 2012). When considering Citizen Culture and the idea of culture that is being promoted, it echoes neoliberalism through its clear emphasis on individual, rather than state, responsibilities. In the formulation and emphasis upon a city of inclusion and responsible citizens, Medellín highlights its position as a viable investment opportunity, distancing itself from the unreliable conditions that caused economic stagnation, and recognising that "social exclusion, particularly when it is associated with the levels of violence observed in Medellín, undermines a city's ability to attract investment" (Maclean, 2014: 64). The presentation of this particular cultural change is therefore seen as the best and only way to improve the city and facilitate an efficient capitalist market (Laurie and Bonnett, 2002).

The good governance agenda that is prominent within the demand for cultural change and Citizen Culture, aiming for greater transparency and efficiency within the local administration, contributes to a climate of confidence for business investment. The transformation of Medellín has brought foreign investment,[79] mass tourism and a large expatriate community of 'digital nomads'. An emphasis on the 'transnational capitalist class' has been critiqued for coming at the expense of inclusion and equality. The highest employment growth rates, according to Franz, are in low-productivity or low labour-intensive industries such as in the service sector, thus promoting a flexibilization of labour markets and the "incorporation of the city into the global capitalist market at the lower end of the value chain" (2017: 66). In practice, a growing transnational elite represents an increase in poorly paid and often informal positions such as those in the service sector, security guards and domestic workers, which also reproduce gendered roles and expectations. Tourism, even when focused within poorer neighbourhoods, similarly tends to produce poorly paid, unstable and informal employment, as explored further in chapter six.

Within this market-led context, Citizen Culture also shifts responsibility for problems such as violence from the state, to the residents. In addition to the hint of this in the *Cuenta con Vos* slogan, the Citizen Culture department gives more detail for this placement of responsibility:

> The interest of the government is to promote citizens co-responsibility for the
> development of the city, starting with the idea that everyone understands our
> role as citizens, where all of our actions with respect to health, caring for the
> environment, values, participation, coexistence and in general in all daily actions,

---

[79] Between 2016-2018 the city reportedly received direct foreign investments of 836.61 million US dollars through global companies including those based in Canada, China, Spain, USA and Switzerland (ACI Medellín, 2019).

impact not only the family but also school, work and other spaces in society. For this they describe the actions that develop the function of this work for changing the Citizen Culture, the means for which they can participate and the different actions of how they will construct, with all citizens, a better city (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 17-18).

Here we see how such responsibility is framed, with the designation of a defined 'role' that is supposed to be adopted by citizens. In the above quote we see the presentation of a positive narrative where embracing active citizenship is emphasised, seeing the citizens as working together to improve the urban environment.

Far from talking about ongoing inequalities or redistributive and transformative change, the responsibilities placed upon individuals privileges a discussion based upon each citizen's supposed choices for good actions (as contributors to the successful city market) or bad (with deviant behaviour outside of the formal market regulations). As Hall and O'Shea (2013: 11) outline, neoliberal ideas permeate our understandings, in this case in the framing of citizenship, ultimately adjusting and forming a neoliberal common sense. Individual change is framed as highly significant, and this idea does not only rest within the government narrative. As seen in both the official narrative and that of those living within the city, the idea of a change in culture and mentality is prioritised and internalised by residents. Here the residents take responsibility for the changes, and simultaneously place the responsibility for change in their own hands. In this way, the individualisation and responsibility of change can be seen to form the common sense for those residing within the city; it has become the shared meaning through which the environment is understood, and as such has become a cultural norm (Hall, 1997).

As is often the case with neoliberal policies, however, Citizen Culture is mostly blind to power relations within society. An individualised responsibility thus overlooks structural conditions which form each individual's experience and opportunities. Rather than seeing a nuanced society with various factors shaping the lives of each resident, the conception of cultural change is within a neutral environment, as seen in the following quote from the Urban Development Plan: "[t]he starting point is the human being, the citizen and their role in the construction of a society" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 23). Similar language is seen throughout the Citizen Culture report, with neutral citizens largely removed from structural divisions and inequalities. However, feminist scholars such as Sylvia Walby (2005: see also Pateman, 1988) have maintained that citizenship is always gendered. Access to citizenship is always influenced by gender relations and women generally have a different relationship to citizenship than men. In

fact, feminists consistently critique the concept of neutrality, insisting instead on situated knowledge and approaches, to seeing the nuance and particularity of how gender, as a logic, embodiment and structure, shape each human experience (Haraway, 1988). Masculinity studies has similarly drawn attention to the ways in which politics and especially neoliberal politics, privileges hegemonic masculine subjectivities despite using a supposedly gender-neutral rhetoric (Connell, 2000; 2005). As such, the neutral language and approach taken throughout the presentation of Citizen Culture fails to challenge gender relations and in doing so further reinforces the idea of the neutral, and therefore masculine, subject.

Supposed neutrality decontextualizes individuals and assumes equality in terms of access to citizenship (and the market) and additionally removes all context for societal problems. The citizen's role in society is said to require:

> that the people of Medellín leave aside the culture of advantageism, the lack of ethics, to acquire a greater commitment as citizens, to have a co-responsibility that allows them to recover confidence in themselves, in others and in the institutions, to follow the law in daily life and in all environments. That is why the first proposal is to transform the culture (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 23).

Here we see the critique of individual norms and actions, attributing these to problems in society. In mentioning a "culture of advantageism" and a "lack of ethics" we see a particularly forceful critique of the problematic political culture previously set out to be the target of change. There is an implication that such problems prevent an individual's full citizenship and have caused resulting difficulties in society. Contrary to critical engagement, Citizen Culture presents a prescriptive outline, dictating how individuals should behave and suggesting that it is their own cultural norms that have prevented 'the people of Medellín' from becoming full and active citizens. The suggested co-responsibility is proposed to aid not only the city but also their confidence in the government, showing that this too is the responsibility of each individual to affirm. With the allocation of the responsibility of change positioned toward the individual citizen, larger structural factors such as patriarchal societal norms, poverty and other inequalities are obscured, despite the fact that these elements have been linked frequently to violence and marginalisation (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). Notably, this approach directly contradicts the broader government narrative of tackling inequality through inclusive and participatory governance. Co-responsibility, in this sense, is about participation but is framed in a particular and limited way.

In the 2015 Citizen Culture report there are very few mentions of gender or indeed the intersecting dynamics of race, class, sexuality and others. The majority of the discussion is therefore disconnected from the social realities of residents of the city. Citizen Culture is seen as separable from culture more generally with the two key words 'culture' and 'citizen' designed to "delimit the scope of cultural policy that can be developed from the government exclusively to the field of the construction of citizenship… to think of the cultural agency only in the elements of culture that are fundamental to the construction of citizenship" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 19). Seeing citizenship in this way, as separable from all other social relations, further obscures and downplays the impact that variables such as class, race and gender may have towards an individual's willingness to define themselves as a 'citizen', and indeed the extent to which others are willing to define them in this way. For example, Natalia, a young Afro-Colombian woman, reported that "when you ride on the metro [in Medellín], as a black woman, you feel all eyes on you… It is so horrible. I feel like a stranger in my own country". Far from feeling part of the city, the continuing and normalised looks and gestures she encounters on a daily basis restricted her movements in the city as well as her feeling of belonging. The everyday microracism and sexism, as she termed it, was part and parcel of the culture of the city for her. Without seeing, or while at the least downplaying the structural dimensions that impact upon the lives and actions of citizens, the very notion of Citizen Culture is placed within an artificial environment, free from societal prejudices and inequalities, where it is assumed that residents simply need to learn to live together harmoniously. Natalia's experience, like many others in the city, is instead shaped and directed by such structural inequalities, restricting their sense of being included as citizens within the city and within its cultures.

There are exceptions to the lack of engagement with gender (and other categories) within the Citizen Culture policy that are worth exploring in more detail. However, in most cases the mention of gender appears to be without direct consequence to the rest of the discussion. For example, in the report there is an acknowledgement that "the reception of cultural production is determined by social position and reflected in variables such as gender, race or class" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 16). While this indicates that such categories are noted for their significance, it is unclear how they are integrated throughout the rest of the document, policy on Citizen Culture or research. Similar to the symbolic representations from the statues in the earlier ethnographic observations, the mention of social variables appears to be a tokenistic inclusion without real bearing on the main bulk of the decision-making or indeed the conceptualisation of Citizen Culture which I have shown to be removed from such realities. The separation is justified as the idealised society imagined by Citizen Culture is a space free of such divisions, seen in the following quote: "Citizen Culture

embodies a vision of society where... human life is valued equally and without conditions of class, gender, ethnicity or race, religion, etc." (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 55). However, while Citizen Culture may aspire to a society where such factors do not impact upon individuals lives, this is far from being the current situation. While culture is produced by, and a product of, gender, race, class and other factors, Citizen Culture is seen as independent from them, or at least striving to be so. There is no clarity on what it would mean to achieve such a society, or a consideration of how the influence of such factors may inhibit the construction of it. As a result, the engagement with these factors is extremely limited within the document, lacking any further detail, or explanation of their significance to the idea of Citizen Culture.

4.6 Measuring Citizen Culture

In the designation of the ideal citizen, there is a seeming lack of nuance and recognition of the influencing factors shaping each individual experience as a citizen. In the monitoring of Citizen Culture, the second core part of the strategy, the de-contextualised approach that is outlined in the previous section can also be observed. In the document, Citizen Culture outlines the following indicators; mobility, regulatory systems of behaviour, legal, moral and cultural norms, perceptions of the law, security, tolerance, tributary culture, community participation, confidence in public (and private) institutions, pride in the city, and life satisfaction (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015). The indicators aim to place where the citizens of Medellín sit within the markers of Citizen Culture and are also used to compare the city with others in Colombia including Bogotá.

Taking the indicators in their broadest terms, Citizen Culture, and its markers, are again seen as largely separable from factors such as economic status or differences in gender, race or class. They do not contain space for such variables, presenting them instead (and once more) as neutral, or 'technical' categories, despite the fact that many scholars have highlighted that such categories are always imbued with social divisions. Mobility, for example, the first on the list, is a highly gendered issue in planning, although often presented as being merely technical (Bondi and Rose, 2003; Fainstein and Servon, 2005; Burgess, 2008; Urban Development Vienna, 2013). Women often take distinct and what have been described as more complex journeys than men, tending to be responsible for collecting children, travelling to work and to the shops for example (Greed, 2005). As well as this, mobility closely connects to gendered experiences of security, for example in relation to public transport, and fear of sexual harassment and assault, particularly at certain times of day (Pain, 1991; Whitzman, 2007; Gardner *et al.*,

2017). Class also plays a huge role for both of these dimensions, with the higher *estratos* (5 and 6) having very different spatio-temporal patterns to poorer residents, wealthy women in Medellín for instance largely avoiding (and able to avoid) public transport and the associated risks (Levy, 2013; Lotero *et al.*, 2016; Macedo *et al.*, 2019). Having seen that these issues are largely absent in the conceptualisation of the idealised Citizen Culture it is not surprising that they are similarly lacking in the evaluation of it, but this raises further concern about the reinforced idea of neutrality presented by the government throughout.

In addition to the brief acknowledgement that gender and other factors, such as race, influence cultural production, gender does get a further, albeit limited, mention in the report (as opposed to race, class, religion and other influencing factors mentioned). In a fairly exhaustive list of over fifty indicators designed to measure the impact of Citizen Culture, only one directly acknowledges a gender dimension. Within the wider theme of security this is the category measuring intra-family violence with the qualification that it is part of the "rejection of mistreatment of women and children" (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 55). Here we see the recognition of specific and gendered security concerns, and women as disproportionately affected by such violence. However, this is seen as only an indicator of outcomes, without clear incorporation within the planning and conceptual framing of Citizen Culture that is presented in the report. As a result, it is unclear how the extension of Citizen Culture will lead to a reduction in such violence,[80] without the integration of gender throughout the policy, planning and decision-making.

A fundamental limitation in the presentation of Citizen Culture thus emerges. By making citizen's responsible for their own security, by instilling values and changing mentalities, it is assumed that there will be a general reduction in overall violence. However, the approach fails to explore and critically engage with societal inequalities and the influences for instance of the patriarchal societal organisation or of differences in class or race in the planning of such a concept. It is optimistic, but also unrealistic, to expect all of these barriers and inequalities to fade away behind a general and overriding focus on improving civic pride and responsibility. Within the constraints of neutral terminology, Citizen Culture cannot disrupt the patriarchal, conservative cultural norms which continue to define the city.

---

[80] In practice the Citizen Culture department does have some limited policies relating gender which will be discussed in the next chapter, in the policy documents these are not mentioned and are not central parts to the Citizen Culture project, rather being individually-led pilot projects.

An example of deeper engagement with gender and its influences on cultural norms can be seen in the evaluation of the construction of culture, with a clear acknowledgment of the impact of broader factors on cultural attitudes. In an outline of the findings of a qualitative investigation that seeks to better understand the social phenomena at play within the idea of Citizen Culture there is a hint of consideration of societal divisions and organisation as a factor which may influence the indicators:

> The results invite us to re-evaluate a purely individual approach aimed at the incorporation of certain 'values' or 'attitudes' and seek to incorporate elements related to the construction of collective imaginaries and the perceptions we have of the issues in the social environments in which we live.
>
> (Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín, 2015: 44)

This is also the one occasion within the report where we see a deeper understanding of the impact of gender not just as an outcome of Citizen Culture but also as an influencing factor underpinning cultural norms. Contrary to the observed presentation of the neutral subject, the above suggests a need to go beyond an individual approach. The above quote is followed in a footnote stating that:

> Some of the qualitative information collected shows, for example, that in some groups of young men, the willingness to transgress norms, and sometimes the willingness to break the law is not a matter of material necessity… but a matter of status and social recognition. Elements related to specific forms of gender identity appeared as factors associated with the said social representations.
>
> (ibid: 44)

Here we see that social environments, and particularly gender, are recognised for their role in shaping cultural values, with a recognition that gender can impact upon our acceptance of social norms, seen in the example of certain male gendered subjects.

Where gender-sensitive policies often assume that gender only relates to women, here differentiated gender identities are acknowledged. It shows a recognition of particular expressions of gendered subjectivities, specifically in this case of young men, shape our understandings of norms and laws. While this crucial point contradicts some of the critiques I have made above and indicates a more meaningful consideration of gender relations, it is only mentioned within a footnote, showing its marginal place within the wider discussion of Citizen Culture. This is perhaps exemplary of the tensions found by those formulating such policy, which of course isn't solely text but also a production demonstrative of the way that policies are formulated and approached by those within

government, often negotiating different approaches and political aims (explored further in chapter five).

4.7 Conclusion

Assessing the framing of Medellín's transformation as a cultural change is important as cultural norms are integral to gender inequalities. As such Medellín's approach to urban development, placing cultural change at the centre provides an opportunity for transformative change. The narrative and aim of cultural change underpins all other changes in the city. Through assessing Medellín's Citizen Culture department and some of their policies, I highlight this as one of the key threads running through Social Urbanism where understandings of the impact of culture are explored and emphasised. Despite the language and presentation of this cultural change being for all, the policy largely overlooks the social realities of city dwellers, resulting in severe limits. Through making the environment in which they approach Citizen Culture 'neutral' and separating a form of culture solely related to citizenship, the approach devalues the influence of a wide range of factors on how cultural norms are understood, in addition to how individuals respond to the very concept of citizenship.

While the city, in some ways, aims to rebalance historic inequalities in who is considered and represented within the urban imaginary, the policy of Citizen Culture does not acknowledge and incorporate existing imbalances. There is a false creation of a society without inequalities in which to foster Citizen Culture, and the language used throughout the conceptualisation of the term presents the citizens as neutral subjects, despite supposed neutrality generally referring to the male and masculine (Jones, 1993). From the start the Citizen Culture approach is not seen to engage in any meaningful or transformative way with patriarchal structures or unequal gender relations. While the optimistic message of a world without such inequalities is seen to justify this neutrality, such divisions and inequalities must be acknowledged and addressed throughout policy making in order to hope to reach such a state.

Despite an inclusive and at times participatory narrative, the Citizen Culture policy shows prescriptive ideas of becoming a 'good citizen', and of what is seen to be negative behaviour. The internalisation of what is termed a 'co-responsibility' over the city ends up being more of an individualised allocation of responsibility and blame for problems in the city, without a concurrent analysis of the symbolic and structural violences that are deeply embedded within direct violence (as explored in chapter seven). It implies an understanding that societal problems are merely a failure to adhere to the expectation

of the ideal citizen. The individualisation within this approach[81] shows how the cultural 'transformation' is rooted within neoliberal structures, prioritising the individual choice and required roles that support and facilitate the supremacy of the market. While this in itself questions the potential for transformative change, it provides a palatable approach that reflects competing tensions and perspectives within the institutional everyday. However, the conservative and patriarchal norms and values commonly associated with the city remain unchallenged, and ultimately Citizen Culture and the wider cultural transformation avoids any confrontation with regards to challenging inequality, gender and otherwise.

Citizen Culture is an intriguing focus of urban development, and one with potential for the transformative change I outlined in chapter one. However, the limitations I show here indicate that despite its innovative character, it cannot transform without tackling social inequalities including, but not limited to, gender relations. The Citizen Culture policy therefore falls short in providing a gender-sensitive approach, but it is also only one department within the *Alcaldía*, and culture has significance beyond this department, both within the government and outside of it. If Citizen Culture does not tackle the ways in which the underpinning cultural norms are gendered, it is important to also consider whether the broader urban institutions and the public space they intervene in, and produce, also contain the same unquestioned gender norms. Having seen Citizen Culture as a key and innovative policy, I move in chapter five to consider the urban development policy more broadly, examining both formal and informal institutional cultures within Medellín.

---

[81] Similarly seen in the country's peace process, there have been suggestions that peace can be secured from within each person (for example: https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-15695755).

Chapter 5

Gender mainstreaming within Medellín's *Alcaldía*

One evening as the sun was setting over Medellín, I stood waiting for the metro at San Javier station, travelling towards the city centre. The train pulled in and I waited as everyone shuffled past and dispersed in various directions at the final stop on the line. After boarding the newly emptied carriage, I stood by the door, waiting for departure as people ran along the station to jump aboard. The doors eventually closed, and the metro chugged away from the station. As I glanced around the carriage, I was met with images of semi-naked women in adverts covering every wall of the interior. The advertisements were for padded underwear, bras and knickers designed to enhance women's bodies, sculpting and enlarging their curves, thus reinforcing gendered and racialized beauty aesthetics[82] (Morgan, 2005). As I stood among the various images of near-nude women, the familiar tannoy announcement, pre-recorded and often repeated on this line of the metro blasted out, stating: "*En el Metro respetamos a las mujeres. Tengamos con ellas un trato cordial y delicado. No excedamos nunca los límites*" (In the Metro we respect women. Let's treat them in a friendly and courteous manner. We should never cross the line). The paradox of this moment, the assertion of respecting women, alongside the adverts promoting a limited female body type and an aesthetic which runs parallel to a broader objectification of women, was striking.

The Metro relay and repeat their message of respect for women on most journeys. The prominence of such a message is promising, but that week the same department had accepted advertising revenue that promoted a very different message. The tannoy announcement always intrigued me, especially as the Metro in Medellín is generally considered to be a safe space, particularly in comparison with other public transport systems where women tend to be vulnerable to harassment, an example being the Transmilenio in Bogotá which is notorious for sexual assaults.[83] Similar to Citizen Culture, there is a suggestion of a communal responsibility to respect boundaries and limits with respect to female passengers. However, in the juxtaposing messages, I saw an inconsistency in the approach to gender equality across the *Alcaldía*. The types of

---

[82] The beauty standards in Medellín have wide-ranging consequences. Plastic surgery for instance is common, often through the black market with disastrous consequences – several women each year die as a result of dangerous plastic surgery, a devastating example is documented in the podcast Radio Ambulante: https://radioambulante.org/audio/doctor-esto-es-nomal-parte-2.

[83] The Transmilenio is the large-scale bus transport system in Bogotá. The comparison of the two transport systems was often used to compare the two cities, particularly in reference to the safety of women. Sexual harassment and assault was common on the Transmilenio, especially in comparison to the Metro in Medellín. Sexual assault on Bogotá's Transmilenio is also formally prioritised as a concern by the Presidential Observatorio de Asuntos de Género (2015)

advertising chosen within the government-run transport system have significance, and the seemingly unthinking inclusion of these advertisements in a space managed and maintained by the government drew attention to the acceptance of norms that are intertwined with gendered expectations and inequalities. The contradictions between the gender equality message and the advertising images drew attention to the continuation of gendered logics present within the institution and city. Relating primarily to my research question concerning how and whether gender relations are included or acknowledged in the urban development plan in Medellín, this chapter considers how such a juxtaposition relates to questions of political power, and the relationships between communities and institutions.

Medellín's methods of governance are widely celebrated as innovative and progressive approaches to planning and managing a challenging urban environment (Brand and Dávila, 2011; Maclean, 2015). In acknowledging institutions, such as the *Alcaldía*, as significant sites that reflect and (re)produce gender norms (Mackay and Krook, 2011; Kenny, 2014), they also become key sites of potential change and transformation. Considering how gender is framed within Medellín's *Alcaldía*[84] is, therefore, of vital importance when thinking about the case of urban change. In chapter four, I have shown the limitations of the incorporation of gender within the Citizen Culture policy, despite the fact that Medellín's government champions their incorporation of gender mainstreaming across all of its work. In this chapter I assess the construction and practice of gender mainstreaming policy across the *Alcaldía* more broadly. Drawing upon policy analysis and interviews from across the local government, I show that despite the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming, there is a fragmented incorporation of gender and a continued separation of gender as a particular concern generally left to sympathetic individuals and 'gender experts'. In capturing individual interpretations of gender from a range of interviews, I note how the incorporation of gender-sensitive policy and planning is thus individual, as opposed to institutional. Three key challenges emerge within Medellín's gender mainstreaming approach: (i) the dissemination and integration of what remains as expert knowledge, (ii) the difficulty in bringing about structural and cultural criticisms of gender relations, (iii) the need to further incorporate complex, critical and intersectional approaches to gender.

Gender mainstreaming should challenge and aim to fundamentally transform the gendered dynamics of institutions (Young, 1997; Chant and Gutmann, 2000), and eventually, the societies they are within. Initially, this chapter explores how gender

---

[84] I focused on the *Alcaldía* as the institution that is emphasised for leading the urban change. I was not able to look at other institutions across the city such as the *personería* or the *defensoria del pueblo* in this research project but recognise that such institutions also influence the city and its politics.

mainstreaming has developed and become increasingly common parlance across a variety of institutions, globally. Charting the international trends of incorporating gender allows for a better understanding of the context of including gender in policymaking in Medellín. In addition to the response to global trends, I explore how local demands from divergent actors and institutions have also both encouraged and restricted the inclusion of gender sensitive priorities and progressive gender politics. Such tensions highlight Medellín's institutions as multifaceted and often contradictory spaces. From the basis of the institutional and societal context I consider the framing and placement of gender within the 2016-2019 development plan, as a key document laying out and shaping the institutional priorities and policies of the *Alcaldía* during this period. After setting out the official rhetoric, I turn to consider those who shape and make such policy. Thinking about such policy as a product of the various practices and negotiations within diverse spaces across the municipal government, I look to some of the spaces themselves to shed further light on those processes and positions. Drawing upon interviews with numerous civil servants from across the *Alcaldía*, I consider how gender mainstreaming translates into practice. By emphasising the tensions, difficulties and conflicts of interest which play a role in the implementation of a gender focus across the administration, this chapter draws attention to the challenges faced by the process of gender mainstreaming and, ultimately, the integration of gender within the urban transformation.

5.1 Mainstreaming gender in gendered institutions

The inclusion of gender within Medellín's government, while relatively recent, is part of a broader trend of 'doing gender' at a global scale. The language of gender is commonplace within institutions at all levels, from local to global (True, 2010) spanning everything from local councils and NGOs, to international bodies such as the United Nations. An integration of gender has been a particular interest within development studies and from the 1970s academics and activists have pushed for consideration and recognition of the role of women within government and development agendas (Pearson, 2005).[85] The dominant discussions and trends in research and practice of how best to achieve this have shifted over time. Where women had been overlooked in development, Women in Development (WID, rooted in liberal feminism) emphasised the need to integrate women into existing policies (Singh, 2006), highlighting their potential economic role as previously untapped productive resources (Boserup, 1986). Within the early debates, WID led demands to move away from gender-blind approaches, calling for measures including the disaggregation of data, of programmes

---

[85] Within Colombia, feminists and women's movements have been participating in development planning from the mid-1980's (Murdock, 2008; Escobar, 2011).

that prioritised women, and an analysis of barriers specifically affecting women (Miller and Razavi, 1995; Pearson, 2005).

In the 1980s, following critiques of the oversimplification and reduction of women's roles and work, the conversation developed from an emphasis on 'women' to 'gender', moving to the language of Gender and Development (GAD).[86] Pushing for a more holistic analysis of the impact of gender relations in all aspects of life, GAD emphasised the constructed nature of gender, seeing how gendered social relations influence both women *and* men throughout the various dimensions of their lives (Young, 1997; Pearson, 2005). GAD begins with the patriarchy, with a holistic approach to gender inequality that calls for broad social, political and economic changes (Chant and Gutmann, 2000). However, in the extensive adoption of gender speak, it is employed with differing emphases, ranging from the recognition of challenges related to gendered divisions of labour to demands for broader structural change. Despite the shift to a language of gender, approaches frequently revert back to the premise of WID, with gender often being synonymous with women (Reeves and Baden, 2000), and lacking discussions of feminism and structural inequalities (Smyth, 2007). Murdock (2003) considered the question of the gender perspective in the context of Medellín during her ethnographic research between 1998 and 2000. She found that gender speak within the neoliberal economic context in fact threatened a reinforcement of essentialist understandings of gender and women's roles, reassociating women with their children and families. As a result, the shift to gender was seen to "move around feminism" within a neoliberal context that was hostile to subversive feminist politics. Such a dynamic remains significant in Medellín, as I show that the gender predominantly returns to a binary of discussion of women and (occasionally) men, achieving some of the early demands of WID but struggling to incorporate politicised and transformative policies.

As GAD gained prominence in a range of national and international organisations, there was a consequent demand to mainstream gender throughout policy and practice. In the 1997 report of the Economic and Social Council, the UN define gender mainstreaming as follows:

> Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as

---

[86] An earlier critique was brought by the approach of Women *and* Development (WAD). This emerged from Marxist feminist perspectives and was influenced by Dependency Theory, understanding women as already being embedded within logics of capitalist accumulation (Rathgeber, 1990) and encouraging self-sufficiency (Singh, 2006). However, WAD was criticised for still neglecting the implications and inequalities relating to patriarchal structures, and the concurrent power imbalances between men and women (Rathgeber, 1990).

well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

(United Nations, 1997, in Sweetman 2012, 389)

The inclusion and attention given to gender throughout all planning, policy and legislation is transformative in scope, recognising and challenging the gendered organisation of society and attempting to overcome this throughout policy decision-making and practice; within gender mainstreaming "the ultimate aim became 'transforming gender relations'" (Debusscher, 2014: 182). However, as the UN definition exemplifies, it is difficult to ascertain what gender mainstreaming means in practice, as it speaks in very general terms. Theoretically, making gender a priority in policy-making would challenge the idea that so-called 'women's issues' are individual (and usually women's) responsibilities (Wittman, 2010), but what does a programme that benefits women and men equally look like? And how can such a policy be designed given the distinctions between different women (and men), returning to my conceptualisation of gender (as discussed in chapter two) and thinking through the problem intersectionally?

Despite such uncertainty, gender mainstreaming has gained significant traction. In addition to international institutions such as NATO and the World Bank, it has also been adopted within urban development agendas and cities around the world. Medellín, has followed the international trend, locating their inclusion of gender within the seventeen UN Sustainable Development goals.[87] Within urban planning gender mainstreaming across policies has called for recognition that the built environment must accommodate differentiated experiences of urban space according to gender (and other factors) (Damyanovic, 2016), in addition to challenging the gendered norms and values that contribute to inequalities both within institutions and the city itself (Fainstein and Servon, 2005).

Despite the potential within the concept, mainstreaming has faced much criticism for its lack of impact. Within the aforementioned institutions, including urban planning, the limits and contradictions of mainstreaming have been highlighted (Greed, 2005; Cornwall *et al.*, 2008; Debusscher, 2014; Coburn, 2019). Rather than having a fixed meaning, the interpretation of gender, as with other so-called buzzwords, differs widely according to who is using it (Cornwall and Brock, 2006; Cornwall, 2007a), at times

---

[87] Gender equality is the fifth of the seventeen goals (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org).

rendering it almost meaningless; Subrahmaniam (2007) asserts that mainstreaming is the fundamental GAD buzzword. In policy, some use gender from an underlying basis of transformative feminist goals and commitments, while others employ the term in a less politicised manner, making the concept of gender equality more palatable to mainstream actors. It is therefore important to consider how gender is understood within particular institutional contexts (Stratigaki, 2005). Far from radical change to institutions and societies, the way of talking about gender within policy is often "disconnected from political and structural realities, and alternative or radical ideas are diluted and neutralised" (Utting, 2006: 4). Verloo (2005), for instance, found that in practice mainstreaming tended to move towards technocratic understandings of gender, but for transformative change there is a need to keep gender complex (Hagen, 2019).

Part of the problem attributed to the debate surrounding integration is that it fails to consider the ways in which institutions are always underpinned by unequal and gendered norms, as well as other forms of social exclusion such as class and race (Sandler and Rao, 2012; Kenny, 2014). Shepherd argues that "'[i]ntegrating' gender allows for a narrative premised on the notion that gender is not inherent in the organizational logics of the discursive terrain that constitutes social/political reality" (2008: 164). As a result, the potential for implementing mainstreaming is limited by patriarchal norms and structures (Allwood, 2013; Kenny, 2014), and complicated by the need for gender mainstreaming that accounts for other complex structural inequalities (Walby, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Returning to the discussion in chapter four, Medellín's patriarchal culture must therefore be addressed within mainstreaming, rather than merely having policy designed to integrate women within unequal structures.

Feminist struggles have long involved engagement with institutions (Prügl, 2011) as sites of potential influence and change. Despite this, institutions are inherently gendered, as such influencing gender norms and roles (Cockburn, 1983; Kenny, 2014). As outlined in chapter two, rather than seeing a gender analysis as just 'adding women', I frame gender as a category, referring to the socially constructed identities and values attached to the 'masculine' and 'feminine'. In addition, gender is a process, referring to the "behaviours, conventions, practices, and dynamics engaged in by individuals, organizations, movements, institutions and nations" (Beckwith, 2005: 132). An understanding of gender as a category and a process prompts an interrogation of the practices and meanings employed within institutions. Institutions have a role in producing gendered subjects, but also in the logics shaping political practice, leading to particular gendered outcomes. As such, the broader understandings of gender are

implicated within an institutions policies and practices. MacKay et al. explain that "to say that an institution is gendered means that constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily culture or 'logic' of political institutions" (2011: 25). These constructions are implicated in gendered relations within wider society, and just as institutions are gendered, gender relations are also institutionalised; institutions are both products of, and illustrative of, their broader environments (Kenny and Mackay, 2009). In Colombia, as elsewhere, gender relations therefore go beyond official policy, permeating "informal relations and political interactions" that are often key to decision-making (Domingo and Menocal, 2015: 35).

However, despite both formal and informal institutions being gendered, they are seen not as fixed entities but rather variable and therefore theoretically open to change (Mackay and Krook, 2011). Rather than seeing institutions and their approaches to mainstreaming as irredeemable, I note that both have brought gender relations to the forefront of a whole host of policies and that gender mainstreaming consequently has potential to be reclaimed as a feminist tool (Walby, 2005; Allwood, 2013). When considering examples from Medellín's policies and practice, Jahan's (1995) identification of mainstreaming as either integrationist or agenda-setting is particularly useful. Within earlier (predominantly WID) frameworks mainstreaming highlighted the integration of women into existing development frameworks, seeing women as a marginalised group who needed to be 'added in'. In contrast, agenda-setting mainstreaming emerges from a baseline analysis of gender inequalities and relations, as they intersect with for instance race and class, going beyond an essentialist understanding of 'men' and 'women'.

With an intersectional understanding at its heart, agenda-setting mainstreaming is located in difference (Crenshaw, 1991; Walby, 2005), as well as recognising the significance of specific local contexts, and how gender works and is expressed within them (Wittman, 2010; Zalewski, 2010). Agenda-setting can therefore be a more transformative mainstreaming approach involving the horizontal inclusion of gender and spreading an awareness of gender across institutions (Woodward, 2008). The distinction between integrationist and agenda-setting mainstreaming will therefore be significant in assessing the inclusion of gender within Medellín's policies. While an integrationist approach has been commonly seen and has brought some positive advances, a combination of this *and* agenda-setting mainstreaming is required for the kind of fundamental change the initial proponents of mainstreaming strived for (Porter and Sweetman, 2005). Debates surrounding gender, and gender mainstreaming, have a lot at stake and the conceptualisation and implementation of the process of mainstreaming is complex and contested. Bringing this together with a recognition of

the gendered dynamics of institutions, in the following I discuss the implications of the interpretation and implementation of gender-sensitive policies in Medellín.

5.2 Gender mainstreaming in Medellín

Within Colombia the inclusion of gender and gender mainstreaming has developed over a period of years, alongside the wider global shift. As mentioned in chapter one, the 1991 Constitution was a key moment in Colombia's political trajectory, altering the official recognition of who were considered to be legitimate political actors and including a formal recognition of the rights of traditionally marginalised groups. It included guarantees of rights for indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians as well as legislation specifically affecting women including the legal equality of men and women and legislation against sexist discrimination[88] (Murdock, 2008). The constitutional change followed the incorporation of CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women)[89] in Colombian legislature, ratified in Law 51 in 1982. International pressures and agreements have influenced the recognition and incorporation of gender issues in Colombia, and the country has been celebrated for its inclusion of an *enfoque de género* (gender focus) in its peace talks and final accords agreed in 2016.[90] It is not only at a national level however that such policy is included. Legislation furthering women's rights has been slowly expanded and a directive in January 2012 transferred some responsibilities to municipal areas, with the inclusion of women's rights becoming a requirement within the development plans of Governors and Mayors (Álvarez Villegas *et al.*, 2013). The majority of departments and municipal areas in Colombia have consequently implemented specific programmes for women, with municipalities including Bogotá[91] and Medellín using the language of gender mainstreaming (Barrig, 2014: 13).

In the first elections of governors in Colombia, feminists and women's movements supported Juan Gómez Martínez as Governor of Antioquia. Upon his election, and in

---

[88] Article 43 of the 1991 Constitution states that "Women and men have equal rights and opportunities. Women cannot be submitted to any type of discrimination."

[89] CEDAW is an international treaty that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. It is an international bill of rights for women that has been ratified by 189 states globally.

[90] Following the demands of women's movements after peace talks began in 2012, women were eventually included within the negotiations, making visible the experiences of women in the armed conflict. Gains were slow, but it was still significant to bring gender in to the peace process (Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, 2018).

[91] During the Mockus administration in Bogotá gender inequality was highlighted. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bogotá's approach to urban planning and development, led by Antanas Mockus, meant a number of unusual interventions in public space. Some of these interventions related specifically to women's rights, for example, the famously launched 'night for women'. On these nights, women were encouraged to go out and enjoy the city at night and men were supposed to stay in the home and care for children. Such acts were symbolic, drawing attention to gendered inequalities (Rincón and Hoyos, 2013).

recognition of this support, a women's sub-secretary was created at the state level in 1992 (Peláez Mejía, 2001).[92] The inclusion of women within the *Alcaldía* in Medellín was soon to follow, with *La Casa de La Mujer* (Women's House) established in 1994. However, this was a marginal agency without much sway, and the women's movement in the city remained consistent in their demands for establishing a department dedicated to women's equality. As part of the early formation of Sergio Fajardo's party *Compromiso Ciudadano*, the civic movement consulted NGOs and community groups in their planning and policy development, with social movements in the city becoming increasingly connected with formal political structures. One result of greater participation and devolved urban powers was the setting up of working groups in the same year focusing on themes including employment, youth and women's equality (Maclean, 2015). Numerous women's NGOs worked closely with *Compromiso Ciudadano* both in the run up to the election and after they gained power in 2003 (Maclean, 2017); shortly after the election of Fajardo as Mayor, they achieved the creation of a sub-section within the department of Citizen Culture called *Metromujer*.

Creating a specific sub-department meant that there were teams working specifically on issues pertinent to women, but the department also faced numerous restrictions. It did not have access to higher councils, or decision-making capacities, and there were severe budgetary restrictions associated with its designation as a sub-department. As such, further calls came for establishing a separate women's department, again emerging from within the city's women's movements (González Montoya, 2009). In 2007 this demand was finally met, as the *Metromujer* became the *Secretaría de las Mujeres* (women's department), making Medellín the first Colombian city with an office at this level dedicated to gender (Ariza-Sosa *et al.*, 2015). Gender mainstreaming has been led by the women's department (with a sub-section of the department devoted to it) from this date, indicating a recognition of the need to engage with gender-related issues and gender equality across the wider local government and throughout its departments. Gender mainstreaming in Medellín was therefore a response to local demands and international trends, with actors within and outside of the institution working for the integration of gender.

5.3 Gendered institutions, competing voices and political pressures

Every stage of the changes in Medellín has been shaped, not just by the government in a top-down approach, but by a variety of actors. Within a broader shift towards

---

[92] Murdock (2003) highlighted how the institutions have "variably embraced feminist critiques and rejected them, depending upon the political context of the moment", highlighting the shift from Gómez Martínez''s support to that of social conservatism under President Andres Pastrana just a few years later.

participatory governance and innovative development approaches in Medellín I explore the institutional gender dynamics and whether they have altered as part of the changes in the city. Various groups are key to the inclusion of gender within governance agendas in Medellín; complex relationships between actors and strategic alliances between external actors and governments can therefore shape and influence institutional practice (Phillips and Cole, 2009). Both informal movements and formal political institutions consequently have significance in understanding the formation of and fractures between policy and practice (Waylen, 2014).

Within Colombia, social movements are vast and diverse; they include a range of trade unions, farmers movements, student activists, indigenous organisations, women's movements and many more (Murillo, 2013). Experiences of extreme violence have spurred many community movements for peace and human rights within Colombia (Maclean, 2015). Some have organised in response to specific acts of violence and impunity (as in the case of *Mujeres Caminando Por La Verdad*, explored in more detail in chapter six), while others work to improve the rights of specific groups or populations as in the case of the women's movement, LGBTQI and Afro-Colombian movements, all fighting against structural inequalities and injustices. Additionally, in recent decades, actors including the Catholic church have adopted the tactics of social movements, using the language of rights and mobilising around civil society organisations (Lemaitre, 2012). Conservative voices associated with the church often therefore clash with progressive activists including women's movements (Ruibal, 2014).

With regional autonomy and broadened forms of political participation, in particular following the 1991 Constitution, there were new mechanisms and spaces for participation and decision-making within Colombia (Bejarano, 2001). Maclean outlines that:

> The changes in the political fabric of Medellín and the transformations in terms of urban development policies, were far more complex than the term 'miracle' suggests and involved constitutional changes at the national level, pressure from global economic forces, participation by a range of grassroots organisations and social movements, and, crucially, in terms of being able to enact a new agenda, the collaboration of the city's business and political elites (2015: 5).

The numerous forces influencing the urban development agenda have therefore brought about various priorities, and such negotiations have relevance with regards to the inclusion of gender. As one activist I spoke with put it, "I think that the greatest social changes have been because society has organised"; this perspective was often

echoed both within and outside of the government. From the 1990s, social movements in the city, such as the women's movement, became more connected with the government and formal political structures.[93] With international pressures and local activism aligning on issues such as women's rights, social movements are credited with bringing progressive issues to the fore. Many activists, including women's movements, shifted their focus from community organizing to state level influence in the period after the Constitution, as part of a wider formalisation of NGOs (Alvarez, 1999; Molyneux, 2001; Murdock, 2008).

Formalised community consultation is a significant demand of Jahan's agenda-setting mainstreaming (1995), but also gives rise to a threat of co-optation with regards to the neoliberalisation of feminist movements (Prügl, 2014). While the above movements range in size, scope and agenda, social movements have become increasingly entangled in neoliberal structures, formalising and professionalising their work in what has been termed 'NGO-isation' (Murdock, 2008; Alvarez, 2009). Formalisation has caused a move away from radical, strategic challenges, with a shift instead to immediate practical needs (Vargas, 1992; Craske, 1999). Within Medellín, Murdock (2003) highlighted that the formalisation of feminist movements into structured and hierarchical organisations resulted in some limits of their radical feminist politics and potential to critique the state. Since Murdock's research in the 1990's the spheres of activists and government institutions have become further entwined. The integration of activists in Medellín's governance and the shift to participatory development strategies (as lauded in Medellín for instance with their incorporation of participatory budgeting, of just 5%)[94] is an example whereby social movements may compromise radical agendas in order to be able to work within the formal structures.

Within both formal and informal institutions, however, there is also resistance from those aiming for transformative change that recognises the potential to 'work' the spaces of the neoliberal, patriarchal city (Cupples, 2005; Larner *et al.*, 2005), in attempts to combat the continuing inequities. Phillips and Cole distinguish between 'UN optic' and 'another world' feminisms, the former being an approach that takes systematic steps within existing political parameters and institutions, while the latter refers to a demand for building something new and radically different to the "economic and geopolitical regimes of neoliberal global governance" (2009: 192). However, the two are seen as distinguishable only for heuristic purposes, as most feminists in the context of Latin America engage with both types strategically. While the formalisation of social

---

[93] Serious constraints have also shaped political organisation in Colombia, with trade unionists, human rights defenders, journalists and activists continuing to be targeted by violence to this day.

[94] Such participation is also often seen merely as a tokenistic 'buzzword', rather than the meaningful incorporation of varied perspectives (Cornwall and Brock, 2006).

movements can threaten the radical nature of the change they demand, it also provides opportunities. Rather than seeing institutions and social movements in opposition to one another, often and particularly with the formalisation of gender mainstreaming, so called gender experts exist between spaces of formal governments and social movements, particularly in Latin America, where feminists have been central actors in movements for democracy and reform (Cole and Phillips, 2008).

In Medellín, the changes in urban development policies have been shown to be significantly influenced by social movements including the women's movement, with institutional activists often shifting between positions in government and social movements (Ruibal, 2014; Maclean, 2017). The role of civil society has been consistently emphasised in the formation of the women's department, but also in the prioritisation of progressive issues and inclusion of the previously marginalised. Gutiérrez Rivera (2017) describes women and women's movements as urban planners in Medellín, seeing their roles as significant in shaping planning decisions within the city. In addition to the centrality of women's movements in the formation of the women's department, many of those involved in the social movements and NGOs of the city moved to work within the women's department itself, an exchange that has been termed institutional activism (Santoro and McGuire, 1997; Ruibal, 2014). Most of the staff I interviewed within the women's department had been involved previously or continued to be active within various NGOs and women's movements in the city, with exchange of ideas and people from each sector further questioning the separation of formal and informal institutions. The flexible boundaries between those working within the women's department and those within social movements has been key to the inclusion and prioritisation of gender equality within the local government.

However, numerous voices have had great traction in Medellín's political discussions, and not just those furthering a progressive agenda. One example of this is the controversy surrounding a proposal for founding a women's health care centre. In his mayoral election campaign in 2007, Alonso Salazar committed to the creation of a women's clinic, dedicated to the study and care of women's health. This was a result of a concerted effort by the women's social justice movements in the city, once more putting pressure on those in power to improve the resources for women in Medellín. However, during the planning stages of the centre, after Salazar's successful election, the project ended up being a focal point of a wider national (and indeed, international) debate about abortion. As one of many medical procedures, the clinic was going to practice abortions in line with the 2006 government legislation permitting abortion in limited

circumstances.[95] In 2009, as one of the proponents of the clinic told me, "the conservative sectors converted the women's clinic into a negative project… they called it the clinic of death". Ernesto, who was *Personero*[96] during the controversy explained that "the reaction, above all, of the hierarchies of the Catholic Church… began to reproach, to condemn, to oppose and to stigmatise the clinic, saying that the mayor was going to set up an abortion clinic". Soon after the negative attention mounted against the women's clinic, the project was cancelled.

In this example, political pressure was key, both in getting the women's clinic onto the agenda in the first place, and then later in its failure to reach fruition. Improvements and advances in gender-sensitive approaches within the local government are consequently shaped by, but also limited to, broader political discussions. When discussing this case, Carolina from the women's department stated: "[the mayor] had a lot of pressure from the clergy, from all the conservative sectors of the city ... That is another thing that permeates gender relations in Medellín. It is a very traditional city, very conservative, very religious". In order for gender mainstreaming to be effective, the inherently gendered character of all institutions, both formal and informal, must be recognised, accepting that mainstreaming in otherwise unchanged structures is fundamentally limited (Stratigaki, 2005; Smyth, 2007; Allwood, 2013), and that both formal and informal structures can sway between contradictory and gendered struggles.

In recent years, Medellín has made strides in the inclusion of seemingly progressive policies. The inclusion of such priorities compounds the idea of Medellín as a progressive and innovative metropolis and is therefore part of their successful city branding campaigns. Various voices and actors compete for dominance, but the movement for change remains limited by competing political influences.[97] Institutions at several levels are both gendered and inform gender norms and relations in both subtle and more obvious ways. As seen in the above, external actors have influenced the inclusion of gender issues, and can limit the incorporation of gender within the local government, while the institution itself cannot be separable from the wider society and cultural trends, in which conservative, patriarchal norms prevail. Bearing in mind the wider environment within which gender mainstreaming sits, I now turn to consider the gender mainstreaming policies in more detail, remaining attentive to the competing

---

[95] Abortion in Colombia is legal only when there is a danger to the life or health of the mother, life-threatening foetal abnormalities or in cases of rape or incest. Before 2006 it was illegal without exceptions.
[96] The appointed human rights ombudsman or public defender for the municipality.
[97] This is not a challenge that is unique to Medellín and has also been seen in broader national debates, for instance with the gender ideology controversy in the run up to the 2016 peace plebiscite (Basset, 2018).

debates that (re)produce the development and integration of its gender-sensitive policies.

5.4 Medellín's Gender Mainstreaming Policy

Having considered the ways in which gender is acknowledged, but in a limited and largely inconsequential way, within the Citizen Culture policy discussed in chapter four, this section focuses upon the 2016-2019 urban development plan, aiming to assess if the same is true throughout the *Alcaldía*'s wider official policy. A core achievement of the 2016-2019 plan is stated to be the integration of a gender focus, with gender mainstreaming claimed throughout the urban development plans in Medellín. Here I pay particular attention to how this gender focus is framed throughout the development plan and consider what implications this has for policy and practice. I do so recognising that there is both coherence and conflict in formulating such texts (as in the integration of gender priorities more broadly), and that such policy is a product of negotiation and tension between competing demands.

Within the 2016 urban development plan, the gender mainstreaming project in the city is described as follows:

> Project: Mainstreaming gender equality
>
> Medellín advances the mainstreaming of gender equality in both public and private entities, to raise awareness of the gender inequalities that affect women, young women and girls, through coordination and advocacy work in order to generate actions for the benefit of gender equality.
>
> Responsible [department]: Women's Department
> (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 266)

While there is a mention of gender equality at a broad level, the gender inequalities that affect women are the starting point. Notably, the women's department is named as being responsible for this project. Each project and policy within the development plan is designated to one or more government departments. As with the majority of issues relating to gender, the responsibility for gender mainstreaming is designated within the confines of the women's department. Such a designation could perhaps be expected from a project that specifically considered women, as with others aiming to improve women's employment or political participation. Locating gender mainstreaming within the women's department is typical of all gender-related policies and projects in the

development plan, as they sit in the document alongside an accompanying stick figure symbol of a woman (Appendix B).

As mentioned, the women's department has significant crossover with the city's women's organisations, and the language within their specific policies is often progressive, highlighting the ways in which such institutional spaces are 'worked' by those within them. It is therefore possible to see the influence of feminist language and arguments within the policy documents, following some trends of agenda-setting approaches for example as they aim to reorient policy priorities, give women a voice and prioritise specific objectives of the women's movement such as GBV and women's empowerment (Jahan, 1995). However, the intention of mainstreaming is the integration of gender sensitivity throughout all legislation, policy and planning, at all levels and in all areas. To meaningfully incorporate a gender focus throughout, it must be recognised that mainstreaming is the responsibility of *all* departments, rather than the women's department alone, meaning such wording raises some initial concerns about the degree to which gender is integrated *across* the *Alcaldía*.

Looking for specific mentions of gender throughout the development plan, a recurring theme is the numerous projects and programmes designed to address the acknowledged problem of violence against women in Medellín. For example, a programme entitled "Medellín: safe for women and girls" states that "public security for women is one of the fundamental elements for their development, progress and the construction of an equal and inclusive society" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 189). Here the approach not only acknowledges that a differentiated understanding of women's security is important, but also appreciates that such violence is a challenge with broader societal consequences (for women) than the outcomes and acts of violence themselves. Projects within this broader programme include "Safe Territories for Women and Girls" and "Prevention and Care of Gender-Based Violence". These programmes are part of a broader Safe Cities programme but are assigned to the women's department and cover a range of actions including improved street lighting (showing an understanding of the connections to the material landscape) and a 24-hour helpline for women, focusing on victims of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence. While I consider the implications of these policies in more detail in chapters six and eight, the inclusion of the programme shows a recognition of serious security concerns facing women. The defined and targeted policies are in line with global movements (including CEDAW), while also briefly acknowledging the multifaceted implications of such violence.

Another programme entitled 'Public Communication for the Empowerment of the Rights of Women' is part of the broader programme for a Safe City for Women and Girls.

Through finding and promoting spaces to meet, reflect, and have dialogue, this programme seeks "the transformation of stereotypes, mentalities, imaginaries and beliefs that undervalue and disadvantage women and generate violence against them. It aims to make visible the gendered gaps and prompt the closure of them, to build territories free of violence" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 191). Again, this programme is under the responsibility of the women's department, but it clearly and directly links violence against women with broader societal norms that devalue women. Here we see where agenda-setting mainstreaming can feed into ideas of transformative change, through a demand for the realisation of women's rights not to be victims of violence purely as a result of their gender identity. The programmes mentioned here are encouraging, and appear to encompass an understanding of the various dimensions of GBV linking to the broader context of inequality (True, 2012). Again, the influence of those treading the lines between women's movements and government institutions is implicit within such texts and more radical demands for change.

While the details on how this will be achieved are lacking (as often tends to be the case in such a broad overview of the government policies), their inclusion suggests a more in-depth understanding of gender relations and violence. However, when looking at the details, the programme "Medellín: A Safe City for Women and Girls", is allocated a mere 1.65% of the overall security budget (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 568). Despite the rhetoric of the prioritisation of these concerns and the critical types of language chosen in the policy document, the budgetary allocation suggests that women's safety remains a fringe concern, in direct contrast to spending on other security areas. Within a broader governmental prioritisation of security within the Gutiérrez administration's 2016-2019 development plan, the small proportion of the security budget is significant for considering gender mainstreaming. The discrepancy in budgets will be of particular relevance in the detailed discussion of the security agenda in chapter eight, but also indicates a conflict between the assurance of gender as a priority, and the concurrent and lacking resource allocation for such a priority to be put into practice.

The reduction in the budget for the women's department has been consistent across recent administrations, and not just with regards to the programme on security. In total, the department was allocated around 60 billion pesos under Alonso Salazar (2008-2012), this figure being reduced to 56 billion under Aníbal Gaviria (2012-2016), with a huge further reduction under Federico Gutiérrez's (2016-2019) administration to a budget of only 39 billion pesos (Escobar Hoyos, 2017).[98] As seen above, the majority of the specific projects and policies relating to gender in the *Alcaldía* continue to be placed

---

[98]Approximately £15 million, £14 million and £9.75 million respectively. Escobar Hoyos (2017) also reports that the *Secretaría de las Mujeres* receives just 0.21% of the total budget across the *Alcaldía*.

within the women's department, meaning that a serious reduction in funding has repercussions for the capacity of the department to achieve its goals. It has led to a reduction in several of their programmes, and a complete cancellation of others. The head of the sub-department for the security of women and girls within the women's department reported that their budget had been halved under the Gutiérrez administration, meaning they were forced to streamline services to the most urgent responsive work, with a marked decrease in their abilities to deliver preventative programmes. The significant budgetary reduction is indicative of the differing priority governments can place on issues such as gender, regardless of how wholeheartedly they adopt progressive language in policy documentation. Budgetary priorities contradict the reiteration of gender as a key focus of the government plan. Looking to the budgets further illustrates the limitations of gender as a political tool, where it can be relegated depending on the priorities of those in power (Sweetman, 2012). Rather than a meaningful shift in the institutional culture towards an approach that takes gender seriously, the budget allocation within the 2016-2019 development plan indicates that such decisions rely on individual priorities, with gender falling further down the list for the administration of Federico Gutiérrez.

There are further but limited instances where the development plan nods to a broader understanding of gender relations, and beyond that of GBV. In an outline of the central points of the development plan the gender focus is described as a need to:

> consider the opportunities that both men and women have, and the roles that they assume in society. We understand that the city needs to recognize the role of women through concrete, effective and pertinent actions, to develop their potential.
>
> (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 51)

The gender focus is specifically positioned within the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN, indicating a consideration of gendered roles and acknowledging that these roles relate to both men *and* women. In mentioning the development of the potential of women, the above extract echoes calls for the empowerment of women (Young, 1997; Smyth, 2007; Aguinaga *et al.*, 2013). Here emerges the influence of global development agendas to incorporate gender, with language that brings together integrationist and agenda-setting approaches (Jahan, 1995), recognising the differing experiences that are shaped by gender roles while emphasising the need to address the ways in which women are disadvantaged. Perhaps expected in an all-encompassing policy document, the broad separation of 'men' and 'women' here and elsewhere, could benefit from some acknowledgement of the many

factors that differentiate gendered experiences such as race and class. Additionally, the language used is vague, lacking a suggestion of what the gender roles that are mentioned refer to, how these roles and opportunities differ between men and women, and the concrete actions that will be taken and how such policy will be implemented. Within a context where there is heavy debate among differing societal actors as to the relevance and problem of gender inequality, such open language leaves room for variance in interpretation and gives a sense of the compromises made in contributions to this sizable document.

With women at the centre of the gender focus taken in Medellín, I also want to consider how they are described and approached. Thinking back to agenda-setting mainstreaming as an intersectional and nuanced account of gender, this is a significant question. In the detail of the development plan, time and again, each of the markers for gender are understood as 'women'. At the most general level, when specifying the groups that are targeted across the whole government policy approach, the report states: "the vulnerable population is treated with affirmative and differential actions of gender (women), generation (children, adolescence and youth), ethnicity, and conditions of quality of life (victims [of conflict])" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 50). While it is positive to see gender as a priority here, women in the broadest terms are categorised as a vulnerable population. Wiping out the complexities or intersecting variables impacting upon the lives of each woman within the city, it instead positions all women as vulnerable, an assertion that feminist scholars have long queried[99] (Shepherd, 2008; Dolan, 2014; Myrttinen *et al.*, 2017). While it is well documented that women suffer negative consequences from unequal gender relations, they are also far from a homogenous group, and such categorisation reinforces an unhelpful binary (Shepherd, 2008). In categorizing women as vulnerable, the framing of gender inequality is far removed from, for instance, the language of power imbalances, or of sexism, reverting back to a critiqued WID analysis rather than seeing gender as a relational category (Young, 1997; Pearson, 2005).

Throughout the document, gender is mentioned either in broad and generalising strokes (without an intersectional understanding), or in specific issues such as GBV. There is a notable absence of gender in most of the plan beyond these specific themes. Consequently, within the development plan there is a division of gendered issues from supposedly gender neutral ones, separating gender out from most policy concerns, and not acknowledging the ways in which for instance the experience of what are seen to be technical issues, such as transport, are gendered (Debusscher, 2014). Despite using

---

[99] Queer theory is also useful here in critiquing a homogenisation of women's experiences, with queer women often missing from discussions (Hagen, 2019).

familiar gender language, the document thus lacks a clear thread of what its approach means throughout *all* departments, or indeed what the institutional understanding of gender is. In the adoption of gender terminology by a broad range of actors such terms are inevitably expressed and understood differently. A resulting depoliticisation can be seen to make gender sensitive approaches benign. As Smyth argues:

> real women and men, power and conflict all disappear behind bland talk of 'gender' while the language of 'mainstreaming' creates the possibility of orderly tools… and systems through which profoundly internalised beliefs and solidly entrenched structures are miraculously supposed to dissolve and be transformed (2007: 583).

A clear definition of gender, in terms of what exactly is being mainstreamed, is difficult to ascertain in the documentation. In broad terms gender has been permitted within the conversation, but could be interpreted in a number of ways, leaving it vulnerable to the critiques that are often levelled at mainstreaming (as discussed in 5.1).

5.4.1 Medellín's Gender Mainstreaming in Practice

In addition to the above points considering the 2016-2019 urban development plan and demonstrating the limits that appear in the chosen language, categorisation and budgets allocated to gender policy, I now turn to consider gender mainstreaming in practice, drawing on interviews with staff across the *Alcaldía*. Institutions are not just their written policy, and civil servants provide detail and nuance to the above points, including in relation to the tensions and negotiations in how such policy is developed and implemented. When interviewing civil servants from various departments in the local government, I asked them to explain what the gender focus meant to them, discussing how it was integrated within their work and practice. In line with the feminist understandings of mainstreaming explored earlier, the following quotes are from two members of staff working within the women's department:

> We understand [the gender focus] … as the need to transform the processes, the procedures, so that there are conditions that can contribute to an equal life between men and women, that help to eliminate the gaps, *techos de cristal* (the glass ceiling), improve access to resources, to opportunities, to allow women ultimately to access to their rights.
>
> We understand [gender] as a category of analysis… Each one of the departments, each of the processes that we have, should make the situation visible, show the

condition of women, and look at projects that build [a society] in a way that achieves equality, between men and women.

In the two examples, there was a clear identification of specific problems that women tend to face as part of understanding gender as a category of analysis. Their answers are more politicised than the language previously explored in the development plan, reinforcing the necessity of compromise among different government actors within such a broad policy document. Within the women's department, various representatives I spoke with had more radical and potentially transformative understandings, seeing gender analysis as a tool through which to shape programmes throughout the government, in a way that ultimately aimed to both improve the situation of women and bring about greater gender equality.

Despite the coherent understanding of gender in the women's department, this was not exemplary of a united understanding throughout the *Alcaldía* as a whole. As mentioned, the gender mainstreaming project is placed within the women's department, and there is a small team dedicated to this work. Sara, the head of the gender mainstreaming team within the women's department suggested that mainstreaming needed a shift in the government mentality towards gender issues:

> What we want is for the *Alcaldía* to be conscious the reality of women, of how their projects are going to impact men *and* women so that they don't contribute to or increase gender inequality, and so that women can achieve true equality, so that they are equal. That is what we are trying to do.

Her goal is similar to the understandings of her colleagues above. Sara saw analysis of the gendered implications of each policy decision as an important inclusion for a move towards gender equality. Despite this goal, my attempts to find how different departments incorporated the gender focus and how it functioned and influenced their work proved more difficult than expected, as exemplified by the following experience.

After several unsuccessful attempts to get to speak to someone in the Education department, I went to the department's main office, housed within one of the few remaining colonial style buildings in the centre of the city. I explained my research briefly to the security guard on the door and waited while he called the member of staff who I had been advised to speak with. When the employee met me at the entrance, however, he explained that he couldn't help me as he wasn't qualified to talk about gender, while assuring me that he was keen to get me talking to someone who knew more about the department's approach to gender. We made our way through the

network of offices spread over several floors of the building and he left me waiting outside the office of someone he said would be able to help. After a brief wait, I was called into the office, but the woman inside repeated a similar answer, saying that she would rather I spoke with a colleague who was better informed on the department's gender focus and suggesting another person I could speak with. The same process happened several times, as I explored every corner of the building and was repeatedly told that each person didn't feel able to talk to me about the education department and its gender focus. Eventually I left with the email address for the leader of the project on social protection, the team working to minimise discrimination and improve tolerance, where several of the specific gender programmes are based.

Frustratingly, when I emailed the contact later that day, she immediately forwarded my email directly on to the leader of the education project at the women's department, with whom I had already been in contact. After explaining this, I eventually managed to arrange an interview with the woman in the department for education. Throughout the interview a few days later, however, she repeatedly assured me that while they *did* have a gender focus throughout the education department, including in the programme she led, she was sure I would have been better speaking directly with the education team within the women's department. Despite briefly mentioning some projects that had a focus on gender equality, she said she couldn't go into the specifics on that or other gender sensitive methods used by her or her colleagues in the project she managed, or in the department for education. Her answers were short and my efforts trying to get her to expand on them were met with guarded answers.

The experience of being directed back to the women's department, when mentioning my projects focus on gender, was not uncommon. While the encounter in the education department was particularly challenging, other sections ignored or dismissed my requests completely. The department for transport looked puzzled that I was there to talk to someone about their approach to gender. Across various departments then I was repeatedly directed back to the Secretaría de las Mujeres. As a starting point for gender mainstreaming, my encounters with people in various departments and their reluctance to discuss the topic demonstrates limitations in the integration of gender across the *Alcaldía*. Mirroring the policy and planning documents, I found that staff throughout different departments tended to see the women's department as those most relevant and responsible for the gender sensitive approach.

Despite the common redirection to the women's department, there were some exceptions when I assured individuals that I wanted to hear perspectives from *within* the specific department, rather than just from the women's department. This led to

interviews beyond the *Secretaría de las Mujeres*, and some insight into what a gender-sensitive approach meant elsewhere. One recurring theme was the use of inclusive language, for instance using *los* and *las* when talking in general terms, as opposed to the more traditional adoption of solely masculine terminology. For example, when speaking with Luis, one of the project leaders from the department for social inclusion and family, I asked what gender mainstreaming meant to him and his work and he replied:

> Look, I think this is a process still in construction, but one element is that we are starting to use the language of gender, and this isn't easy, culturally. It isn't easy for everyone… to talk of the *niño* and the *niña*, of the woman, or of including *nosostros* and *nosostras*. I think that it is one way, but from my experience it is still a difficult process.

Luis was open here about the challenges that even something as simple as incorporating gender inclusive language had been within his department, suggesting that this contradicted broader cultural norms. In a context where even such limited engagement with gender would have been unheard of in the past this small change does have significance.[100]

However, Luis also told me that the department of Social Inclusion and Family worked with people in vulnerable living situations and predominantly with single mothers and their families. He mentioned that they needed to take the "rights of women *and* men seriously" but did not mention any further analysis of the reasons for the skewed balance of their work being with women, or what this might mean for policy and practice. Luis was sympathetic but lacked the confidence and tools to integrate gender beyond the language of inclusion. Despite an awareness and consideration of gender, for instance in stating that the majority of those they worked with were single mothers, the gendered implications of such trends were not assessed beyond the statistics. This was the case across different departments I spoke with and in the primary policy documents I had access to. However, the fact that women are disproportionately living in poverty or are more likely to be single parents has significant inferences for gender relations (Peña *et al.*, 2013; Chant, 2014). There was no probing therefore of the structural violences and entrenched societal inequalities disproportionately experienced by women, or an integrated understanding of the power dynamics and patriarchal structures that cause this imbalance to occur within policy or practice. This suggests that the pedagogical tools or resources to expand the approach of gender mainstreaming are limited. Changes that Luis had made were accessible small wins, like

---

[100] The push away from gendered and binary language is ongoing in social movements, public entities and academia. Iterations of this include Latino/a, Latin@ and Latinx as non-binary terminology (Torres, 2018).

the use of gender-sensitive language. However, such inclusion differs from the way that gender mainstreaming was presented in the policy document, and is not fulfilling the more ambitious aims of those working in the women's department.

When speaking with a previous head of the women's department, she told me one of her key achievements during her time was the disaggregation of data:

> So, we said there were some… actions that we could dedicate effort to achieving, as a minimum the information disaggregated by sex, as one strategy of gender mainstreaming…. So, for example in the government secretary there was a department to monitor citizen security, I now know what that violence looks like. We had to hire an information expert to look at the information systems that were there and… They disaggregated the information by sex so that an analysis could be made to see what is happening with women and with men. For the first time, we were given information about violations of women's rights, about crimes against women, and the safety of women when disaggregated by sex, and we could also then disaggregate by *comuna*, by age. It was an important advance.

This work, she explained, was started in 2008, and by 2017 it was instilled practice. The nuance in data collection has huge implications for understanding gender-based violence as well as allowing a greater understanding of all types of violence and social research, according to a range of factors. Disaggregating data was a key demand within the earliest strands of WID, and is crucial for understanding the particular types of challenges facing women and men in the broadest terms (Moser, 1993). Again though, while disaggregated data is helpful in a gender analysis, it falls short of horizontal and agenda-setting mainstreaming. These achievements made in 2008 were described as a minimum, as the very least she could do at that point in time. In the following ten years it seems that things had not moved far beyond this and even the use of inclusive language continues to be a challenge, or a difficult process to implement, as Luis mentioned.

The two key points, of statistical differences of men and women in any given department, and of gender-sensitive language, were generally seen to be the limits of the gender-sensitive approach across the *Alcaldía*. Sara, the head of the gender mainstreaming team was highly critical of this limited engagement: "when you go to the department…. and say, 'How have you incorporated a gender focus'… they say, 'we work with a majority of women here, many more women than men'. But that isn't a gender focus. There is a total lack of awareness." Her experience echoed the findings from my own conversations in different departments, and Sara was resolute that mainstreaming

had to go further. In her own perspective, as seen with others in the department, she saw a gender focus as questioning patriarchal structures and destabilising patriarchal mentalities. However, these are large scale changes without tangible policies or clear lines of implementation, meaning that those within various departments seemed unable to comprehend what such a concept would mean for their work or be able to put into practice. While challenging to integrate gender must remain complex (Hagen, 2019) in order to make the kinds of transformational changes Sara hopes for.

In Sara's frustration, and that of others I spoke to about the limited understanding of gender-sensitive approaches, the gender focus depended on individual rather than institutional understandings. In attempts to influence the departments more directly, the women's department is organised to have their staff members working alongside other departments in an advisory capacity. An example, as seen in the education department, was to have an assigned officer within the women's department working closely with the education teams. However, this had resulted in a designation of gender expertise as outside of the departments themselves. Others, such as SISC (*Sistema de Información para la Seguridad y Convivencia*),[101] had a specialist within their team working on gender-based violence. When I spoke to the programme manager in SISC, he again directed me straight to the young woman monitoring GBV, rather than offering an overview of how it related to work across the department's security policy and monitoring. The specific work providing information relating to GBV was useful, but it was not part of an accepted institutional understanding or shift to the inclusion of gender issues, or even an acknowledgement of the framing of gender mainstreaming within the planning documentation. Instead, gender was officially prioritised, as I was repeatedly told, but simultaneously pushed to the margins and framed as a specific and separable concern.

Mainstreaming originally responded to the problem that individuals, and usually women, get 'stuck' doing gender work (Wittman, 2010), and yet here the same thing was occurring under the banner of mainstreaming. The dissemination of expert knowledge was not easily received and there was a continuing lack of confidence about how to implement such ideas across policies and programmes. Complex and imposed language from international organisations may not have helped, and the language used did not translate to outputs in other departments. Just as we consider the ways in which formal and informal institutions are gendered, at times in divergent ways (Waylen, 2014), further differences can be identified between departments or actors within institutions. States are not monolithic but are broken into different spaces which may be gendered and approach gender in different ways (Mackay and Krook, 2011). As such,

---

[101] The department analyses data about security and provide the security statistics for the city.

and as seen in the above examples, certain spaces were more or less adaptable to including gender relations within their planning and policies, and indeed to talking about this to me, as a researcher. While I agree that horizontal approaches which challenge internal gender dynamics are vital, tactical moves taken within institutions should also be recognised and celebrated. It is important to recognise that individuals are doing important work within Medellín's *Alcaldía* to make gender a priority, and others do acknowledge its significance. However, the understanding and meaning of a gender-sensitive approach depends on individual interpretations and the confidence to put those priorities into practice. Experts are consequently appointed in certain departments to cover the gender approach within them. The process of gender mainstreaming is therefore individual and fragmented rather than institutional.

5.4.2 Masculinity and Gender

As in the shift in institutional language from Women and Development to Gender and Development, gender mainstreaming aims to understand gender relations fully. While gender-sensitive approaches should redress the prior marginalisation of women, the shift to GAD also incorporates a consideration of male gendered subjects. Understanding and addressing unequal gender relations requires a comprehension of relational gendered expectations and roles, and not just those of women (Connell, 2002). As a result, I now turn to consider where the gender approach goes beyond talk of women, while noting that this was very limited. In my interviews and conversations with government employees (and indeed most people I spoke with) a gender focus, or even the term gender, was broadly interpreted as being either relating to women or (occasionally) LGBTQ populations.[102] The only exception, with a consideration of men and masculinity, unprompted, was in my interview with Carlos, the sub-secretary of Citizen Culture. When I asked, "How have you integrated the gender focus in your work?", he replied "in the last two years there has been a development of an agenda of masculinities. It is one of our biggest concerns." He went on to explain that they are looking specifically at how particular masculinities are formed, with an emphasis on what he termed 'new masculinities'. While he did not want to be prescriptive about how masculinity *should* be expressed, he wanted to discourage particular negative associations with masculinities, saying instead what it did not have to be. Such an approach recognises that "[m]en and masculinities are a central factor in re-producing but also potentially ending patterns of violent conflict" (Myrttinen *et al.*, 2017: 105-106).

---

[102] Without thinking of these two together, recognising for instance that some women also fit within the LGBTQ population (Hagen, 2019).

The masculinities workshops were in their early stages and were not a central part of the department's work. Engagement with gender was limited within the department's policy and reports, as outlined in detail in the previous chapter. Carlos did not have a clear idea of the project's next steps or whether any workshops were upcoming, as it was only a recent development within the department. I asked why masculinities were a new and key concern for them and he replied:

> particularly in the past year, we have started with a masculinity agenda because ... there are phenomena, particularly violence in the city, that can be easily connected the *machista* construction... let's say that the way to solve an argument is with your fists, in this case it is constructed and stuck around the ideas of using violence to resolve arguments... as a masculine condition.

As such, Carlos recognised that the gender roles of men played a part not only in the role of gender-based violence as is often highlighted, but also in broader violence (Hume, 2008). While I will return to this concept in more detail in chapter seven and eight with a discussion of security in the city, it is worth considering briefly here, due to Carlos connecting Citizen Culture, *machismo,* and the reduction of violence. He had been struck by the way individuals resorted to violence in his time as project lead, and had diverted resources towards the masculinity project, despite, and as seen in the last chapter, it not being part of the overall Citizen Culture policy. His project, in emphasising masculinities, further reinforced the impression that the incorporation of gender-sensitive approaches was not mainstreamed or institutional, but rather individual. Carlos and others moved gender up their own agendas due to their understandings of the significance of it on their personal working priorities. However, his approach was not reinforced by the department's policy or that of the wider urban development plan. It was not therefore part of a broad institutional approach, instead relying on his efforts, and those of others in his department, to engage with this gender analysis and design small projects accordingly.

Through workshops and talks the Citizen Culture department were investing in pilot conversations about what it meant to be a man in Medellín, one of which he told me was entitled "*no todos somos tan malos*" (we're not all so bad). This positioned men away from traditional *machista* stereotypes, saying that men did not have to be, as he said, "providers, macho, strong". The workshops and campaigns had so far worked with *barristas,*[103] bus drivers, and boxers. Each of these groups are male-dominated and predominantly working class. Drawing the focus here was seen to be a practical

---

[103] *Barristas* (barras bravas) refers to extreme and/or organised football fans. Such groups are commonly associated with violence.

solution, starting with groups that are often associated with more negative masculine expressions. However, it is also rooted in an idea that gender problems were located in certain parts of the society, as emphasised when Carlos explained he had learnt a lot during his time working in the *Alcaldía* about gender roles in the city: "my experience and particularly in my socio-economic class, young people in [the higher] *estratos*, 4, 5 or 6 in the city live in a completely different world". In the wealthier parts of the city he asserted that there was a "super-fluid vision of gender". He saw this as completely different in the lower *estratos* and poorer areas of the city, where, in his opinion, there were much more fixed and separate gender roles and identities. In his understanding, his own social class seemed exempt from critique and he inscribed problematic gendered subjectivities not within society as a whole, but instead with particular subjects within the city.

While intersectional approaches encourage a consideration of the implications of gender with other social categories including class, it does not mean placing the blame for such inequalities solely in the hands of otherwise marginalised groups. There were no programmes looking at plural environments, for instance mixed-gender workplaces, or working with people across different socio-economic backgrounds. Placing negative masculine expressions in need of fixing upon working class men did not acknowledge the ways in which subjects at all levels throughout society, as well as institutions like the *Alcaldía* itself, are gendered. Inequality is designated as a particular, rather than a societal, dilemma. While a differentiated approach to gender, considering the impact, for instance of class, is vital, the approach here places the blame for inequality and negative male subjects as firmly and uniquely within poorer neighbourhoods and their male subjects.[104] An intersectional understanding of mainstreaming can instead be seen as a way to work against the depoliticised critiques of mainstreaming and to oppose concurrent oppressive structures including gender and class (Fischer, 2012).

Additionally, in the masculinity workshops, as echoed in the work of the women's department, the interpretation of an approach to improve gender equality and relations reinforced the approach to work either with men *or* with women; working on empowering women and girls *or* tackling negative expressions of masculinity with men.[105] The targeted approaches to improving gender equality were themselves entrenched along the lines of the binary identification of gender. The women's

---

[104] Similar problems have been discussed in relation to Women, Peace and Security and its attention on poorer countries, without concurrent recognition of gendered practices within the institutions (See, Wright, 2019)

[105] Enloe (2015) warns of the potential to only take gender seriously in policymaking when considering masculinities, with men and masculinity easily subsuming an interest in women. Feminist scholars also emphasise that men and boys are not the only subjects to perform masculinity (see for example Zalewski, 2000).

department, just as with the women's social movements who demanded it, worked almost exclusively with women. The gender specialist in SISC looked solely at violence against women and girls in her analysis. Whether synonymising gender as women or thinking about its relationship with men and masculinity, the gender policies continue to essentialise gendered experiences within binary categorisations. Gender approaches in the city work with *either* men *or* women, and generally framing men as those with power and (particularly poorer men) as violent subjects in need of fixing, and women as powerless, as vulnerable, or as victims (Cornwall, 2007b; Shepherd, 2008). Despite the shift from language of 'women' to that of gender aiming to overcome a binary separation, the division retains strength in gender work in Medellín.

The narrow consideration and binary understanding of gender does not encompass a societal and structural, or even institutional, shift. Just as the government slogan of *Cuenta con Vos* implied individual responsibility for solving the problems of wider society, the incorporation of gender relies on individual change. Working with women on empowerment or 'women's issues' and men on developing new masculinities can be helpful in addressing micro and individual expressions of broader patriarchal norms, however at the same time, it reduces them to individual responsibilities. It also reinforces the idea that women and men are on parallel tracks, needing to improve their own gender expressions independently. However, gender subjects are defined in relation to one another and attempting change as two separate spheres is thus fundamentally limited.

5.4.3 Resistance to gender mainstreaming

As well as the concerns raised about the incorporation of a gender sensitive approach, active obstacles and barriers prevent further mainstreaming. Within a global context of backlash against women's rights and the inclusion of gender in policy and planning, Sandler and Rao (2012) argue that it is necessary for any appraisal of gender mainstreaming strategies to consider not only those making progress but the wider contexts and potential antagonists to such policy and strategy. When I made contacts in the government, I always explained that my research had a gender focus and as a result, my sample was, to a certain extent, self-selecting. Those who didn't feel able or willing to discuss the theme of gender with me simply didn't return my calls or emails, agree to interview, or sent me in the direction of a colleague or often directly to the women's department, as explored earlier. The result of this meant that most of those who agreed to interview and that I spoke with in the *Alcaldía* were aware of gender issues, broadly in favour of gender mainstreaming, and conscious of the limitations they faced in incorporating a gender-sensitive approach. Even within this self-selecting group there

were limitations with regards to the understanding and application of gender-sensitive practices, or of their confidence to talk about the implications of a gender approach. However, they tended to imply that mainstreaming was a slow process, but one making steady progress. The picture from those working to integrate a gender focus throughout the *Alcaldía* was less optimistic.

When interviewing members of the women's department, I repeatedly heard not just of the challenge of a wider societal acceptance of a shift to gender sensitivity, but of active resistance within the *Alcaldía*. Sara, the lead of the team for gender mainstreaming, told me about the challenges she faced in her work, with an exasperated look on her face:

> The gender focus isn't a central part of the other departments. [Gender mainstreaming] is a slow process… because there is resistance. There is moral resistance, political resistance against the gender focus. There is ignorance. What we do here in this team is trying to educate, to train the workers of the administration. To train them in gender issues, to give them tools so that they are able to construct project indicators and reasonable budgets for gender issues. But it is a very, very slow process. Above all because to achieve gender mainstreaming, to achieve changes in the political will, it is a political issue, and that is so difficult. It is very difficult because the ones who make the decisions. Their interest isn't in a gender focus, their interest confuses the gender focus with making it only a matter of women's issues, with a population issue and that isn't it…. There is already a model that is part of the internal training school… But these are small steps in a system that doesn't understand what gender is, and with a political will that is not interested in gender.

In addition to indifference, Sara speaks here of resistance. Her use of this word is significant and demonstrates how, despite the language in the policy documents, there are many working within the *Alcaldía* who do not accept gender as a significant concern, or one that is of relevance to their work. In outlining a lack of political will, Sara highlights a fundamental problem with gender mainstreaming, the rhetoric must be accepted and valued by all across the institution, and without doing so becomes constrained and individual, far from the original goals of mainstreaming.

This sentiment was repeated by others trying to work on different but related issues within the *Alcaldía*. The experience of active rejection or resistance of more progressive policies was also found in the Centre for Sexual Diversity. When talking about improving the awareness of LGBTQ issues and tolerance, the project lead at the Centre for Sexual Diversity explained: "we work with the *Personería*, with public defenders,

with private companies, and paradoxically we work the least within the *Alcaldía* of Medellín. It is very difficult to open spaces to work on this issue within our own institutions". The *Alcaldía* is therefore seen as one of the most hostile places to work on issues closely related to gender. Once more the limits of challenging the institutional culture emerges, resulting in the retention and reproduction of broader societal norms, values and prejudices within the *Alcaldía*. The conservative, patriarchal character of the city is reproduced within the institution and impacts upon not only the incorporation of a gender-sensitive approach but also relates to the inclusion of a range of additional and related themes and concerns.

Rather than an integrated gender focus throughout the departments, gender issues were therefore separated out to what were seen as the responsible departments. I spoke with Carolina, a member of staff working at that time within the women's department but who had previously worked as a gender expert in other departments. When asked whether gender was significant throughout the *Alcaldía* she replied:

> Not today. Let's say it's a process. In theory it would be, but in practice, no. They even assume that the women's department is a small *Alcaldía* for women... There are some [departments] who have components, who have projects... but others that still don't, that still feel that it is the task of the women's department

Rather than helping to integrate these priorities, she suggests that gender specialists within departments and dedicated sections had reinforced a separation from the impetus and responsibility for incorporating a gender focus. The women's department was seen to address the concerns of the women's movement, without further integration across policy or practice. Gender, again, is separated out and framed as a concern for women, and an individualised problem, rather than an issue requiring structural change.

5.5 Conclusion

Medellín's *Alcaldía*, like all institutions, is constituted of multiple and divergent actors and interests. Internal and external pressures shape the direction and articulation of policy, meaning that the incorporation of different priorities and issues becomes a process of negotiation. As a result gender mainstreaming can bring about changes, but may not break down the substantially gendered dimensions of the institutions it is often working within (Benschop and Verloo, 2006) Within this chapter, I have shown the implications of some of the resulting tensions, showing how local and international trends and debates influence the positions on issues such as gender. In paying attention

to the institutional rhetoric, policies and practices, I outline the commendable work of those finding ways to use the formal structures for change, but also the limitations of gender mainstreaming within a large and fragmented institution. Such concerns are paralleled in wider processes, for instance in the Colombian peace process with its *enfoque de género* (gender focus), where the vagueness of the concept and competing priorities has resulted in difficulties in its implementation and impact (Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, 2018). The *Alcaldía* contains diverse perspectives and positions, resulting in difficulty in articulating and furthering a unified institutional approach or a clear understanding of gender as a concept. Without talking about structural change, most departments (other than the women's department) and society as a whole are, as a result, absolved of responsibility. While specialist and dedicated projects and departments use aspects of agenda-setting mainstreaming, the limitations of this have become apparent. Prioritising gender within pockets of the government according to personal interest and commitments is valuable but falls short of the transformative goals of gender mainstreaming.

There are positive areas of change which should not be ignored, and small steps towards potentially transformative approaches to mainstreaming can be seen within the continuous incorporation of a gender perspective (Kloosterman *et al.*, 2012). However, where there are sympathetic individuals and/or departments with a commitment to gender equality, there is often a concurrent lack of confidence in how to implement gender policy beyond simple changes. As a result, departments have brought in easily accessible changes such as gender-disaggregated data or language, but without simultaneous structural analysis. A technical approach can consequently undermine the potential for transformative approaches to be considered (Mannell, 2012) and a lack of pedagogical tools or a clear message on how to mainstream more critical and transformative gender-specific approaches continues to be a challenge. Gender is marginalised within Medellín's *Alcaldía*, and actively rejected by some outside of, but also within, the government, adding further and serious implications for the potential to integrate progressive gender issues.

Everything from the abandonment of the project of the women's health centre, to the redirection of almost all themes of gender to the women's department raises concerns about the ability for the gender mainstreaming approach to tackle and respond to broader societal and gendered norms and concepts. Gender thus becomes an issue that is separable from the responsibility of wider society, instead being about the inclusion and empowerment of women or the fixing of particular and negative masculinities (predominantly associated with poorer men). The women's department and others working on gender issues use their resources to work for change but do so within an

often-hostile environment with shrinking budgets. That said, there are significant moments of change, and agenda-setting gender work in areas of the government that should be recognised. Civil servants find ways to work within the challenging institutional environment to make change, but relying almost entirely upon individual commitments and drives, rather than being driven by the institution as a whole.

A gendered analysis helps to consider the ways in which the change in Medellín is limited and disparate, rather than the organised and transformative change often presented. I highlight processes of change, alongside the essential limits of incremental changes within institutions, whereby the work of the *Alcaldía* is ultimately constrained by fundamental inequalities in society, that also run through its institutions. From this deeper understanding of the city's institutions, I move in chapter six to consider how the policy, and cultures of the city also shape the material urban landscape. In a city where the municipal government has placed so much emphasis upon intervention in public space, I consider how gender plays a part in (re)producing such space, noting that such a consideration was largely absent in the development plan and approach to gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 6

Gendered Space in the Changing Urban Landscape

As the metro train pulls in to San Javier metro station, its final stop on the line, I shuffle from the train past those politely waiting to board as people around me disperse from the station in all directions, towards the metro cable that climbs up the steep hillside, towards the long line of bus stops, or by foot. Walking past the sizeable queue for the metro cable I leave the station and head to the footbridge, crossing a busy road to meet with the foot of the San Javier *Parque Biblioteca* (library park). San Javier, more commonly known as *Comuna* 13, covers seven square miles and incorporates twelve *barrios* on the Western edges of the great urban sprawl crossing the Aburrá valley. Standing outside the *Parque Biblioteca* it is easy to marvel at the government facilities provided in a historically deprived neighbourhood. The park is one of several similar facilities throughout the city and a constant hub of activity, providing locals with a space for meeting, for accessing computers and Wi-Fi, a small collection of books, and spaces for classes and events. Several government services also have offices based within the library, reaffirming its position as a central meeting point in the neighbourhood.

As it is close to the end of the working day, the queue of women, waiting to speak to someone in the *Centro Integral Para la Familia*,[106] is shorter than normal, but around half a dozen still wait outside the door, some swaying young children on their hips. Three men wearing suits sip small *tintos* while deep in conversation at a picnic table outside the café, and a young couple sit hand in hand on a bench that overlooks the community garden. In the warm late afternoon sunlight, the neighbourhood seems tranquil. The library perches on the hillside, giving it both visibility within the neighbourhood and a vantage point where it feels like the whole neighbourhood stretches out ahead and above you. Haphazard houses blanket the hillsides of the neighbourhood and unpopulated mountain tops peek out above the rooftops in every direction. San Javier library park is just one of the many public spaces that have been developed in *Comuna* 13 in recent years, and along with the others has been credited with changing the character of the neighbourhood itself. As the *Alcaldía* state: "public space constitutes an ideal setting for closing the gaps of inequality and poverty" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 450). In bringing interventions, and specifically infrastructure projects, to marginal areas, the urban development approach in Medellín is seen to tackle some of the highlighted problems often associated with Latin American cities (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). This chapter focuses upon the changing public space

---

[106] These family centres have a wide range of serves including for healthcare, nutrition and legal support.

within Medellín, and *Comuna* 13 in particular, considering both the ways in which such space has changed, and the implications this has for the gendered experiences of the urban space.

Drawing primarily upon literature from feminist geography, urban studies and planners, the core arguments underpinning the analysis in this chapter relate to the intricate interconnections between space and gender (McDowell, 1983; Massey, 1994). As outlined in chapter two, the spaces of the city are differentiated by the multiple lived experiences of the urban environment (Fenster, 1999; de Certeau, 2011; Chant and McIlwaine, 2013). In focusing on everyday experiences of and negotiations of space, I acknowledge that the personal has political implications and that relations and processes at all levels are gendered (Enloe, 1990a). The gendered dynamics of space can be recognised in snapshots of everyday city life. The queue of mothers described above, patiently waiting each day at the family support centre within the library park, are just one of many examples. A constant queue of women, visibly inhabiting their roles as mothers within the urban infrastructure, normalises and reinforces such responsibilities and a gendered division of labour. Everyday mundane moments within the urban landscape indicate some of the ways in which gendered norms are regulated and formed by the gendered spaces they rest within (Gibson-Graham, 1994; Bondi and Davidson, 2005).

Engagements and interactions within the urban landscape, including within the innovative government interventions, continue to be shaped by gender logics and subjectivities. Despite significant changes and interventions in the marginal spaces of the city, such spaces continue to be embedded in both history and politics, thus (re)producing the social (Massey, 1994: 4). Here then, I again draw on the everyday as a key position from which to observe structural inequalities including, but not limited to, gendered relations and performances (Enloe, 1990a; Elias and Roberts, 2016; Chisholm, 2017) through which we can begin to understand the intersections between gender and space (Fenster, 2005b; Beebeejaun, 2017). In this chapter I draw upon interviews and ethnographic observations from *Comuna* 13 to illustrate various spatial dynamics and restrictions along gendered lines. This includes restricted access to certain sites and spaces, a gendered political economy and the complex gendered spaces of resistance.

In chapters four and five I have focused on the policies and framing of the urban environment, culture and gender, and the implications of these for Medellín's urban transformation. Here, the discussion shifts attention to the spaces of the city themselves, considering the design and planning of specific interventions, and prioritising the everyday experiences and negotiations of that space. Investment in

infrastructure and, more specifically, public space has been central to the urban development plan in Medellín; here I shift to consider the spatial performance of gender (and intersecting identities). The focus of this investment has been on poorer and peripheral neighbourhoods,[107] like *Comuna* 13, with innovative design and transport solutions, including the cable cars and outdoor escalators. While this investment has altered daily experiences of the landscape of the city, it must also be noted that experiences of urban space differ according to gender and other intersecting categories (Falú, 2009). *Comuna* 13 is one of the most celebrated parts of the city as a result of its transformation over recent years as a focal point of the investment in outdoor infrastructure. In assessing the narrative of Medellín's transformation, it is an important site within which to consider various daily interactions and experiences in different sites and spaces in the neighbourhood.

In considering urban design and space, I recognise such space as socially constructed, bounded, and shaped. As such, urban landscapes become readable (McDowell, 1997). Despite the clear recognition of public and private spheres as intimately related, as outlined in chapter two (Enloe, 2011), for the purposes of this discussion I focus primarily upon the experience of public space. When I asked Carolina, a civil servant working in the women's department, what was needed in the city, she reported that change was needed not only in the public space but also in the private, but said that "the state continues to assume that it cannot intervene [there]." As she found, policy makers often rely upon the binary distinction, with public and private identified as separate spheres, designating only the public space as within the remit of intervention and the private sphere instead seen as separate from politics (Sweet and Escalante, 2010). Gendered spaces also encourage a rigid binary categorisation of gender, shaping gendered performances and potential subjectivities within public spaces (Doan, 2010). Leaving the private sphere as 'sacred', as an area where we cannot, and should not, intervene, allows for gendered relations and gendered violences within it to continue unchallenged (Vargas, 2009). Such separation fails to consider and recognise the ways in which such spaces are both constitutive of gendered norms and relations. As the clear focus of the planning strategy of Medellín, looking to public space, allows an insight into the considerations of planners, and helps to understand the ways in which gender is integrated or made invisible within planning decisions. In this chapter I engage with public space as a core area of intervention for those aiming to shape a new city, focusing upon the way in which the public space is accessed and used, but with an underpinning acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of private and public space and the ways in which the experiences of both are gendered.

---

[107] Although not exclusively, infrastructure and state interventions can be found across the city.

Additionally I understand space, like gender, to always be in flux and under construction (Massey, 2005). Far from being static or uncontested, I explore examples of protest and resistance, where uses of space and the gendered logics within it are troubled and contested. I draw out ways that the spaces and gendered expectations in Medellín are both shifting and impacting upon one another albeit within broader regulatory logics. This chapter also draws out the complexities and nuances of gendered space, the ways in which the use of public space can include contestations and negotiations that include shifts in gendered norms. In moving to the mutual construction of space and gendered identities we can consider, as Bondi and Rose argue, "both the constraining and liberatory possibilities of urban public space and city life" (2003: 236). In protests, celebrations and performances using the changing urban space, we see a troubling of the public/private divisions for women's roles and challenges to the privileged and often violent hegemonic masculinities that have been associated with marginal neighbourhoods in Latin America and beyond (as explored in chapters seven and eight). Alterations in the public space in *Comuna* 13 have changed how the city and neighbourhood are experienced and have provided new opportunities for engagements with, and appropriations of, space. Drawing upon a combination of ethnographic observations and interviews, I look to the everyday of such space. This illuminates the three core themes of this chapter: the ongoing restrictions to certain spaces and how they are gendered, the gendered political economy of the changing urban space and the resistance that both troubles and reinforces gendered binaries. I consequently show that despite various changes the city space continues to be gendered, in somewhat flexible but ultimately regulated ways.

6.1 Changing the face of a neighbourhood

The development of infrastructure projects has been extensive in *Comuna 13*. Within the neighbourhood there are a wide range of projects including the library park, described above, the outdoor escalators, the cable cars, a number of outdoor open-access gyms and the *Casa de Justicia,* providing a range of legal support and advice and support for victims of violence, including one of the *duplas* (teams or duos of psychologists and lawyers) supporting women affected by domestic violence*.* The infrastructure projects are dotted around the *Comuna*, clearly demonstrating the presence of the *Alcaldía* within the neighbourhood. The visible local government interventions in public space are presented as a way of addressing the 'social debt' left after decades of neglect (Maclean, 2014) that were felt particularly acutely in a neighbourhood like *Comuna* 13. Through focusing on *Comuna* 13, I assess the narrative of transformation, within its epicentre. Considering the area of the most celebrated change, I do not assume that such change is equally felt across the city (see chapter

seven). However, the investment and concentration within public space in the *Comuna* makes it significant for considering the case of the transformed city.

Talking with residents of *Comuna* 13 about the experience of public space there shows some of the dramatic changes they have lived through. Previously, the public space in the city, and specifically in the neighbourhood, was one of extreme insecurity, of death and violence. *Comuna* 13 was known as the most violent neighbourhood within the violent city, and has long struggled not only with violence but also poverty and exclusion, consistent with informal neighbourhoods across Latin America (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). Yuliana, a young woman who has grown up and lived in the district her whole life explained:

> [the neighbourhood] has changed so much. When I was little, when I was 4 years old, when you left the house you would see people dead on the floor, killed. But now, no. Everyone walks around here without anything. Everyone walks without fear. You can leave at whatever hour you want to; before you could only leave until around 6pm. It has changed so much.

Yuliana's account was similar to many that I heard from those who had lived in the *Comuna* for many years. Her daily experience of the neighbourhood, and that of other residents, had changed dramatically, from a place where traversing the neighbourhood even in the walk to school was insecure and severely restricted, to a place where she, and other residents, welcomed a new freedom in their movement and experience of public space. The discrediting stigma associated with the area[108] also had material impacts on those living there, as the area came to be associated solely with violence. The change that is experienced in the daily life of residents and the reduction in violence in *Comuna* 13 is often the focus of attention, both in the press and in scholarly accounts (for example; Blanco and Kobayashi, 2009; Stiglitz, 2014). Whilst acknowledging this change, and without wanting to diminish the significance of it, considering it through a gender lens can help us to see some of its limitations. Therefore, here I consider sites within the urban landscape, paying attention to the gendered nature of both the constructions of space and the experiences of it.

---

[108] Goffman's (1968) account of stigma, in particular with regards to group identity, helps to illuminate how stigma can relate to discrimination and feeling devalued. Such stigma connects to ideas of structural violence and social exclusion, both common in Latin American cities (see Koonings and Krujit 2007).

6.2 Gendered restrictions in urban space

Drawing the discussion to the urban everyday allows us to understand the gendered experience of, and engagement with, space in the city. As outlined in chapter two, access to different spaces in the city is determined by gender identity, with spaces "governed by patriarchal power relations and norms of female propriety" (Chant, 2013: 66). Restrictions or exclusions are influenced by "symbolic meanings of space" (Fenster, 2005b: 226), meaning that gendered norms (and intersecting categories) shape the creation of "spaces of belonging and dis-belonging" (Fenster, 1999). Here I demonstrate ways in which certain spaces within *Comuna* 13 are gendered and how that can restrict particular gendered expressions and subjects. As a result, I show how spaces shape and (re)produce particular gender expressions and consequently which gendered subjects are more or less welcome within different spaces.

Figure 7: Outdoor gym, barrio Las Independencias, San Javier-Comuna 13

The patriarchal, hetero-masculine appropriation of space can be seen in the restrictions certain individuals felt in access to particular spaces in Medellín; one example being the city's outdoor gymnasiums (Figure 7). As one of the many infrastructure investments in public space, the gyms vary in size and location, often situated on the side of roads or footpaths, or by public parks. One weekday morning I pushed through the turnstile onto the local bus in *Comuna 13* and spotted Ana, a young woman who was also on her way

up to the language school by the escalators. We often met here, on the way to the class, and our usual conversation centred around her many hobbies and usually on her love for exercise. On this day when I asked about her avid fitness routine she turned to me, sighed and explained that although she used to go to the outdoor gym a lot, she hadn't been able to go recently. She usually went to the gym with a friend, but her friend was pregnant, she told me, so she couldn't go anymore. Ana looked surprised when I asked her why that meant that she couldn't still go on her own, replying simply that "there are lots of men there". When I probed further she said that she wouldn't feel comfortable there by herself, her tone making it clear that this should be a fairly obvious fact. Our exchange demonstrated that there were certain expectations associated with who could, and could not, access the space. Ana's friend's pregnancy seemed to prevent her from accessing that particular facility, and in turn meant that Ana also felt unable to use the gyms, due to the perceived impossibility of accessing such a space as a lone female.

In addition to the restricted use of these spaces by women, the gyms also presented a limited type of masculinity. The very public nature of these gyms, meant that a particular hyper-masculinity was on show. Men, and usually young men, competed as they used the machines or took turns to beat the previous contenders maximum number of chin-ups. In competitive displays of physical power, the visible and prominent performativity of a hyper-masculinity that emphasised strength alone, foreclosed other ways of being within that space. As you walk around *Comuna 13*, and other neighbourhoods in the city, you often encounter these gyms. They prominently stand at the side of streets, next to thoroughfares, along with other sports facilities such as *canchas* for football,[109] and are part of a wider campaign to improve fitness and expand access to healthier lifestyles within the city.[110] The gendered everyday experience of this space illustrates that the design and management of the gyms and other facilities failed to consider the gendered restrictions that the gyms can generate and reinforce. In failing to account for the gendered experience of such space, the gyms were not welcoming spaces for women, and especially lone women. While a young man from *Comuna* 13 assured me that the gyms were inclusive and welcoming, Ana's everyday experience contradicted such a suggestion. For Ana, despite her love of exercise, a change in circumstances meant that the gyms were no longer a space she felt she could access. Additionally, the visibility of such spaces in the heart of communities

---

[109] El Poblado, the wealthiest neighbourhood in Medellín, houses one of the largest outdoor gyms in the city. Hyper-masculine and competitive performances were particularly pronounced in El Poblado's gym, further querying the idea that such gendered norms and performances are unique to the poorer and marginal neighbourhoods.

[110] INDER, the Sports and Recreation Institute of Medellín runs a variety of free classes for residents of all ages, and access to world-class sports facilities. INDER led the construction of urban outdoor gyms in 2017 to encourage exercise - https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16391581.

promotes a narrow depiction of hyper-masculinity, meaning that male strength and power become normalised and prioritised over other ways of being within that space.

Restrictions to space were not only reported in relation to the gyms. Laura, a lawyer and academic from Medellín, described public spaces in Medellín including parks and squares, as places where "women can't go, because they are spaces that are absolutely masculine". She did not deny that such spaces are used by women at certain times, and of course the category of women is heterogeneous, containing individuals across urban environments with extremely diverse experiences informed by a number of intersecting identity categories (Tacoli and Satterthwaite, 2013). However, Laura affirmed that the male-dominance within such public sites meant that women were less likely to feel that they belonged within such spaces (Fenster, 2005a). The gendered nature of urban space has been linked to specific security concerns, for instance low lighting which restricts the movement of women and vulnerable groups (Tankel, 2011). In Medellín some of these concerns have been addressed, sites of the core infrastructure projects, for instance, tend to be well-lit and open. However, as Laura explained: "the urban transformation, yes, it's great, it's positive, but it doesn't change the forms of appropriation of space." Here she acknowledges that interventions in public space alone cannot change the way such space is experienced as there is an ultimate failure to address the restrictions associated with gendered roles and performances in wider society. Just as in chapter four, where I explored how cultural change cannot challenge gender (or other inequalities) without challenging the unequal structures that inform it, space too cannot bring about progressive gender equality without specific gender-sensitive planning and consideration. Physical spaces must therefore be understood within their broader context, recognising how gendered subjectivities (among others) shape engagement with the cityscape (Massey, 1994).

Restrictions from particular spaces therefore still occur despite the infrastructure developments. The way that the urban spaces are experienced rests heavily on gendered expectations, understandings and exclusions. In Medellín, as elsewhere, traditional gender roles have associated women with, and restricted them to the private sphere (Fraser, 2016). Jaime, a member of hip-hop collective based in *Comuna 13*, for instance explained that in Medellín:

> It is an absolutely *machista* society... it is society in general, including women. They're part of *machismo* too. Because more than us, women are encouraging it. So, for example, there is a son and a daughter. The son can go out on the street, but the daughter, no. The daughter has to go to the kitchen, the son, no. The

daughter learns to make beans, the son, no… *machismo* always places women in the home, and men in the public.

The gendered societal expectations that Jaime outlines continue to restrict the potential for women to access opportunities, particularly those based in the public sphere. Hip-hop is a significant outlet through which to subvert and challenge power relations and injustices, including violent masculinities,[111] but Jaime reported that gendered roles and expectations mean that access continues to be restricted for women. The hip-hop collective Jaime is part of is made up of a mixture of DJs, graffiti artists, rappers, photographers and dancers. When talking to Jaime about the members of the collective he was aware, and even apologetic, about the lack of women in the core group of 14 young men. Being invited to become a member of the group, he explained, was based on talent and friendship. But Jaime saw the distinction mentioned above, of women in the home and men in the public, as feeding into an unequal distribution in hip-hop:

> So, we say that rap is very street, you learn to be a rapper in the street with your friends. That's why it's much more difficult for girls. If you're a good female rapper, you have to work three times as hard, and that's why in general girls aren't such good rappers… so, you see for every 100 male rappers there is one female.

The gendered expectations in wider society meant that the potential to access certain spaces and groups varied according to gender identity and expectations. Regardless of advances in infrastructure and development of public space in Medellín, the limitations in challenging broader societal expectations have resulted in a continued restriction of access to certain spaces, due to the continuing masculine dominance within the public sphere.

The examples I draw upon here indicate that the nature and design of particular spaces, and the societal norms they (re)produce, exclude performances of certain gendered performances and subjectivities. Women and girls in Medellín, as in many parts of the world, continue to have greater responsibility for the home, preventing engagement with activities that occur predominantly in public space. The design of public space and developments within it have failed to challenge the restrictions and limitations of gendered subjectivities that can be performed within them. Urban planning has long been critiqued for ignoring gendered imbalances, and the ways in which such spaces support traditional gendered activities and roles (Fainstein and Servon, 2005; Greed,

---

[111] Baird (2012) outlines the role of alternative socialisation spaces in giving male youths from poorer neighbourhoods opportunities outside of gangs and associated violence and masculinities.

2005). The examples explored here further query the need for a comprehensive engagement with gender relations and the spaces of the city, and further call for meaningful gender mainstreaming across all governmental services and interventions (as explored further in chapter five). Infrastructure and developments within public spaces are always connected with gender and can never be discussed as technical or neutral issues separate from social relations. While I have focused on gender here, the restrictions on public space also intersect other identity categories such as age, sexuality and race (Fenster, 2005b). The restrictions on space are illustrative of the link between space and gender, also showing how the impact of public space intervention will always be limited by wider societal gender norms. As such, a focus on public space alone cannot mitigate gendered restrictions and expressions within the city.

6.3 Gendered political economy of changing public space

It is not only in the restricted access to space that we can see the gendered use of space. To illustrate this, I focus upon the outdoor escalators. As one of the flagship infrastructure projects that have dramatically changed the cityscape, the escalators, which opened in 2011, have become a symbol of transformation, attracting significant attention and an increasing number of both national and international visitors.[112] Six *tramas* (sets of escalator steps), zig zag their way up the hillside, each topped with a colourful orange roof that stands out prominently amongst the small, concrete houses (Figure 8). Initially inspired by the outdoor escalators in Barcelona,[113] these are one of the most unusual and renowned urban development projects in Medellín. The designers saw them as an intervention with the ambitious scope to build community and reduce violence. Following decades of extreme violence in *Comuna* 13, and *barrio Las Independencias* in particular, the local government demolished several houses in a contested area within the *barrio* and constructed the escalators, an innovative solution to improve the city.

While they save some residents a gruelling climb up the steep hillside, their purpose is not limited to transportation.[114] César Augusto Hernandez, the engineer behind the project explained that they were instead seen to break urban ghettos and borders that divide different territories; he stated that they "would break down the social

---

[112] The contrast between past violence and the relative safety is a focus of touristic visits to the neighbourhood (see Rendon, 2017).

[113] Barcelona's escalators, such as those near Parque Güell, are designed to improve accessibility in steep areas.

[114] Realistically the role of the escalators in transportation is limited. This is not the steepest hillside in the city, nor the busiest. They also run up several stories but in a city with many hillside dwellings, meaning only a small proportion of the population need access to this particular area of the neighbourhood.

composition and rebuild it" (quoted in Ke, 2013). With great diversity of need in the neighbourhood, and huge costs of nearly 4 million US dollars, the merits of the project were strongly contested and opinions on their utility and effectiveness vary drastically. Most local residents see them primarily as a change in the image of the neighbourhood, rather than bringing practical benefits, as seen in the following quotes:

> I think they're … an aesthetic face of the city, publicity, city-marketing. The most obvious thing is that the escalators were sold as a social project, like a mobility project, which they aren't. Like a transformation project, which they aren't.
>
> Jaime, hip-hop collective

> The escalators, (sigh), they are superficial make-up on the reality of a neighbourhood like *Comuna* 13 … But they look beautiful.
>
> Mateo, LGBTQ campaigner

> For me, the escalators are a way of saying here we are. Recognition.
>
> Jhon, resident near escalators

Whether seen in a positive or negative light, the significance of this infrastructure project is undeniable. Even Erika, one of the most strident critics of the escalators I spoke with (who had been displaced from her home by their construction) admitted to herself, "Are they changing the face of the neighbourhood? Yes, of course. Have they brought progress? Yes, of course." While their utility and appropriateness as an intervention is contested, they are undoubtedly a symbol of change (Young, 2019). They have brought the neighbourhood to prominence and many residents are fiercely proud of the change that they see as being symbolised by the escalators.

The changed image has brought other benefits, the most commonly cited being the attraction of tourists and their contributions to the area, both economic and otherwise. The area around the escalators used to be difficult to navigate for residents and off-limits to foreign tourists; the surrounding area was the site of severe violence for many years. Now, walking up the steep narrow street to the foot of the escalators you pass shops selling homemade *cremas*, cafes, colourful graffiti murals and a community garden. On each platform between the six sets of escalators there is a changing variety of stalls selling everything from churros to fridge magnets. From my first visit to the neighbourhood in July 2016 to when I left Medellín in November 2017, the steady increase in numbers of tourists, street stalls, shops and cafes was notable. Over the course of the year, the escalators received high profile visitors, including Bill Clinton,[115]

---

[115] https://caracol.com.co/emisora/2017/07/10/medellin/1499723343_976529.html

giving the area even more international attention. More and more rival tour companies are setting up to take the many tourists to the highlights of the area and tell the story of the neighbourhoods' transformation.

Figure 8: Outdoor escalators, barrio Las Independencias, San Javier-Comuna 13

Tourism is one of the focal points of the urban transformation project in Medellín. The *Alcaldía's* 2016-2019 development plan states that "Tourism, as an activity that crosses the rest of the industries, and as one of the activities that grows most quickly after an economic crisis, contributes to the creation of employment opportunities, and to social transformation" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 369). There is a wealth of literature on the implications of tourism and the tourist gaze (See for example; Urry, 2002), and specifically tourism in relation to the global South (Smith, 1989; Harrison, 1992; Lumsden, 2001; Tucker *et al.*, 2004; Becklake, 2016), or poorer neighbourhoods, frequently referred to as slum tourism (Williams, 2008; Frenzel, 2016). Such literature helps to frame this discussion, but here I focus on the gendered political economy of the burgeoning tourist industry by the escalators, and how it further indicates that the regions development and infrastructure projects inadequately challenges gendered inequalities. Instead the construction of the escalators and the resulting change in the experience of that space does not challenge the neighbourhood's feminised poverty,[116] and has even encouraged its persistence through an explosion of and reliance upon informal work.

---

[116] Women are often overrepresented in breakdowns of those living in poverty, a phenomenon that has been termed the 'feminisation' of poverty. The feminisation of poverty is not only related to the overrepresentation of women in low-paying employment sectors (Pearce, 1978; Peake and Trotz,1999), but also of greater "responsibility and/or obligation" which in turn leads to gender-inequitable labour burdens (Chant, 2014: 2).

While income generation opportunities are beneficial for individual households, especially in an area that has historically had limited opportunities for enterprise, the economic benefits brought by the tourism are precarious. The majority of the employment opportunities the escalators have brought are informal and high-risk.[117] The contribution of informal work, particularly in poorer areas, is contested. As a way of negotiating but simultaneously reinforcing neoliberal practices (Gago, 2017), it is seen as a way through which "less privileged groups have managed to bypass mercantilist controls" (Portes and Schauffler, 1993: 55). The role of informal economies within Latin America is undoubtedly significant (De Soto, 1990), but not without problems. The local government in Medellín itself appears to be sceptical about the benefits of informal work. In their recent development plan they acknowledge that "the inequalities between geographic areas that have the greatest deprivations in informal employment, barriers in access to health, low educational achievements and without health insurance continue" (2016: 81). Here, they group informal work together with other challenges that disproportionately faced by poorer neighbourhoods. Chen (2001) supports this concern, stating that a higher proportion of informal sector workers are poor, with lower incomes than those in the formal sector. As well as this, she outlines the overrepresentation of women in the informal sector, thereby presenting a strong link between gender, informal work and poverty. The acknowledgement of the vulnerability of informal sector workers must therefore also consider the gendered dimension of both poverty and informal work. Despite the *Alcaldía's* apparent concerns about informal labour however, the celebrated escalators have predominantly spurred a host of informal labour opportunities.

In outlining the feminisation of poverty, responsibility and obligation, Chant (2014) argues that there is a double burden of those living in peripheral and poor neighbourhoods as a result of the lack of services and infrastructure. However, Medellín in some ways challenges such criticism. Over the past decade, the *Alcaldía* has invested in a range of services throughout the city, with an emphasis on poorer peripheral neighbourhoods including *Comuna 13*. The analysis of Citizen Culture in chapter four has shown how Medellín's policies are underpinned by neoliberal structures and while such investment may seem to present a departure from the individualism associated with this, it is rather aligned with the concepts of roll-out neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002). As discussed in 1.3, developing an inclusive city is a central dimension of Medellín's plan to shift the rhetoric of the city and attract business investment. As such

---

[117] In contrast, the same development model has been critiqued for displacing informal street vendors in other areas through policing the use of space and driving vendors away (Acevedo and Carreira, 2010).

the investment in public space presents a different dimension of Medellín's neoliberal development, but remains situated within this approach.

One example of such investment is *Buen Comienzo* (good start), a childcare service that provides care for children under-5. *Buen Comienzo* centres are situated all over the city, and while the focus of the centres is on the wellbeing of the children, it also provides childcare services. Leidy, a tour guide, student and young single mother, praised the centres for giving her the opportunity to work and study:

> *Buen Comienzo* supports mothers that are looking after their children in their early childhood…. It's paid for by the *Alcaldía*, I don't have to pay anything. They feed my son. When I'm working and studying they look after him, and when I was in college I had the opportunity to help in the playgroup and it was great, that I could take him there and be there

For Leidy, *Buen Comienzo* meant that she could juggle her many commitments, including informal work in her own tour company. Free and consistent childcare allowed her to start the company and run tours, in spite of the fluctuating nature of the work; based entirely on tourist enquiries, and an unstable tipping-based income. While the childcare provided by the local government overcame problems identified by Chant (2014), these services do not challenge the traditional societal ideas of women caring for children. Leidy specifically referred to the support that the childcare service provides for mothers,[118] showing her designation of childcare as a predominantly female responsibility. The daily use of space therefore, and the benefits of the local services remained intimately connected to the gendered divisions of labour (Fenster, 2005b). The services may have opened up employment opportunities for women, but their gendered burdens remain.

For others, childcare was a more direct reason for undertaking informal work. When speaking with Diana, a woman and *vendedora,* running a small stall selling artisanal goods next to the escalators, I asked her what the escalators meant to her. She replied:

> they have brought a lot of tourists so there are more forms of employment for us.[119] For a lot of women here in the barrio we didn't have a way of leaving to work, because we couldn't leave the children alone…. The achievement now is that we have a way of working here, thanks to the escalators and the many

---

[118] A member of staff at the *Alcaldía* interestingly mentioned specifically that *Buen Comienzo* was not designed for women, instead being primarily focused on children, but there are still indirect benefits for women as Leidy's case demonstrates.

[119] She used '*nosotras*' here, specifying that she was talking exclusively about women.

tourists they have brought. There are ways to work here in the neighbourhood now.

The changing nature of the public space has allowed new opportunities for self-employment for women like Diana, who are now able to work producing crafts, and sell them near to their homes. She manages to do so because the flexibility of this labour and its close proximity to home allows her to balance it with other commitments. As such, while this may have improved her personal situation, it shows how such employment opportunities are firmly rooted within traditional gender roles. Chant argues that:

> As a general rule, low-income women's home-based enterprises are small-scale and under-capitalised. They also routinely revolve around food, and other domestic activities which dovetail closely with women's reproductive roles, symbolically as well as practically (2014: 14).

In Diana's case and others across the various stalls that compete for space by the escalators, such a trend is repeated in the types of goods, food and juices that are sold at the escalators, often right from the home.

The informal sector thrives in economies with low growth, where people have limited options and employ pragmatism in adapting to their environment (Gago, 2017). It tends to meet survival needs and is limited to individual and small-scale gains, rather than providing wider prospects for growth, and as such does little to challenge the poverty that is experienced by many in *Comuna 13*. In identifying the aims for development planning, Moser (1993) distinguishes between practical and strategic needs (a distinction that relates to that between integrationist and agenda-setting gender mainstreaming, as discussed in chapter five). While these do not exist along a rigid binary and are in fact often entwined, it remains a useful distinction to consider in reference to transformative change (Molyneux, 2001). The employment and income generation opportunities can be seen as an improvement in access of residents in the neighbourhood to meet their practical needs, such as access to basic services and needs such as food. However, the strategic needs, being those that question and probe the systemic subordination inherent to gender relations are neglected.[120] Diana and Leidy,

---

[120] I note that the division between strategic and practical needs has received criticism. For instance, it can discount that there are always political dimensions inherent to practical realities (Wieringa, 1994). Additionally, since its adoption by mainstream development institutions the distinction has been critiqued as a Western imposition of preconceptions of what strategic needs should look like (see for example Aguinaga et al., 2013). That said, it proves useful when considering the variety of street vendors and how they designate their daily experiences.

in emphasising their appreciation of the opportunity to generate income, align primarily with the achievement of their practical needs.

Others based at the escalators used the newly accessible public space as an opportunity to bring both practical and strategic needs together. One such example is the approximately 40 women who are part of the *Red de Apoyo para las Mujeres* (women's support network), a craft network based in *Comuna 13* who run a small stall at the top of the escalators. They make a range of products including jewellery, fragrances and ornaments and sell them to the many tourist visitors. They are made up of predominantly black and indigenous women, often additionally marginalised, and initially started out of necessity, as a way to support each other through years of violence. Tourism in *Comuna* 13 has provided an opportunity for them to sell their handicrafts, and over the year I spent visiting the area I saw Sandra, the leader of the network and stall, move from occasionally sitting on the concrete bench near the viewpoint with a small selection of crafts to having a large and well stocked stall on a daily basis.[121] Sandra explained to me that the network doesn't just provide economic support to the women in the group, although that does play an increasingly large part of what they do. She explained the start of the group to me:

> A long time ago, we ran a workshop... We ran an open workshop to make arts and crafts. Four women arrived, possibly five, and we started to knit, we started to embroider, and little by little we were talking about our pain... this made us feel united, little by little.

Since the small beginnings, the group has grown significantly. The scope of their work has also expanded, alongside the stall and support group they also run a variety of workshops talking about themes including human rights, women's leadership and education. The *Red de Apoyo* goes much further than economic or practical gains alone, also acting to unite women from various backgrounds and improve their knowledge and understandings.

There are many positives to the *Red de Apoyo* beyond the (unstable) economic support it offers. That said, the employment still reinforces a gendered political economy, resting upon an unchallenged dichotomy of feminised domestic labour and drawing upon traditionally 'female' skills. Again, like Diana, members of the group are able to contribute their handicrafts, made in the home and again complementing domestic responsibilities. The women grasp the opportunity on offer and have extended its

---

[121] Since I left the city, the group have further expanded, opening a small café selling traditional foods, called *Berracas de la 13* (https://www.facebook.com/berracas13/).

potential with a cooperative style of working, however it continues to rest upon and reproduce gendered divisions of labour, as well as a reliance on women's own economic entrepreneurial aptitude, rather than empowerment as structural change. While the small informal businesses may bring practical gains, the entrepreneurial responses to the changes in the urban environment do not in and of themselves represent structural change, rather showing a more constrained version of self-empowerment[122] (Batiwala, 2010). The women in the collective have been able to use the opportunities brought by the change in public space, for employment but also for organising, but still remaining within restricted and naturalising divisions of labour.

The stories of Leidy, Diana and Sandra begin to demonstrate the breadth of experience of the informal sector work around the escalators. Their experiences vary, each embodying different gendered roles and identities, but all three illustrate the gendered nature of the work and roles that these women, in very different situations, still occupy. The *Alcaldía* expressed concern about the high levels of informal work in poorer neighbourhoods of the city; however the majority of opportunities for work brought by projects like the escalators revolve around such informal work, providing a means for survival, but not structural change (Canagarajah and Sethuraman, 2001). The daily experience of space around what is now the site of the escalators has changed dramatically in a short space of time. Without considering the feminised nature of poverty (Chant, 2014), or of the informal sector (Chen, 2001) however, the planning and experience of the changed public space has further reinforced particular ways of being and gendered subjectivities. When considering the encouragement of gendered informal work and the continued restriction of particular subjects to other public spaces within the neighbourhood, as seen in Ana's reluctance to access the outdoor gym and Jaime's concerns around the restrictions facing women in their access to hip-hop, we see that despite the changing face of the public space the urban landscape remains gendered. New and innovative infrastructure developments have altered the face of the neighbourhood, and the residents have utilised and appropriated the spaces within it, in ways that have practical and strategic impacts (Wieringa, 1994; Molyneux, 2001). However, without challenging any of the root causes of poverty and inequality for instance, such interventions will always be limited by the structural disparities under which they remain.

---

[122] Empowerment is another development 'buzzword', that has been depoliticised and often associated singularly with economic development rather than transformative structural change (Cornwall, 2007).

6.4 The City in Flux: spaces of resistance

Following on from the previous examples of the gendered everyday of public space, the remainder of the chapter turns to consider how the changing nature of public space and various infrastructure developments have also been sites of resistance. Cities, and particularly cities as focal points of neoliberal development, have been heavily critiqued for the ways they perpetuate injustice and inequality, but also recognised as central to struggles for justice (Harvey, 1988; Smith, 1994; Harvey, 2000; Marcuse, 2009). While the potential for transformation at a city level is constrained by broader societal dynamics, urban space is also an environment where such dynamics can be troubled and changed, as the previous examples of informal labour began to indicate. There are limitations as to what can be achieved within the urban space, but planners, activists and the residents do shape and work the space of the city's landscape for change in notable ways. Whether transformative or transactional, change is a defining characteristic of urban space. As Saskia Sassen suggests, in urban research we must consider a cities distinguishing features of "incompleteness, complexity and the possibility of making" (2013: 209). I therefore understand that the inherent incompleteness of the cityscape opens up the possibility of making, through opportunities to shape the urban political environment. These possibilities may not change who holds power, but allows a creation of histories, an ability to speak. Echoing the contribution of Paulo Freire (1998) in the essential "unfinishedness" of the human condition, the city too is a space of flux, together with those who inhabit it they are in the "process of becoming". As such, it is important to note the ways in which urban space is appropriated and claimed. While this can be achieved in various ways, the examples I focus on various forms of creative practice. As explored in Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2008), performing arts can provide a route to challenging oppression in everyday life and as such to explore the agency to make change. The central concepts of incompleteness and processes of becoming are central to understanding the creativity of resistance in the public space of Medellín.

Gender, being central to space, is therefore also integral to the reformation and possibilities for making within urban space. Public space, due to its exclusions and political dynamics, is a dynamic territory of power, that can bring about participation, silences and exclusions (Phillips, 2014). As throughout the thesis, a gendered analysis of space and change goes beyond looking just at women, considering how individuals and collectives resist injustices and often at the same time reshape and/or reinforce gendered roles. I will therefore consider traditional gender roles on both sides of the gender dichotomy, considering the ways in which women push gendered boundaries but also how elements such as hegemonic masculinities are troubled by the ways in

which the urban landscape is appropriated. Here I show that women (and men) are not passive in processes of change, but actively shape the alteration of the spatial structure of the city (England, 1991).

For the remainder of the chapter, I therefore discuss how the shifting character of public space in *Comuna 13* has resulted in new opportunities for claiming and reclaiming that space, not only for economic reasons but also in challenging violence and troubling the boundaries of gendered subjectivities. While I acknowledge the potential of these changes, I note that they continue to be placed within a gendered dichotomy, which further entrenches a binary understanding of gender. I consider various examples, showing the breadth of such activities and their implications; the events marking the fifteenth anniversary of *Operación Orión*, and the *Carnaval de la 13*, focusing on the final parade of the carnival. The cases depict different aspects of the reclamation and reshaping of public space using creative expression. The discussion is significant for the overall research questions as it probes further what opportunities the 'transformed' city has brought, but significantly the way that these are 'worked' by a variety of actors and the gendered resistances in the city. Having discussed the political economy and spatial experience of public space in *Comuna* 13, and restrictions within it, resistance adds an important dimension of creative engagement and reclamation within the changing urban environment.

6.4.1 Operación Orión Nunca Más

16th October 2017 marked the fifteenth anniversary of *Operación Orión*, a controversial military operation in *Comuna 13*. Just two months after the inauguration of President Álvaro Uribe the military offensive in the neighbourhood began as part of his Democratic Security approach (explored in chapter seven). State forces worked with paramilitaries, with orders not to retreat until full control of the sector had been obtained (Morgan, 2008). As the last of eleven military operations in *Comuna* 13 over the course of 2002, Orión is remembered as one of the most violent.[123] As many as 3,000 soldiers and police officers, alongside state-supported right-wing paramilitaries entered what is one of the most densely populated areas of the city to combat the urban guerrilla rebels who had taken control of the region in the preceding years.[124] The offensive lasted four days and was praised by authorities as a great success and credited for the supposed pacification of the area (Sánchez, 2011). Accounts of the operation and its consequences are disputed, *Corporación Jurídica Libertad*, a local NGO, reports that eighty-eight people were killed, and hundreds were wounded, detained, displaced or

---

[123] *Operación Mariscal*, in May of the same year, was also one of the most impactful.
[124] Leftist guerrilla organisations such as FARC and ELN had strongholds in *Comuna* 13 (Durán-Martínez, 2018).

disappeared over the four days. For residents of *Comuna* 13, *Operación Orión* is a painful memory. Many fled the neighbourhood during the conflict, waiting anxiously in other areas of the city for news of family and friends. When I asked residents to describe *Comuna* 13, *Operación Orión* was almost always mentioned and the significance of the event cannot be understated. The legacy of *Operación Orión* has numerous dimensions. Residents are very critical of the government approach and their support of the paramilitary involvement. Mateo, an LGBTQI+ campaigner who grew up in *Comuna* 13, for instance explained that:

> We can't hide that *Operación Orión* was the union between the state and criminal gangs, or the *Autodefensas Unidad de Colombia*,[125] to stop the [left wing] militias. The state, in that agreement, gave a lot of power to the criminal gangs. They were empowered in this neighbourhood and had social control … They created the government of Don Berna.

Following the violence, the control of the neighbourhood fell to the paramilitaries, the most prominent being the AUC as mentioned by Mateo, with Don Berna at its helm. With a network of support in the state-security agencies and having brought down his rivals, Don Berna, explored in more detail in chapter seven, took control of Medellín and became the city's 'pacifier', taking credit for improvements in security in the city.

Homicide levels in the area fell in the years following *Orión*, but violence did not cease. Disappearances, forced displacements and other forms of violence were commonplace in the following years; control had effectively passed from one armed group to another with a 'paramilitarization' of the area (Bernal-Franco and Navas-Caputo, 2013), and social control under a constant threat of violence (Morgan, 2008). In addition to the broadly negative legacies, the violence, loss and pain was central to the creation of numerous social movements. On the fifteenth anniversary of *Operación Orión*, the *Comuna* marked the occasion in countless ways, on a day they entitled *Operación Orión Nunca Más*, a name affirming that such an operation must never occur again. The culmination of years of campaigning for justice and change over the past 15 years brought a variety of groups together in a rejection of violence. Many social movements and community organisations were formed in the aftermath of the conflict, while others were much older and existed throughout, even being direct targets of violence during the intervention.[126] On the day of activities many community groups in the area planned

---

[125] The AUC (*Autodefensas Unidad de Colombia*, or United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) is a coalition of 37 right-wing paramilitary groups, they officially demobilized in 2006.
[126] One example of this is discussed in *Verdad Abierta* (2013), as they detail how groups including AMI (*Asociación de las Mujeres de las Independencias*) were targets of direct violence during the operation.

events and ways to commemorate the loss and violence in their own way.[127] Some opened the doors of their organisations to welcome visitors from the community, others scheduled performances of rap or poetry, some shared stories of violence in the neighbourhood while others organised crafts and creative interventions across the neighbourhood. Within the broad range of processes of commemoration, two were particularly significant in their reclamation of public space; *Galería Viva* and the protest of *Mujeres Caminando Por La Verdad*.

6.4.2 Galería Viva

Galería Viva (living gallery) opened on the fifteenth anniversary, in the cemetery of San Javier. Located a five-minute walk from the metro station in San Javier, the cemetery is positioned on a steep hillside that slopes up from the road and a curved vertical wall of graves looks out across the neighbourhood. That day, the usual calm of the cemetery had been transformed into a hive of activity. By the entrance, under a gazebo, a group of young people were sat on large cushions passing a microphone around and discussing their memories of the violence. A performance artist laid soil on the path around the graves, surrounded by large portrait photographs of those who remain missing and unaccounted for. A community gardening group helped visitors plant seedlings in pots to take away and handed out flowers which were laid at graves, at photographs and further around the neighbourhood. As I sat on a wall in the cemetery, an old woman carefully cleaned the grave of her son behind me.

The focus of the event was as the opening of several new works of art in what was entitled the living gallery. Numerous pieces of graffiti and free-standing artworks covered the cemetery and featured a mixture of large and small murals on the cemetery walls, portraits of victims of the violence and significant people from the neighbourhood, alongside graffiti writing and tags. As in any gallery, people wandered slowly around, taking in the many pieces of art. A young *graffitero* showed me where he had put his tag overlapping one of the murals, explaining that every artist had their own method of paying tribute. On the walls of the graves, an introduction to the gallery explained that the gallery began with an alliance of young people in *Comuna 13* and was designed to "narrate the story of our territory… It is a space for the expression of pain…. through murals we make memories visible, in order to reconstruct the memory of our loved ones from and for life." At the centre of the range of activities was the artwork

---

[127] Remembering violence has become more integrated and accepted within Colombia, as the government has encouraged reflection as a process connected to the country's peace process and reconciliation (O'Bryen, 2019). *La Casa de la Memoria* in Medellín is one such government funded space, while activists in the city take their own approach to remembering and commemorating such violence.

covering the walls, demonstrating a symbolic reclamation of the history and grief of the neighbourhood.

Figure 9: Mural, San Javier Cemetery, Galería Viva

The *Galería Viva* was the creation of many community groups in the neighbourhood, but the hip hop collectives were responsible for the majority of the graffiti art that has since lined the walls of the cemetery, in what they claimed to be the first painted cemetery in Latin America. When I visited the cemetery the day before the opening of the gallery, I wandered amongst many of the artists as they finished their work, noting that all of those who were there, at that time at least, were young men, echoing the earlier concerns of Jaime with regard to his male-dominated graffiti collective. In their artwork they condemned the violence of the past and present, drawing attention to more recent victims of violence as well as those from *Orión* and other such periods of intense violence. Through the artwork these young men were demonstrating, in a manner that commanded the physical space, their rejection not just of violence, but also of hegemonic masculinities that such violence is rooted within, themes which are explored in more detail in chapter seven. The artwork depicted both men and women in ways that challenged the stereotypes of dominant gendered subjectivities. Emotion for instance was present (see Figure 9), depicted on male bodies, with tears shown flowing down the cheek of a young man who retained a masculine pose, as his tears flowed underground and nourished the roots of the city, and *Comuna* 13, around the corner. The contrast reversed and challenged stereotypical representations of the area, and particularly of young men, in the context of violence, showing the emotion and vulnerability of the young man, without compromising the strength of his pose.

Figure 10: Morocho, San Javier Cemetery, Galería Viva

A second, smaller mural (Figure 10) was dedicated to Morocho, a rapper from *Comuna* 13 who was killed in 2014, at the age of 14. His image is accompanied by a small plaque which states that "life is over, but the seed is planted". The text references the way that his death inspired work against the killings and violence, but the image also challenges preconceptions about the victims of violence in areas like *Comuna* 13. In the mural Morocho is pressing his hand against a wall with two striped paint stains, one of red, to represent violence, and the other of white, signifying peace. His youth is accentuated, and he is depicted turning and looking back towards the viewer over his shoulder, with a warm and subtle smile creeping across his face. Just as the above image in its open emotion, Morocho's playful portrayal challenges stoic, stereotypical and hegemonic masculinities. As explored in chapter seven, and due in part to associations between social exclusion and gang violence (see for example; Barker, 2005; Baird, 2018), young men in *Comuna* 13, as in many marginal and informal neighbourhoods across Latin America, are often associated with gangs and violence. The age of those killed decreased rapidly alongside a rise in adolescent gang members, and in 1989 young men between 14-20 made up 70% of those dying in violent deaths in the city.[128] Similar trends continued in the years to come, and young men from the marginal neighbourhoods are

---

[128] The trend of youth gangs at this time is explored in Alonso Salazar's Born to Die in Medellín (1990), detailing the experiences of a number of young gang members, predominantly being men from the poorest marginal neighbourhoods in the city.

often connected with violence, their deaths attracting less attention from regions outside, with their place in society as *desechable*, or disposable. Such stigma leads to discrediting their character, and linking young men to hip-hop can mean that they become associated solely with street crime and violence (Griffin, 2019). Through showing male subjects with alternate expressions, emphasising their empathy and humanity, the gallery's imagery provided a direct contrast to the associated violent and hegemonic masculinities.

The interventions by the graffiti artists, alongside the role of hip-hop in the neighbourhood, disrupted stereotypes of poor and marginalised men and violence (explored further in chapters five and seven) in a very public way, as well as reclaiming the narrative of grief and loss within the site of the cemetery. As mentioned earlier, hip hop movements in *Comuna* 13 are predominantly male, and, as Jaime explained, they are conscious of this dynamic. While Jaime noted that the imbalance was problematic, and connected to broader gender inequalities, this did not mean that they did not trouble gendered expectations in other ways. They used their platform for a collective rejection of hegemonic masculinities; through their creative outlets of graffiti, dance and rap, the collectives expressed an alternative. Jaime expressed their actions in these terms exactly, stating when talking about gender relations and the work of his collective: "we have worked hard to unlearn it, to create other masculinities". Baird (2012a) established that alternative socialisation spaces in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Medellín were significant in negotiating alternative masculinities, away from what he terms the 'gang male role model system'. The experience of violence and a specific understanding of hegemonic masculinity is directly challenged through the types of imagery used in their graffiti, and the activity of the collective in *Comuna* 13. In their appropriation of the cemetery not just as a space to grieve, but also as a space to protest they resisted the ideas of the victims of violence as dispensable, or as solely defined by such ideas of masculinity. Instead, in the portraits of those effected by violence they were given humanity and complexity.

6.4.3 Embroidery for peace and truth

Leaving the cemetery and crossing the road, I stopped beside a group of predominantly older women, sat on plastic chairs and picnic blankets on a usually unremarkable pavement at a street corner. The majority were sat with needles and thread in hand, skilfully working away, sewing the names and details of people lost in the violence. When their small tapestries were finished they were pegged onto the washing lines that hung between the trees on the street corner, covering the pavement with their creations (see Figure 11). The women chatted and laughed as they worked on a piece of fabric.

Each scrap was uniquely designed, the dates shown on the various lengths of cloth stretched from before *Orión* to as recently as just a few weeks earlier and referenced not only violence in *Comuna* 13 or Medellín but also killings and disappearances across the county. At the roadside, a more intricate tapestry hung, representing the *Comuna* as a whole. A mix of colourful buildings with labels including 'school' and 'hospital' were shown with the mountains in the background, some covered in small houses, and with people all around. In the centre of the tapestry a woman dressed in the colours of the Colombian flag was waving a white handkerchief. The event had been organised by *Mujeres Caminando por La Verdad* (Women Walking for Truth), a group of women who are working for peace and justice for those who have been killed or are still missing. Their washing line was one of many protests organised by the group, who are highly active throughout the *Comuna* and beyond. In addition to protests, the group, like the *Red de Apoyo*, provide support and community for victims of violence in the *Comuna*. Sofia, a quiet woman in her 40's who had been a member of *Mujeres Caminando* for several years, explained to me that she had lost her nephew in *Operación Orión,* and that she regularly met with the group and it provided a great support to her. The group is made up of many women like Sofia, who are still dealing with direct loss from *Orión* and other violence in the neighbourhood over the years.

Figure 11: Washing lines of protest, San Javier

When I asked Martha, one of the leading members of the group, why their group was made up only of women, she explained that women were the ones who had suffered the greatest loss, that they had lost their husbands and children, but had to continue for their families. She told me that they couldn't be consumed by their loss, emphasising their significant role at the centre of family life. Erika, a founder and leader of a community group working with families in *Comuna* 13, stated that: "After *Operacion Orión* many women's organisations were founded in *Comuna* 13. Organisations of women who were suddenly widows. Whose sons are still disappeared. Whose sons

were killed. So many women." Many of these women came together in their fight for justice and truth over what happened to their loved ones. *Mujeres Caminando* provided a focus for their grief, with the women taking on the task of searching for the truth of their loss, with many disappeared and still unaccounted for. The members have a strong determination to seek justice broadly, seeing their role not only as a support within the home but as a support within the wider community. Their search for the truth was framed firmly within their roles as mothers, as sisters, as aunts, as women within the neighbourhood, and their resistance itself was consequently feminised (Motta, 2013). The women have organised and mobilised as a direct result of their loss. A similar narrative was found elsewhere, for instance in a special edition on Women and the Construction of Peace of Visión 8,[129] a community leader states: "They killed my son 2 years ago and that can't be changed, but I think even though I'm not going to bring my son back, I will save the lives of other young people that can be saved" (Zapata and Dary Ruíz, 2016). As such, the women draw upon ideas of altruism and maternal responsibility in their self-categorisation.

Similar movements across Latin America have mobilised within the idea of motherhood and maternalism, the most famous of which being the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina. Their position as mothers, daughters and wives helped lend moral legitimacy to their demands, separating them from more overtly 'political' protests[130] (Fisher, 1993; Bergman and Szurmuk, 2001; Chant, 2002). Aligning with feminine or maternal identities has been seen to be beneficial for the pursuit of the goals of similar groups across Latin America (María Virginia, 2017). Similar to Argentina, in the case of *Mujeres Caminando* the women celebrated their entirely female membership, while at the same time appropriating public space (Rosenthal, 2000). In the case of the *Madres* in Argentina Feijoó and Nari stated that "a practical redefinition of the content of the private and public realms has emerged. The task of defending life itself was forced out of the private sphere of the household and into the autonomous space of public and political expression" (1994: 113). On the fifteenth anniversary of *Orión*, the women in *Comuna* 13 similarly brought their protest, along with other typically private and female activities, into the public, challenging the gendered public private divide that is seen to retain significance in Medellín in both Jaime's words and the discussion above. The expression of their personal pain was hung on a washing line, directly referencing the airing of laundry, a domestic, mundane and feminine task. Embroidery tends to be

---

[129] A community newspaper produced and published in *Comuna* 8, Medellín.
[130] Motherhood has also been used in attempts to pacify protestors, for instance Claudia López, the mayor of Bogotá, invoked notions of motherhood in relation to the 2019 national strikes in Colombia, suggesting that mothers should call for their families to avoid violence and vandalism in the protests due to being natural pacifiers (https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-protocolo-de-claudia-lopez-para-evitar-la-violencia-y-el-vandalismo-en-las-marchas/648225).

similarly designated, making this, too, an overtly gendered choice of artistic expression. The women utilised mundane domestic everyday activities to support their political position, two spheres so often separated (Enloe, 1990a; 2011). In their protest, the group brought together the banal and the political in the space they occupied and their actions within it.

Located next to a busy roundabout, *Mujeres Caminando* had chosen a corner on a frequent bus route and directly opposite the cemetery. It was a busy thoroughfare on any day and particularly so on this day; crossroads are often strategically used in protest for their prominence and visibility (McGahern, 2017). From our interactions on pavements, to active disruption from micropolitical acts and protests, what tend to be thought of as unassuming sites in fact shape the experience of urban space. Through claiming inconspicuous spaces such as pavements, it is possible to subvert or challenge hierarchies (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012). Such action does not inherently alter such inequalities but shows ways in which the traditionally powerless are integral to making history and politics (Sassen, 2013). The women of *Mujeres Caminando* disrupted the public space, but at the same time broke down the boundaries and spaces of both personal grief as well as of women and their domestic tasks as being limited to the private sphere, querying the social constructions of space (England, 1991). In leaning into their female roles, as with the *Madres* in Argentina, they further reinforce gendered divisions of labour (Craske, 2003).[131] While this may be the case, in their actions they also contest the spatial divisions of gender, protesting not by challenging traditional roles and skills but by embracing and celebrating them, as well as highlighting their pain and grief in the public sphere. The ease with which the women claimed the public space contrasted with the residents' accounts of fear and violence in previous years, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. I wondered if a similar protest would have been possible before the changes in the neighbourhood, suggesting that without the greater ease of access that is generally felt in public space in the neighbourhood in recent years, such an act may have been more limited. The women in the group used the changing nature of public space to commemorate and demand justice for those lost, while simultaneously blurring the boundaries of the public and private spheres, drawing upon their traditionally female skills in their visible and public act of protest.

In the use of decorative arts and artisanry in women's groups in Medellín, Murdock argues that "artistic methodologies came to be exclusively associated with women idealized as nurturing, caring… [and therefore] less able to challenge gendered power

---

[131] Craske (2003) outlines that the greater representation of women in community activism can create a triple burden, with women now undertaking their double burden of domestic labour and income generation with an addition of work as community leaders and participation in local groups.

relations" (2008: 198). Compared to male NGO directors, for instance, who would be more likely to give public speeches, Murdock outlines that the different focus of the methods used by women's movements could reinforce traditional gendered roles and expectations and may consequently result in limits in terms of challenging gender relations. However, the spatial significance of the acts brings greater significance to their challenge to gendered expectations. In bringing these feminine ideas of nurture and care into the public space there is an unsettling of where such characteristics traditionally belong, and subsequently of gendered subjectivities. Furthermore, in emphasising the everyday of gendered experience in female roles, and the continuing restrictions to public space that were outlined earlier in this chapter, the use and subversion of how space is used the use of public space directly challenges how we think about the public/private binaries of everyday life.

The examples explored here, of the tributes to both the victims of *Operación Orión* and broader violence in the region and country, by the hip hop collectives, and the women's movement, illustrate just some of the diversity inherent to the day of commemoration of *Orión Nunca Más*. Both movements in their own ways resisted and shaped the gendered expectations and boundaries, with the predominantly male hip hop artists promoting peace and alternative masculinities, and the women's group challenging the public/private divide, continuing to emphasise traditional feminine roles and skills. The activities surrounding the fifteenth anniversary of *Orión* utilised the more accessible public space of the neighbourhood to unsettle traditional gendered expectations, particular to the marginal part of the city where additional stigma surrounds violence and public space. Such activities were achieved, however, within limited gender binaries. Just as in chapter five, where the *Alcaldía* reinforced a binary understanding of gender in its engagement with either women or men, the same pattern emerged here in these groups engagements in public space.[132] The city's nature as an environment in flux allowed both groups to shape the change they strive for, doing so within the gendered dichotomy but unsettling the boundaries of that duality in limited, but significant, ways.

6.4.4 Carnaval de la 13

Just a couple of weeks after the *Orión* event, the *Carnaval de la 13* took over *Comuna* 13. Unlike the events marking the fifteen-year anniversary of *Operación Orión*, the carnival did not commemorate violence in the region directly, rather acting primarily as a reclamation of public space. With events over ten days, the celebrations culminated in a parade on 29th October 2017. The carnival brought together many of the groups based

---

[132] It is pertinent to note that a number of social movements in *Comuna* 13 are more diverse.

in the area with a range of dance, theatre, circus, and music. In a procession that toured around the *Comuna*, over thirty groups joyfully paraded through the streets, cheered on by locals out to watch the spectacle. Sitting on the curb waiting for the procession, I was passed first by the organisers speeding along in their car, who quickly jumped out to tell me enthusiastically about all of the people out to watch the carnival so far. Just as they raced off to check that the route ahead was clear, the first performers emerged on the brow of the hill, holding up a huge banner printed with "*Carnaval de la 13*" and wearing huge smiles on their brightly painted faces. The procession displayed an array of colourful costumes, music, and dancing (Figure 12), celebrating the diversity and creativity of the neighbourhood.

Figure 12: Dancers, Carnaval de la 13, San Javier

The festival website describes that the event began in order to:

> recognise and intervene in the territory through play, theatre, dance, music, puppetry and circus, to appropriate the public space of the neighbourhoods of the *Comuna*; additionally, the collective action of the cultural and artistic organisations breaks the invisible barriers that exist in the neighbourhoods, barriers imposed by the armed groups.[133]

The route was intentionally designed to use roads and paths that had been particularly known for violence, crossing several previous *fronteras invisibles* (invisible borders).[134]

---

[133] http://www.recreando.com.co/carnaval-de-la-13/
[134] These borders are controlled by rival gangs, and act as a strategy of social control (López-López et al., 2014).

In the route itself the parade was a conscious reclamation of the public space that had been off-limits or severely restricted for many years, now much more freely available as a result of the generally improved stability in the area. Having begun in 2007, this was the eleventh annual carnival. In the early years of the carnival, the area was still very unstable, and the scale of the event was adjusted accordingly, but the celebrations have grown year on year, with international performers now taking part.

Public space in the previous years within the neighbourhood was overwhelmingly associated with insecurity and violence; residents would pass through public space with caution and fear and the stigma of violence was widespread throughout the city and beyond. In their presence and reclamation of the streets, the artists and performers subvert the expectations associated with the space. Parades and carnivals are often understood to have political significance, used as a subversion of norms and inversion of affairs (albeit temporarily) (Werbner *et al.*, 2014; Lazar, 2015). They also have gendered implications; events and marches such as Rio de Janeiro's Carnaval (Lewis, 1996), the women's suffrage movement (McCammon, 2003), and gay pride (Brickell, 2000; Johnston, 2007) have contested the heterosexual and/or masculine dominance of public space. Mitchell argues that "taking to the streets and overthrowing the normative order the streets represent- an order marked by racism, by sexism, and by homophobia- has been crucial in advancing the cause of justice" (2003: 231). While the protest here is less overt in its political affiliations, I argue that the carnival too subverts normative gendered expectations and subjectivities. Insecurities and the stigmas of violence in the city are inherently gendered, as explored in chapter seven and challenging the dominance of such violence therefore troubles the societal orders, including the gendered norms and subjects of the violent masculinities associated with it.

In the contestation of the dominance of violence and violent actors, the carnival therefore contests the hegemonic masculinities that the violence in the region has (re)produced. Parading through the streets in celebration were a diverse cross-section of those residing in *Comuna* 13. Performers represented a range of ages, races, traditions and backgrounds, bringing traditional Afro-Caribbean dance together with indigenous music, and other diverse cultural traditions and communities. Juan, one of the organising committee for the programme of events, stated that the "recognition of the strength of the community organising here [in *Comuna 13*] spreads far beyond the *Comuna*". The pride in the action of community groups in the area, particularly in the face of the violence, is often emphasised. Here in this act of claiming public space the community action and unity was made visible. It encapsulates a visible rejection of the narrative of violence and danger, instead emphasising the creativity, joy and vitality of the neighbourhood and its' residents. In line with the reclamation of space within

Comuna 13, Sassen argued that: "The city, and especially the street, is a space where the powerless can make history… Becoming present, visible, to each other can alter the character of powerlessness" (2013: 213). Through their parade, the performers consequently shape and remake the urban landscape. In challenging the very concept of the stigma of violence associated with *Comuna* 13, through a demonstration of art and performance, there was a direct challenge to the hegemonic masculinities that have been so prominent in the neighbourhood, and in the area's reputation. Challenging such stigma does not reduce violence (and I explore the continuation of such gendered expectations and violent masculinities in chapter seven) but contests the singular association of the area with such violence, in ways that can begin to complicate the gendered expectations within urban space.

The use of art is not inherently liberatory. Numerous scholars have shown how artistic expression can in fact further legitimate inequality.[135] The examples shown here, however, do not pander to elite artistic expectations, instead carving out their own spaces and methods for storytelling and the claiming of public space. The examples discussed demonstrate the creative use and appropriation of the changing public space of *Comuna* 13. They indicate how such spaces can be 'worked', not just by "professional(ised) subjects" (Laurie and Bondi, 2005: 395), but also by community groups and residents, in their appropriation and utilisation of public resources and infrastructure. Speaking to the idea of a city as a site in flux, the examples from *Orión Nunca Más* and the *Carnaval de la 13* show how the changing nature of public space has also opened up new opportunities which have allowed for resisting the violence of the past, and doing so in a way that emphasises the concurrent malleability of gender norms, albeit within boundaries (McDowell, 1983; England, 1991; Massey, 1994).

Changing public spaces have been utilised by residents and activists mobilising for change. Despite often furthering a gendered dichotomy, the various groups and individuals are still working to challenge particular and hegemonic gendered subjectivities. Throughout the thesis, I see gender as relational, meaning that the framing of particular feminine subjectivities is placed against the ideas of masculinity. Here we have seen ways in which both feminine and masculine expressions are appropriated within public space in flexible and shifting ways, troubling the hegemonic ideals while remaining within a gendered binary. When considering these themes, the possibility and changeability of public space is key. Presence and visibility within public space alone can subvert expected gender norms. Public space was claimed for both demonstrating traditionally feminine (and private) tasks and skills, as well as for

---

[135] Bourdieu (1986) for instance demonstrates how distinction between elite and working-class art further entrenches difference.

alternatives to hegemonic and violent masculinities in creative expression and celebration with the carnival. In highly visible demonstrations of alternative masculinities, the murals too made a significant intervention within public space that queried gendered expectations, particularly in their intersections with class, and the expected masculinities of young working-class men within Medellín.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that public space in Medellín continues to be a key site of gendered interactions, both reproducing gender roles but also challenging them in meaningful ways. Drawing upon a breadth of examples from everyday engagements to celebrations and commemorations, I emphasise the complexity and nuance within public space. From the gendered everyday appropriations and restrictions within public space, dominant gendered expectations and norms are seen to remain, but are also troubled. At times, such as in the cases of the *vendedoras* and the *Mujeres Caminando*, traditional gender roles are embraced and celebrated. Women's support networks are emphasised, alongside traditionally feminine skills and tasks. The presence and visibility of women and traditionally feminine expressions and creations in public space do however prompt ruptures and challenges to traditional gendered dichotomies, shifting these women's experiences beyond the private sphere. Likewise, the hip hop collectives explore and promote alternative masculinities in public spaces, away from expectations of violence often associated particularly with young working-class males. In challenging the stigma previously attached to *Comuna* 13, the carnival similarly moves away from associations of violence, and the accompanying hegemonic masculinity (explored further in chapters seven and eight).

I have illustrated the ways that residents respond to and utilise the changing urban space in creative and innovative ways, for ends that vary widely from individual economic concerns and income generation, to the pursuit of specific campaign outcomes or to challenging the stigma of violence in the region in itself. Residents do not passively live the urban environment, rather (re)producing it in ways that, at times, trouble gendered expectations. They continue to mould the public space, however, in ways that follow a gendered binary. Just as in the formal structures and governance, explored in chapters four and five, a gendered binary is reinforced in the experiences of, and engagements with, public space. Gendered subjectivities, even if troubled in some ways, continue with prominence throughout various experiences of the urban landscape, whether that be in the gendered political economy of urban space, the gendered restrictions to particular spaces or in the approaches to protest and resistance within that space. Public space and interactions within it thus remain characterised by a

gender binary, which can also restrict access to certain public spaces for particular gendered subjects.[136] The continuation of a gendered binary does not just involve the presentation of particular gendered expectations but results in the continuing restriction of the access on women to particular spaces, which, as Falú (2009) argues, is a form of violence in itself.

Underpinning the discussion here is the assertion that neither gender nor space are static and various actors can influence the ways in which each are shaped. The changing urban landscape that has been so central to Medellín's approach to planning and development, is clearly shown to have altered the experience of public space for those in *Comuna* 13. Feminist geographers and urban planners have illuminated, as discussed in chapter two, that men and women experience the city in different ways and space is (re)productive of gender. Here I support such assertions through the contributions and experiences from *Comuna* 13. Despite the changes in the urban environment I have shown that the space continues to be gendered, albeit with scope for change. In bringing together different dimensions of gender and space, I show that the troubling of gender relations through reclamation of public space does not preclude the continued struggles or gendered restrictions to that same public space. In support of the assertions of Sassen (2013), resistance and protest within such space is notable, but cannot overturn the unequal social relations that inform experiences of space. While certain spaces continue to be restricted, the examples show how women also claim their right to the city, even if they do so in ways that reinforce gendered norms and performativities. The unfinishedness of the city has scope for unsettling gender norms, and particularly the dominant and hegemonic masculinities associated with Medellín's violence. However, without challenging the underpinning cultures of the patriarchal neoliberal city, as shown to continue in chapters four and five, the changing character of public space in Medellín has not overcome gendered binaries, restrictions or norms. The implications of such limitations take on further resonance in the following discussion in chapters seven and eight, where gendered insecurities within the urban landscape are further identified and explored.

---

[136] Restrictions are further reinforced, not only by gender but, although beyond the scope of this discussion, also by intersecting factors including sexual orientation and race. For further exploration of these ideas, Orrego's (2013) discussion of *Aire de Tango* explores the tensions of sexuality and gender identities in Medellín, and Munoz (2018) provides a useful overview of the intersections of race and class in experiencing public space in Bogotá.

Shifting insecurities: gendering the securitised discourse and ongoing violence in the changing urban landscape

> The change is 100% ... Before there was a lot of violence, a lot of injustice, lots of [armed] groups. Our lives were always fearful, there was fear of leaving the house ... and now, no. Freedom. We feel like when, before it was like a bird enclosed in a cage, now the bird can fly ... that's how we feel now, how I feel now, and all of my family.

> Diana, resident and street vendor in *Comuna* 13

In the above quote, Diana captures the narrative of transformation with respect to security and violence in Medellín. Diana's presentation of a newer, safer urban environment is commonly found, and emphasising the ways it has changed is an important reclamation of the narrative of *Comuna* 13 by the residents. Multiple forms of violence have dominated not just *Comuna* 13, but the whole of Medellín over recent decades. Violence and security have been recurring themes that have emerged and been present in discussions of culture, gender mainstreaming and public space. Almost without exception, the lives of residents within the city have been touched by violence. In recent years however the story of the city has shifted, from one governed by fear towards less extreme insecurities and greater freedoms. While most would recognise that violence still exists in Medellín, it is now framed as an issue at the fringes, rather than the defining feature of the city and the lives of those within it.

The emphasis on a reduction in violence can be found in numerous accounts of the city, for instance in residents' descriptions (as in Diana's account above), within media representations (especially in the foreign press),[137] and in the discourse of civil servants (as explored in chapter four). In particular, the reduction of homicides in Medellín has been lauded as suggestive of a broader reduction of insecurity; if homicide levels have reduced it is assumed that all other types of violence will have done the same. Homicides are, however, limited in measuring violence and the true picture is much more complex (Pearce, 2010) with crime and various insecurities continuing to be significant challenges in Medellín. While chapters four and five assessed the policy and practice within the institutions that are working to prompt the urban change, and chapter six looked at public space as a key site for change, this chapter and chapter eight both look to the supposed outcomes of these interventions, considering how

---

[137] For instance: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/08/medellin-livable-cities-colombia

violence and security are conceptualised and lived within the 'transformed' city. Emphasising different aspects of violence, governance and gender, this chapter considers the political geography of the security approach. I discuss which people and spaces are considered to be fixable or not-fixable, and highlight the ways in which Medellín's security practices and apparatus are gendered, classed and racialized. Drawing upon interviews and ethnographic observations, I explore the perceptions of security in a number of sites within the city. Rather than a transformation from violence to peace, such perceptions indicate that Medellín has instead seen a shift between varying forms of insecurities. Additionally, I show that despite playing an integral role in both the city's securitization and ongoing violences, gender is not a central consideration within the city's demands and policies for security.

Notions of insecurity and violence have been operationalised in Colombian governance, and elsewhere, with forceful and militaristic responses justified as a route to establishing greater security (Rodriguez, 2018). Recognising the focus on security at the heart of the Gutiérrez administration (2016-2019) in Medellín, I first consider the connections between violence and the state, and the complex history of political violence in the city. Particularly, I show how this relates to the Colombian context where such violence has been interwoven with both state and criminal actors. Recognising the impact of this at varying scales, I then move to outline what the Gutiérrez security agenda comprises of and some of the ways in which it is implemented, showing that gender is integral to the top-down securitised discourse. With both ethnographic observations and interviews focusing primarily on *Comuna* 13, I draw attention to the ways in which there is a continuation of militarised policing, with greater police presence and new security technologies. I show how such interventions generate new forms of insecurity, particularly for poorer and marginalised residents. Finally, I consider various and ongoing forms of violence in the city, showing how such violence is 'othered', as well as normalised and downplayed. The gendered securitised discourse emphasised throughout these discussions leads directly on to chapter eight, where I focus upon the gendered everyday of such violence. Each of these elements help to answer my central research questions of how gender is integrated within policy changes, how gender is erased in approaches to the problem of violence in Medellín, and the gendered contradictions that arise from the militarised approach to violence and multiple ongoing insecurities.

7.1 Violence, Security and Militarisation in Medellín

Violence and security are often central concerns within approaches to urban development (Humphrey, 2013). Maclean, for example, states that:

[v]iolence has also become an issue for urban planning. Not only does the urban landscape show the scars of urban violence, but urban infrastructure, design, and architecture have been used as tools in addressing the causes, as well as mitigating the effects, of urban violence (2014: 23).

A variety of tools have been implemented within Medellín to address the city's violent reputation. *Comuna* 13's multiple innovative infrastructure projects are a particularly clear example of this. After being plagued by severe violence for several decades, the challenge of changing the area was substantial, and its rapid transformation makes it a claimed success for both improving security and for sustainable development.[138] Understandings of security tend to be categorised as either addressing specific and direct security concerns, known as defence security, or as recognising and aiming to improve access and enjoyment of the multi-faceted necessities of human life, known as human security (Vargas Alzate *et al.*, 2015). These broadly fall into the categories of preventative social policy (improving access to basic services and amenities), versus zero tolerance approaches to existing violence, controlling threats and relying on state and militarised forces (Uribe López, 2010). While Medellín has seen both tactics in recent years, the governments rhetoric of urban development within Medellín has tended to fit closely with an emphasis on human security. However, I show how there are numerous ways in which a militarised approach continues, contributing to a further sense of insecurity for many.

Militarism is not a popular political term, particularly for liberal states, due to its associations with authoritarian regimes. Colombia, similar to other states, attempts to avoid being labelled as militaristic (Posada Carbó, 2001; Rodriguez, 2018), however, it does so while retaining many characteristics of a militarised approach. Colombia's army had historically been weak, and violence and security were largely privatised rather than state led. However, under the auspices of Plan Colombia[139] and with support from the United States the military's role and size has grown expansively. Colombia's army is now the second largest in Latin America, only shortly behind Brazil (despite having less than a quarter of the population).[140] The military have their own areas of jurisdiction and the government have claimed long periods of *estado de sitio* (states of exception) whereby the usual democratic laws are temporarily suspended in moments of disorder or violence (Barreto Rozo, 2011). Everyday fears stemming from years of civil war and extreme violence revitalises militarism. Related threats to individual freedoms can be

---

[138] The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, awarded to Medellín in 2017, specifically recognises these factors.
[139] The initiative was launched in the 1990s to reduce cocaine production and restore security in areas held by illegal armed groups. Plan Colombia gained support from the US government in 2000, ramping up counter-narcotics and insurgency operations (Durán-Martínez, 2018).
[140] https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/el-mundo/como-esta-el-poderio-militar-en-america-latina-articulo-843382

seen to justify militaristic responses, which Rodriguez (2018) sees as being embedded within the Colombian society. Terming this 'civilian militarism', Rodriguez sees it as exemplified by the rejection of the peace process in 2016, but more broadly in the acceptance of a militaristic atmosphere that is entwined with, and justified by, security concerns. Colombia therefore continues to boast of a democratic and non-militaristic tradition while the logics of the military continue to dominate various aspects of society. Medellín, similarly, and particularly under the Gutiérrez administration, falls into the same paradox when furthering and simultaneously denying securitisation.

As part of the supposed protection of citizens, the fusion of militarism and security has meant that "securitization has extended military power into new realms" (Basham, 2018: 32). Cynthia Enloe (2000b; 2007) has led influential discussions on militarism, uncovering the ways in which militarisation establishes the adoption of militaristic values and a privileging of military solutions (see also: Henry and Natanel, 2016; Tidy, 2019). In this way, militarism sees the extension of war-based meanings and responses into broader political and social spheres (Sjoberg and Via, 2010). In doing so, it is the extension of warlike techniques beyond military practices alone, allowing for, and justifying, pervasive military activity (Peterson and Runyan, 1993).

The concept of militarisation has been queried, drawing attention to the impossibility of separating the military from the social as war-like forms are always imbricated in wider social landscapes (Howell, 2018). Questioning the implication within militarisation that military ideas are an imposition, rather than a predisposition of society, is of particular relevance in Colombia. Rather than establishing distinct boundaries between war and peace (Reardon, 1985), I use the concept of militarism to bring aspects of the two together. With recent and extreme experiences of violence, Medellín has seen fluctuating militarisation, but this should not overlook the numerous forms of violence and war-like conditions that spread beyond the conflict. Instead preferring 'martial politics', Howell (2018) argues that such a frame illuminates the ways in which many institutions, such as the police,[141] are always war-like, from their roots to their actions. Without denying the imbrication of violence and war within societies, including in Colombia, militarism remains a useful tool through which to consider the case of Medellín and character of interventions from both the national Colombian government, and at a more local level the city's *Alcaldía*.[142]

Where human security should attempt to tackle social conditions contributing to situations of violence, defensive security approaches further the need for tough

---

[141] It is worth noting that in Colombia the policy also falls under the umbrella of the Ministry of Defence and are consequently a direct part of the militarised framework.

[142] The term was preferred by residents/civil servants in the city, grounding this decision in the context.

militarised responses. In doing so, the government overlooks past violences inherent to similar state behaviours, and ignores the suggestion that within a fragmented urban landscape, securitised approaches result in the potential for "violent engagement with violent 'others'" (Pearce, 2010: 289). In this way, security threats are placed outside of the social needs of society, with subjects, often young men, as in need of being secured. Critiques of militarism suggest that far from improving security, such an approach in fact creates insecurities which are gendered and racialized, meaning that "only parts of the social body can be secured" (Basham, 2018: 41), while others are merely associated with being security threats (Wilcox, 2015).

Consequently, militaristic responses disproportionately create insecurity for social groups including those in vulnerable or subjugated positions, including women, and indigenous and poorer populations (Kirk, 2018). Feminist security studies scholars, amongst others, have shown the ways in which militarism and militarization are gendered; Sjoberg and Via assert that "[m]ilitarization is gendered in its aims (competitive power-over), its means (the military industrial complex), its language (of strength and domination), and its impacts (which disproportionately and negatively affect women)" (2010: 8). Militarisation, and the norms and tactics of militarised societies, are shaped by, and shape, the construction of gender in both its social and spatial forms (Cockburn, 2010; Henry and Natanel, 2016). Enloe (2000a; 2008) draws attention to the production of military masculinities,[143] showing how they reinforce gendered hierarchies and entrench masculine ways of living and being secure (see also: Theidon, 2009). Both militarisms and masculinities, however, are diverse and context-specific (Myrttinen, 2004; Welland, 2013), meaning that the specificities of structures of power, violence and gender in the context of Medellín remain central within this analysis.

Militarism is not therefore the only factor in approaches to securitisation within Medellín. Power relations between different actors and the overlapping forces of criminal groups and political violence also play a part, prompting consideration of the multiple actors that have been involved in the violence and instability of the region. Links between formal and informal actors, often both militarised in their tactics, and the subsequent connections between politics, violence and masculinity, demonstrate that the themes of violence, security and gender are intricately connected. Such connections raise further questions of the potential of the state as a leader of change, particularly when discussing the remit of security. Reguillo Cruz (2013) queries the distinction

---

[143] Although the concept of militarised masculinities is not without its own critique. Myrttinen et al (2017) for example suggest that conflict-affected masculinities require approaching with nuance, considering the particular local historical, political, social and economic contexts, rather than there being a generalizable idea of a singular militarised masculinity.

between legal and illegal powers, instead seeing a normalised form of what she terms parallel power, whereby criminal actors such as those involved in the drug trade exist alongside, and are unchallenged by, state powers. When considering Reguillo Cruz's arguments within the Colombian context,[144] these powers can be described as a continuum or state of affairs, rather than parallel as in many cases state actors are directly implicated in violence. There are consequently crossovers that blur the boundaries between the state and the violence of criminal actors, including paramilitary groups which are often implicated in human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

The role of state actors has consequently contributed to the normalisation of violence and organised crime in Colombia.[145] Durán-Martínez (2018) argues that greater state cohesion brought a decrease in visible forms of violence, but only as a result of more stable collaboration between the state and criminal actors. In the 1980s and 1990s at the height of narcoterrorism, state fragmentation meant that criminal groups were unable to secure credible state protection. Later on, with increased state capacity, the changes meant that the incentives for criminal actors to publicly display violence were reduced, they instead learnt that "too much attention was detrimental for them and that it was better to adapt than to fight the state" (Durán-Martínez, 2018: 131). Hidden forms of violence including disappearances, forced displacements and sexual violence became more prominent, allowing criminal actors to act without drawing the attention at the national state level or of the wider public. Paramilitaries closely intertwined with state actors became central to the process (Civico, 2012), with the government playing a role in the consolidation of the power of violent and criminal actors, such as Don Berna and his paramilitary-led control within Medellín in the early 2000s, who assisted state military interventions including *Operación Orión* (Moritz, 2016).

After this point, Don Berna monopolised power, controlling those he worked with in the city in moves that have been said to do more to reduce the violence than any of the social interventions. In fact, around the same time as Fajardo's 'Medellín Miracle', a common joke was that in Medellín the main concern wasn't gobernabilidad but "donbernabilidad". This pun taken from *gobernabilidad* or governability, suggests that Don Berna's overarching control of the city was the real reason for the dramatic decrease in homicides and violence (Moncada, 2016; Durán-Martínez, 2018). The formation of a *pacto del fusil* (gun pact) under Don Berna meant that the government and the *Fuerza Pública* (armed forces) overlooked the narcotrafficking operations in exchange for the supposed peace in the city; Don Berna's control also meant that smaller criminal groups generally accepted that they could only commit acts of violence

---

[144] Her research is based upon Mexico.
[145] Such connections have been emphasised across Latin America (see for example Rodgers, 2006).

with his permission.[146] After Don Berna's extradition to the United States in 2008 (on drug trafficking charges), various groups struggled for power causing a notable increase in homicide rates and showing the limited capacity of such truces. Without challenging the criminal structures or inequalities in the city such pacts are precarious and lead to recurring cycles of peace and violence in the city. However, as the later spike in deaths was concentrated within the criminal gangs and 'violent' and poor young men, they were more easily framed as localised disputes rather than being national security concerns (Durán-Martínez, 2018), meaning that the general narrative of transformation was able to remain in place.

Here however, I draw attention to the ongoing violence in the city not as a separable or localised concern, but as a consequence of ongoing inequality and multiple ongoing violences within a continuum. This includes symbolic and structural violences that mark out particular subjects as less worthy of consideration, and consequently remain unacknowledged within the narrative of urban change. Overlooking ongoing violence within the narrative of transformation suggests that whole areas within the city are not of concern. Noting the connections between violence, power, exclusion and gender relations, alongside the role of the state, prompts further critical engagement with the states approaches to improving security. As such, when considering a gendered analysis of the approaches taken in Medellín, I focus on the mutually constitutive realms of violence and security, paying attention to the ways in which both the numerous forms of violence and the approaches to the city's security (re)produce gendered identities and roles, but showing that these dimensions often remain unacknowledged.

7.1.1 Tackling violence in the city: securitisation

Cities with serious security challenges, including Medellín, have become sites of policy experimentation.[147] Medellín's state forces had historically neglected the security concerns in marginal areas of the city, in both human and defensive terms. In predominantly informal areas, the state was largely absent, allowing the dominance of external actors including armed groups (Moser, 2004; Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). From 2000, however, Colombia saw a wave of state-led securitization. President Uribe launched his concept of 'Democratic Security', stating a need to 'fight for security'. The approach sanitised the idea of security, with Uribe suggesting that there was a requirement for a militarised response to those working against the state, in order to

---

[146] https://lasillavacia.com/silla-paisa/si-hubo-donbernabilidad-pero-mas-alla-de-fajardo-66049
[147] Various approaches have been attempted, in recognition that there is no 'magic bullet' solution to the reduction of urban violence. These have included various policies ranging from high tech security approaches and 'smart' city technologies, infrastructure and transport projects, to peace pacts (Gutiérrez and Jaramillo, 2004) amongst others. Non-state led approaches have included vigilante groups and the growth of gated communities, contributing further to spatial inequalities in cities (see; Caldeira, 2000, Rodgers, 2006).

protect democracy.[148] Framing the left-wing guerrilla and their armed resistance as purely 'terror' rather than political resistance, the rhetoric justified heavy-handed interventions and Uribe administered intense militarization, and the use of military power, to combat actors including FARC. In Medellín this meant various military operations and a hard-line defensive approach that was controversially used in densely populated areas such as *Comuna* 13 (Rodgers, 2006).

In recent years, and most notably from around 2004, Social Urbanism shifted the conversation to human security. Each of these periods, however, is not isolated, instead building upon previous policies and choices, with the latest and more innovative approach placed over concealed and "deep-seated inequality and stigmatization resulting from decades of normalized socioeconomic exclusion and a regime of securitization and (para)militarization" (Sotomayor, 2017: 73). Abello Colak and Pearce (2015) discuss this as part of a broader trend in Latin America from repressive security practices (although these have never been removed entirely), to security as management. In recognising what is seen to be the inevitable continuation of urban violence and conflict, there is a shift in urban governance towards its management rather than eradication (Moser and McIlwaine, 2014). Despite the purposed practicality of accepting some level of violence, numerous and continuing forms of direct violence are highlighted as shortfalls of Social Urbanism. Sotomayor for instance suggests that "Medellín's praised innovative policy making has to be understood in relation to the fact that criminal actors have found developmental policies advantageous to the sustainability of their own social, political and territorial control" (2017: 86). Criminal groups have therefore been seen to adapt to and thrive within new forms of governance, with the reduction in violence linked to various gun pacts between the government and the armed actors, from Don Berna and beyond,[149] rather than being demonstrative of a significant social change

Alongside the continued presence of criminal groups forms of petty theft and robberies have not disappeared and perceptions of insecurity remain high; a study in 2015 found that only 26% of the population reported feeling safe in the city (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016). The daily reality of most residents in Medellín, whilst not plagued by the extreme violence of decades past, continues to be informed by various forms of insecurity. A common understanding of insecurity provides an opportunity for capitalising on fear as a political tool. A sense of fear and distrust is characteristic of urban areas with such a complex history of violence, and encourages further socio-spatial division within the urban landscape (Caldeira, 2000; Glebbeek and Koonings, 2016), as certain parts of the

---

[148] See for example Uribe's manifesto (2002), cien puntos.
[149] For example; https://pacifista.tv/notas/medellin-y-un-nuevo-pacto-del-fusil-entre-las-bandas-criminales/

city are stigmatised by associations with violence from both the past and present. Federico Gutiérrez drew attention to and capitalised upon these insecurities in his campaign and mayorship, claiming the need for a new approach with a particular emphasis on security. Following his election in 2016, Gutiérrez continued to further the rhetoric of human security, mentioning inequality for example as a risk factor for violence, but his actions and priorities appear to fall more closely with defensive understandings and militarised approaches to security,[150] as the next section illuminates.

7.2 Keeping watch: A securitised state presence

In 2017, the defensive and militarised approach to security was clearly symbolised by the appearance of the police helicopter, the Bell 407, flying over the city almost constantly. The city's geography, and placement within a steep valley with an open plain in the centre, means the helicopter always seems visible as it traverses the city; the sight and sound of the helicopter is a constant reminder of the police presence. In many of my interview recordings from outdoor cafes, or rooftop terraces, the spinning helicopter blades are often audible, hearing it pass by overhead as it circles above the urban space. Sitting by the outdoor escalators in Comuna 13 as the helicopter passed overhead, I glanced to look to the birds shown in a graffiti mural that adorns the walls (Figure 13). A pair of hummingbird's perch above a depiction of the neighbourhoods crowded housing, laden with grenades and protective armour. Each bird represents the helicopters that circled around *Comuna* 13 during the military operations of 2002. With a painful history of military interventions, the constant presence of the police helicopter echoes one of the neighbourhoods most challenging moments.

Across the city, the helicopter's presence is reminiscent of the panopticon, with observation as a method of control (Foucault, 1991); it is fitted with advanced technologies including infra-red monitors and sophisticated cameras keeping watch on all below it. The helicopter costs are extensive; an article in *El Colombiano* quotes an initial investment of more than 6 billion pesos (approximately £1.3 billion) in addition to significant running costs. In an interview with the newspaper, the police commander General Gomez explains that the helicopter is available 24 hours a day, stating that "[t]here is a weekly schedule of the places and times where the helicopter should be, but in addition to this prevention work it will be ready to attend any event in which the

---

[150] Political opponents including previous Mayor Alonso Salazar have been openly critical of Gutiérrez, accusing him of being a "trojan horse of Uribismo" due to his links and previous endorsement from Alvaro Uribe, the former Mayor of Medellín and later President of Colombia, known for a hard-lined approach to violence and insecurity: https://lasillavacia.com/quienesquien/perfilquien/alonso-salazar-jaramillo.

police patrol requires support".[151] When considering the visibility of the police within the city, I acknowledge that the Colombian police resemble military forces in numerous ways,[152] from their hierarchies and jurisdictions to their uniforms and equipment (Rodriguez, 2018). Walking through the streets of Medellín, and particularly in areas such as *Comuna* 13, you are often confronted with armed military and police patrols. Groups of soldiers, mostly young men, walk through the neighbourhoods keeping a watchful eye on people while clutching rifles to their chests. Framed primarily as a preventative measure, the helicopter, and more generally the police and military presence, symbolises the current administrations security agenda, a militarised and technological approach to the violence and insecurity that continues in the city.

Figure 13: Mural, Escalators, San Javier[153]

In one of the 15 defined values and principles laid out in the 2016-2019 development plan, as often quoted by Gutiérrez, security is affirmed to be an apolitical issue, outside of ideological debates; "it is not of the left, or the right, it is a [human] right and has to be guaranteed" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 27). In a city so recently defined by insecurity and violence this rhetoric is popular, but the specific approaches as to how security is framed and maintained are inherently political. As shown earlier, the security approach speaks to who is prioritised within the urban space (Basham, 2018), which issues are considered important, and how they should be negotiated. Emerging within a discourse

---

[151] https://www.elcolombiano.com/antioquia/seguridad/costos-de-mantenimiento-del-helicoptero-de-la-alcaldia-de-medellin-FI6497052

[152] With various branches of the police, some bare greater resemblances to military forces, the ESMAD or riot police for instance.

[153] https://admin.freetour.com/images/tours/5637/graffitour-%28comuna-13%29-05.jpg

of securitisation, an undefined promotion of security is used to justify the encroaching militarisation of the city, exemplified by police presence across the city, from the streets to the sky.

The *Alcaldía* notes that it has much work to do when it comes to security, the Gutiérrez administration stated in the 2016-2019 Development Plan that "although the security of our city has improved, we cannot ignore the phenomena that affect us socially and economically … That is why we are committed to a comprehensive security that has as a basis the coexistence to guarantee the effective enjoyment of rights as well as the construction of coexistence in the territory" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 24). While this quote, and particularly the recognition of a need for 'comprehensive' security, suggests multidimensional understandings of insecurity and interventions to overcome it, the same document also includes more militaristic language, switching seamlessly between the polarised approaches to security. Later, the report states that "it is necessary for the city to take integral action that takes into account a reorientation of the comprehensive security policies to retake control, and promote concrete actions and strategies so that [Medellín] feels protected and *acompañada* (that institutions are with the people)" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016: 61).[154] The police helicopter, as one example, demonstrates the increased police presence that accompanies the population, without recognising the insecurities often generated for vast swathes of the population of such forms of securitisation, to be discussed in more detail later.

As mentioned, openly militaristic approaches are unpopular, with officials remaining hesitant in using militarised language due to its unpopular associations (Posada Carbó, 2001; Rodriguez, 2018). Gutiérrez similarly rejects the use of such terms. In an interview with local radio station LAFM, for example, he stated: "it is not true that Medellín is militarised", instead stating that he supports "military assistance" with mixed patrols, as seen in the police and army's presence in the city, and particularly in areas including *Comuna* 13 and others, where there are high levels of criminality.[155] Despite the contradictions between the policy and budgets allocated to new state security measures, Gutiérrez continues to downplay the securitisation of the city.

However, throughout conversations with a diverse range of people in Medellín, the security focus of the current administration was emphasised, with a noted focus on crime and punishment. Mariana, a member of staff within the women's department

---

[154] Similar themes have also been part of previous Mayoral strategies, Fajardo, while most renowned for social urbanism, has also talked about calling for more police and their subsequent role in the reduction of violence in the city. See: https://www.newsweek.com/qa-medellin-mayor-turns-city-around-96755.
[155] https://www.lafm.com.co/colombia/alcalde-federico-gutierrez-apoya-presencia-del-ejercito-en-los-barrios-de-medellin

stated that: "In the Security Secretariat, what happens is that they are really focused on the theme of physical protection, so against theft, against robbery, for territorial security. It isn't a focus on human security, not at all." Similar scepticism about the emphasis of the security focus was expressed by Daniela, the leader of a feminist NGO. She explained that although the current administrations language suggests a continuation of the greater emphasis on human security, she notes a clear gap between the rhetoric and the practice, particularly under the current administration. She suggests that "with the presence of armed actors, in a city that is militarised, the behaviour in the way of dealing with differences, the way of overcoming conflict … it is one of power … A city in conflict is a militarised city, one that resolves conflict through force". Under the government of Gutiérrez, security and securitisation is broadly seen to be the central priority, but in privileging certain forms of direct violence, as well as shifting to a militarised response, it is a restricted understanding of security. In the following I discuss the implications and limitations of such an approach.

7.2.1 Problematising the relationship between security and militarisation

With competing and contradicting rhetoric between discussions of human or defensive security, the *Alcaldía* in Medellín downplay the militarism within its current security agenda. However, the city has shifted further towards an emphasis on policing and military solutions to the ongoing violence and insecurity. Militarism often, however, generates greater insecurity, especially for particular and marginalised subjects within these spaces (Pearce, 2010; Basham, 2018). Here then I consider the way the current security agenda is understood, and who is included or excluded from it. The type of security that a militarised and forceful approach brings is experienced differentially; in a city so spatially fragmented, this can play out in geographic terms. Rodriguez (2018) found that police and military presence in Colombia was normalised, even in residential areas, as a result of decades of civil war and militarism. In addition to this routinization, the presence of militarised forces in certain areas is a reminder of past instances of violence at the hands of government actors (implicated in abuses of power on numerous occasions as mentioned above).

Particularly with the introduction of the 2017 National Police Code[156] Jaime, a resident of *Comuna* 13, explained that securitisation was part of an approach to governing with fear. By banning drinking in public spaces, for instance, he saw a targeted attempt to reduce crime merely by reducing the amount of people in public spaces, stating that:

---

[156] A national *Código de Policía*, or police code, came into effect in 2017 and extended police powers and banning certain activities in public space such as drinking in public or informal sales and being liable to fines for loud music, sex work, rowing or fighting in public space or attacking or challenging a police officer.

if there is a fight, the police have a responsibility, if there are deaths, a robbery. But if no one is in the street then no one is going to rob anyone…. In all of our neighbourhoods the police don't come to look after us, they come to harass, they come to look for gangs… there's that cat in a gang, from the north American comic, it's a cat that knows the police officer, the police officer knows the neighbourhood, he's quite nice, he knows the people. That doesn't exist in these *barrios*, the police just arrive with their guns.

Jaime made it clear that the police presence in *Comuna* 13, and similar areas, had a hostile character. Unlike his comparison with the cartoon (I assume, Top Cat), we see here that the interactions with police are one of distrust and violence, causing even greater insecurity for many of the residents there. As a young man from a marginal neighbourhood, Jaime's distrust of police has emerged from histories of clashes and persecution at the hands of the police (discussed further below). Furthermore, he was sceptical of their presence, seeing the role of the police as one of control rather than protection, and the removal of people from public space as a tactic for reducing the potential opportunities for crime to take place rather than tackling the root causes of such crime or protecting anyone in the neighbourhood.

Residents are often distrustful of state forces, for instance mentioning police repression. Such distrust is particularly acute in the peripheral and lower *estrato* neighbourhoods, suggesting that a security approach is differentially experienced according to various factors, including social class. Jaime explained that police presence was different in *Comuna* 13 than in El Poblado, the wealthiest part of the city. He states that with the police, "in El Poblado there is always less aggression, more respect. It's clear, because if you are police and you go up to a young person in El Poblado, it could be the son of a businessman … [In *Comuna* 13] we are treated differently". In a city fragmented along class lines, Jaime saw the police behaving differently according to the neighbourhood they are within, with greater value and expectations placed upon those residing in richer parts of the city. The privilege that is seen to be afforded to those living in upper class parts of the city suggests that the police and a militarised approach to security represents protection, or a crackdown on crime in some areas, but generates fear and further insecurity in others.

Young men from marginal neighbourhoods, like Jaime, have been particularly targeted by authorities in the past, with histories of profiling (Sotomayor, 2017), *limpieza social*

(social cleansing)[157] and the *falsos positivos* scandal;[158] there are therefore multiple examples which have encouraged and justified their fear (Palacios, 2001). Such histories provide further context therefore for Jaime's distrust. As Wilcox (2015) states, the violence within this securitisation produces certain bodies as worth saving, and others, by extension, who are not. The stigma of violence, particularly as attached to young male working class bodies, therefore queries the universal benefit of such policies. Distrust and trauma abide in the memories of militarised approaches from government forces and police which have often brought fear and violence on equal measure with other violent actors. Those living in marginal areas have experienced social exclusion and stigma, and within these spaces, and in an aggressive security agenda, it reproduces historic inequalities and social divisions.

For some then, the larger numbers of police and military officers on the streets can be interpreted as maintaining a commitment to keep residents safe. However, multiple factors shape who and what activities the police control, and their manner of interacting with the people they are, supposedly, there to serve. There is a great deal of scepticism about the role of the police in Medellín, Natalia explained that the police weren't there to protect people like her. Her home and neighbourhood in Altavista, one of the five *corregimientos*, (rural jurisdictions) surrounding Medellín, continues to face extreme violence (to be explored further in the 7.3), but the police and army, she maintains, are not the answer. When there are shootings in the neighbourhood, when there are problems, she told me, state actors such as the police arrive, stay a little while and then go. Their presence is unannounced and often results in cross fire which puts residents even more at risk. She explained that:

> We don't understand the logic of the police at all. It isn't to protect the citizens most of the time. So, it has been... I don't know, more like protecting the institutions, the name of the institution and the idea of security that is being sold, a security that we aren't living.

In their sporadic support and armed responses, seemingly without consideration for those living in the area, the police are seen as a further cause of insecurity. In defining the area by gangs in need of uprooting, a violent response is justified, and certain subjects become legitimate as targets of violence (Pearce, 2010). Without accounting for the vulnerabilities of the residents in the controlled areas, the forceful responses show

---

[157] Populations marginalised both socially and economically are vulnerable to so-called 'social cleansing', being targeted with physical attacks including murder (López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2014).

[158] Colombia's *falsos positivos* scandals involved the kidnap and killing, predominantly of marginalised people, by paramilitary fighters who often had the assistance of the army. The victims were dressed as members of the left-wing guerrilla groups and posthumously framed as violent actors and therefore legitimate targets (O'Bryen, 2018).

how militarism can breed further insecurities for already marginalised and vulnerable populations (Basham, 2018; Kirk, 2018).

High perceptions of insecurity are seen to justify the increased police presence (Rodriguez, 2018), simultaneously disregarding the differential responses to militarism. The legacy of military operations, and the continued perception of their failure to protect residents, particularly in the marginal areas of the city, has led to a general distrust and scepticism of the Gutiérrez-led security agenda. Natalia was incredulous when I asked about the current administration's emphasis on security. She explained that:

> the money that the Mayor has spent on that helicopter flying around everyday... it would be so much better to invest in communities, and work to build a strong base that would avoid the conflict that we have in this city. Because Altavista isn't the only place where there is killing, assassinations almost every day. It is *one of* so many places. It has been the position of this administration that they are providing security. But what kind of security is it when people are killing [each other] ... what kind is that? ... When a lad is unemployed, and armed, there is no security.

Natalia and others do not call for police officers who do not respond to the needs of the community, but rather for education and opportunities, for human security. Her work with a community group, encourages educational opportunities and attempts to find viable and attractive alternatives to joining armed groups, something that she sees as much more valuable in tackling the causes of gang violence. The militarised response, conversely, frames the criminal gangs as a problem in society to be simply uprooted and removed, rather than a symbol and expression of the ongoing social exclusion and related structural problems and violences in society (Baird, 2018). In talking about those most likely to be in conflict, to be killing one another, Natalia specified an unemployed lad, drawing attention to the fact that these groups are mostly comprised of poor and marginalised young men. Baird (2018) explains that those involved in violence in urban areas in Latin America are almost always poor young men, demanding greater understanding of the role of masculinities in gang membership. While masculinity is not the only determinant, gangs offer a route to "negotiate contexts of exclusion in search of masculine respect" (Baird, 2018: 185, see also Barker, 2005). In this sense, the existence and activities of criminal groups are intertwined with structural violence including exclusion and stigma, which in turn further reproduces violent hegemonic masculinities. In approaching such men with militarised responses and further violence, they become bodies that are not worth saving (Wilcox, 2015).

In addition to the prioritisation of particular subjects within the urban space, militarised responses to violence relate to the production of particular gendered and militarised subjects (Enloe, 2000b). Militarism and militarised masculinity create a further dimension of insecurity for those who do not conform to the expectations of the hegemonic masculinity it privileges. As indicated here, similar expressions of violence are not unique to the armed conflict and should therefore also be made in contexts of, and approaches to, urban violence. When approaching urban security in an increasingly militarised manner, a gender analysis that considers and challenges hegemonic masculinities both in the state forces and outside of it, must be front and centre.

7.3 Gangs and ongoing direct violence

Militarism can consequently be seen to create greater insecurity for many in the city; additionally it has also proven ineffective in addressing the very problem it aims to solve, with direct violence still proving to be a significant concern in various parts of the city. Violence in Latin America has come to be aligned predominantly with delinquency and criminal groups, namely gangs[159] (Rogers, 1999). The reasons for joining gangs often relates directly to a lack of legitimate opportunities, connecting gang violence to structural violence and inequalities in wider society (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007). As mentioned in chapter six, men, and particularly young working class men, become associated with the hegemonic and violent masculinities found within marginal spaces, as the spaces themselves come to be defined by violence and the responses to it (López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2014). Social exclusion and its associated expressions of power and violence not only reproduce masculinities, but are also connected to race and class divisions (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). In fact, some of the groups traditionally labelled as 'feared' including young men in poorer neighbourhoods, may also be 'fearful', highlighting the need to break down dichotomies that deny the complexities of fear and security (Pain, 2001).

Within Medellín's security approach, gang violence is targeted as a problem to be solved and removed. However, Santiago, a researcher based in *Comuna* 13 told me that the security focus wasn't about prevention, he saw it as a way to "directly attack the groups that are operating in the territory... but just attacking certain *combos*, it isn't generic [across all of them]. There are a lot in the city". He explained that militarization gave the state power to intervene where it wanted, but that this was not about removing and preventing gangs altogether. As shown, certain people (usually poor men) become

---

[159] In Colombia, there are various terms for different types of gangs; these can be tiered within the same structures, for instance *oficinas* (broker organisations), *bandas* (older established gangs with territorial power and armed and economic resources) and *combos* (territorially limited gangs, more involved in the street level) (Durán-Martínez, 2018).

framed as in need of securing against, or even eliminating, through militarised force. The militarised response is targeted and temporary, responding only in certain moments or places within the city through intrusive methods. Here I consider the continuing presence of armed actors within the militarised city. In looking beyond the celebrated areas of change, such as *Comuna* 13, the precarity of the changes in the city becomes abundantly clear and while homicide levels have reduced significantly, the reduction is not consistent across the city. In fact, the homicide levels increased in 2017 and 2018, and the Security Secretariat confirmed that organised crime was the strongest in 2018 that it had been for at least a decade[160]   In particular, poorer areas were still encountering much higher homicide rates (Caicedo-Velásquez *et al.*, 2016) and Natalia's neighbourhood of Altavista is one such area. Looking at Altavista shows that the decrease in direct violence is not consistent across the city, and some areas continue to be defined by violence and insecurity.

Altavista is located to the south of *Comuna* 13 on the western fringes of the city. Similar to *Comuna* 13, it is a strategic site for accessing trade routes towards the coast from Medellín and numerous armed actors have competed for control of the area in recent years. Far outside the narrative of urban transformation, the daily experience of violence in Altavista means a situation of insecurity that dominates life in the area. Public space in Altavista is far from the tranquil destination shared by locals and tourists alike that is now (generally) experienced in *Comuna* 13. While Altavista has also received investment in public space and infrastructure (although construction has often been put on hold as a result of threats of direct violence), such sites retain a sense of insecurity. Natalia, a resident of the *barrio* and the organiser of a local youth group, recounted various stories of residents becoming caught up in the violence. One afternoon when the youth group were meeting to study maths, a renowned local gang member ran past, followed swiftly by a police officer with a raised gun. Upon seeing the two men, many of the young people immediately ran to their houses, sheltering from the fear of violence in the neighbourhood's public spaces. Such instances can prevent people leaving their homes for school or work, but even their homes are not always safe with the fear of *balas perdidas* (stray bullets) coming through the walls.

Just as *Comuna* 13 had previously been stigmatised as an area of violence, and significantly with the residents collectively marked as dangerous, Altavista now had this label. Whenever it was mentioned, I encountered similar responses to those associated with the city, and *Comuna* 13, in the past. I was warned to stay away, that it was dangerous and that there were 'bad types' there. For Natalia, the government rhetoric

---

[160] https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/homicidios-en-medellin-que-esta-pasando-articulo-835903

about increased security was inconsistent with the experience of not just her, but her whole community. In Altavista she maintained that "no one trusts the state, we haven't seen real guarantees … we have lived with six, seven, eight months of violence". She told me that those in the neighbourhood felt that they were expected to sort out their own problems, with the government and even the police only turning up for a couple of days at points of extreme violence and then disappearing. Natalia and other residents experienced feelings of abandonment that were similar to those in the past in *Comuna* 13, and other marginal neighbourhoods. It was difficult, she told me, having institutions that don't respond to the needs of the residents in all of the city equally.

Natalia and her predominantly Afro-Colombian neighbours had moved to the new *barrio*, Nuevo Amanecer in Altavista, collectively, following a fire that destroyed over 600 houses and displaced them from their previous home in *Comuna* 8.[161] Prior to that, Natalia, along with her mother and brother, had moved to Medellín after having been displaced by violence in rural Antioquia in 1997. She told me "we are victims of [repeated] violence… They tell you that you will not go through violence again, but in Altavista we are always living in situations of violence". When they arrived in the area, to their newly constructed houses, *Los Chivos*, one of the large and infamous gangs in the city that have been prominent since the 1980s, were already in charge. After some time, Natalia told me, some members dissented and formed their own rival group, taking weapons and money from *Los Chivos*. Since this point, the dissenters had taken houses in the neighbourhood by force, and there has been ongoing violence and many months of near daily shootings between the rival groups, as well as the police. Natalia explained that the situation in Altavista was volatile: "we had two peaceful years but in recent years there have been lots of problems… there was an order under the [gang], if people followed the rules there weren't any problems, it was a peaceful place." Similar to other parts of the city where physical acts of violence had decreased, the gangs' presence has consistently shaped and controlled life within the area in various ways. Changes in the gangs' relations with rivals ultimately shifted the experience of daily life almost beyond recognition for those in Altavista. Natalia's story is key for understanding the experience in Altavista, and the concerns that it raises about the precarious nature of the peace that has been secured in other parts of the city, when the roots of the violence and gangs are not addressed.

The government did not attempt to prevent the gang activity or provide security, instead intervening (only occasionally and) forcefully. The state and the gangs therefore co-exist within the space, both unleashing violence and insecurity upon those living there. It is a familiar story, but one that contradicts the narrative of change and

---

[161] https://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/mano-dios-llamas/56861-3

transformation in Medellín. For Natalia and other residents their lives involved countless forms of violence. Internally displaced by both conflict and natural disasters, living with the violence of social exclusion and new forms of conflict on their new doorsteps. For those in the area, violence is rooted within the fabric of the city, Natalia suggests that: "it's part of how everything is constructed in the area, the delinquent groups, the strategies that they have… they are more organised than the *Alcaldía*, than the state departments." The presence of the gangs is unchallenged by the policies of the state. She continues:

> we are looking for opportunities, for work, but immediately. Now. Not like the state says… always after, after, after… we have had all of these different administrations and the problem continues… It is difficult in situations of violence and when no-one shows people that there are ways to leave, that violence isn't the only way to survive in this city.

Natalia therefore highlights continuing inequalities and their connections to violences in the city. In failures to challenge such divides in the urban landscape, the racialised divides between rich and poor connect to the coloniality of power, as explored in chapter two, and violence that continues to shape social exclusion (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016).

During my time in Medellín, certain instances of gang violence and homicides were also reported in the supposedly 'safer' areas. When a spate of several homicides occurred in *Comuna* 13 in August 2017, I was chatting with two young men from the neighbourhood, Andrés and David, who explained in a matter of fact manner that the government would not let such violence continue. Having lived in Comuna 13 their whole lives, the men had seen it turn from a neglected neighbourhood to the focal point of the city's transformation. As a result, they suggested that the strategic importance of the area and its transformed status was too significant to allow it such violence to return. Government intervention with regard to security at the margins is often cynically understood in this way. Natalia did not see the government as caring, or as doing anything to solve the situation in Altavista because they were conversely not seen as an area of strategic significance within the city. Instead she explained that the neighbourhood felt abandoned to "sort out its own problems". Those in *Comuna* 13 on the other hand thought that they were prioritised because of their position within the narrative of the transformed city. It is also however worth noting that *Comuna* 13, rather against the narrative told, remains with one of the highest levels of homicides and ongoing disputes over territory continue.

In observing the continuing violence in Altavista, and instances of violence even in the 'transformed' neighbourhoods including *Comuna* 13, the concept of the secure city becomes localised and precarious. Even the most extreme forms of violence continue to define lives within certain areas, and are intertwined with spatial inequalities, making up structural and symbolic violences. In *Comuna* 13 the celebrated change was seen to have an impact across the neighbourhood and be protected as such, where other parts of the city continued to be neglected and stigmatised. Rather than seeing this purely as a geographical shift of a pre-existing problem, it also ties into an othering of violence, with the problem seen to be associated primarily with 'negative' subjects, usually 'bad men' in those particular gangs, in those particular and dangerous areas and in need of securing violently (Pearce, 2010). In this way the direct violence becomes a localised and specific problem outside of society, rather than a creation of that same society's structural and symbolic inequalities and violences.

7.3.1 Normalisation of ongoing violence

As mentioned, *Comuna* 13 is particularly celebrated for its reduction in violence, changing from being known as one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in the world to a tourist hotspot (explored in chapter six). Residents of *Comuna* 13 were often keen to tell me the ways that the neighbourhood had changed; there was a sense of both relief and pride in leaving the stigma of violence behind. Previously, the area had been associated collectively with a predisposition for violence (Morgan, 2008). Such connotations had been a significant fact of life for those from *Comuna* 13; residents reported that taxi drivers would refuse journeys to the area, and that the stigma of living there had even prevented employment opportunities. The violence in *Comuna* 13 marginalised those living there in multiple ways, and the reduction of direct violence has undoubtedly been a huge change in the daily experience of those living there. However, while the expressions of violence have changed, there are also continuing forms of insecurity that counter dominant discussions of the area. Jaime, a life-long resident of *Comuna* 13, told me that the violence in the area had changed rather than disappeared. He states:

> No, no you can't see it but there is armed violence, gender-based violence, violence from the state with exclusion, for me that is one of the strongest ones because a lot of people here [are affected] … Violence is part of daily life and that is the saddest thing. The jokes, the humour, the language, the words that are used, it's so complicated.

The types of violence he outlines, ranging from the language used to threats of continuing armed violence, tend to be less attention-grabbing and spectacular than the

extreme violence of the past. Jaime instead draws attention to continuing and subtle forms of violence, seeing social exclusion as the most widespread and concerning. In support of Durán-Martínez's (2018) findings, certain and less overtly disruptive forms of violence were tolerated. For Jaime, violence and insecurity may have moved to a less obvious position, but continues to exist in numerous forms, the structural, symbolic and direct forms of violence all querying the claim of the urban transformation.

Within the security agenda, and the consequent urban militarisation, criminal gangs continue to control *Comuna* 13, although again in ways that have adapted to the new conditions. Around the escalators, seen to be the centre of the change, Mateo, another resident of the area, maintained that: "around the escalators you are still living with microtrafficking, the criminal gangs still exist, you are still living with social conflicts, you are still living with poverty, you are still living with social inequalities." Infrastructure projects like the escalators may have brought numerous changes, but without concurrently tackling the underlying structural inequalities in the city. The continuing gang control of spaces including around the escalators is exemplary of this. As mentioned above, gangs are one of few viable options for many young men in the margins of the city (Baird, 2012b; 2018), and while the tourism in the area and improved security has brought some improvements for economic opportunities, these continue to be precarious and unstable (see 6.3). Despite some reductions in extreme poverty, the city continues to have huge divisions between richer and poorer areas. Gangs, within this and other marginal areas, continue to offer unmatched opportunities for wealth and status, in addition to a route to accepted and productive masculinities (Baird, 2017), as explored further in chapter eight.

Though there is ongoing gang presence, and the associated reasons for joining gangs continues, their activity in places like *Comuna* 13 has tended to involve less direct violence; the open warfare of years gone by has mostly, although not consistently, reduced. Similar to the *pacto del fusil* (gun pact) that had also been influential in the time of Don Berna and again at numerous point since (Jaramillo and Gil, 2014), agreements between rival groups had (mostly) calmed direct violence without compromising the organisation or power of the gangs. Moser and McIlwaine (2014) observed that such actors are often managed, rather than eradicated; however, in Medellín it seems to be more a case of self-managing, having learnt that "visible violence… makes them vulnerable to state action" as it would force the state to intervene (Durán-Martínez, 2018: 40). Less public forms of violence or control are instead downplayed or normalised and effectively accepted. Mateo's comments differed from what I often heard, and I instead found a routinisation of ongoing violence when speaking to many from *Comuna* 13.

One afternoon, I arrived at the San Javier library park and was met by Paula and Maria, two middle-aged women who were central members of a women's collective in the neighbourhood. When I asked about security, Maria reported that things were better now, but Paula, who spoke very little throughout our meeting, interjected at this point and quietly explained that there were still several forms of insecurity ongoing. Maria glared across the table at her, interrupting Paula and preventing her from expanding on her point, quickly qualifying the statement by saying: "Well, [there is] a little bit ... but not only here [in *Comuna* 13], but in the whole metropolitan area. That is, insecurity at a general level. Problems, differences, you're going to see that everywhere". Maria was quick to shut down criticism of the neighbourhood, instead wanting to portray *Comuna* 13 as no worse than any other part of the city. Part of this, I suppose, related to my position as an external actor, with what they saw as power to tell their story of transformation and success. Many of the people I interviewed were keen to highlight my role in spreading the news of the success of the change in the neighbourhood.

Continuing violence was often downplayed in this way. Jhon, a young man who grew up near San Javier metro station at the heart of *Comuna* 13, for example told me that "violence continues but there is violence everywhere". Compared to the extreme violence of the past, the change was significant, but the resulting justification or normalisation of continuing violence indicated that the problems were seen to be an acceptable norm, something that could not be avoided, but that shouldn't be emphasised. Having been seen to have finally moved on from the violence of the past, there was a hesitance to talk about ongoing forms of violence. Hume (2007) found that those living in violent areas in El Salvador took comfort in the fact that their neighbourhood was not as dangerous as other places, and here I often found the same. There was a reliance upon the narrative of change and security, and its tangible role in moving beyond social stigmas and especially with the new economic opportunities and stability that came alongside the changed perception of the neighbourhood. Such a narrative was emphasised not only by residents but also by civil servants, who saw *Comuna* 13 as the focal point of the government's interventions. Violence was normalised, it was inevitable, but it would be a similar problem wherever you were. The residents of *Comuna* 13 now had control of their neighbourhood's narrative, in a way they had been powerless to in the past, and this overcame the symbolic violence of stigma, at least to a degree. However, the continuing insecurities shape and define the lives of many of those living within the city, and as such must be recognised for their influence and for their interaction with, and reproduction of, particular gendered dynamics and violences.

7.3.2 Ongoing dominance of violent actors

Across the city, including in *Comuna* 13, gangs continue to hold control in various ways, not only with direct violence but also with threats of violence, and in controlling people's activities and opportunities. *Vacunas*[162] (extortion or protection money) are charged to everyone from bus drivers,[163] to shop owners, to residents for travelling across a particular gang's territory or for having a car or motorbike parked outside their homes. Juan, a young man whose family owned two small traditional cafes in *Comuna* 13, told me decisively that the neighbourhood was now very safe and the violence was behind them. When I asked about extortion and the role of the *bandas* (criminal gangs), he said that they of course had to pay the protection money, but that it wasn't a big problem, just a fact of life. Mateo, had similarly spent his life in *Comuna* 13 but was more critical of the gangs hold on the neighbourhood, seeing it as having shifted rather than weakened. He explained:

> the conflict evolved, before they killed on the corners, now today people disappear… today the conflict exists but it isn't so obvious. The criminal gangs have a contract between them, their territories are respected, their squares are respected, their micro-trafficking is respected… Social control should come from the public forces but today the social control in the *Comunas* of Medellín comes from the criminal gangs. Right now, there is no social control in the name of the state in the *Comunas*.

Far from seeing the state presence in the neighbourhood as resulting in state control, he instead saw the gangs as those with the power. Such power was not necessarily accumulated through direct violence, or particularly the types of attention-grabbing violence of the past, but instead through controlling and restricting the ways in which people lived their lives, the state of affairs and social hierarchy being secured by the dominance of these groups.

Armed groups also controlled social organising in various parts of the city. Erika, who runs a small organisation for social action and family relations in *Comuna* 13, told me of how the presence of criminal groups had influenced her ability to work within the neighbourhood. She reported that these controls are therefore influencing social movements:

---

[162] *Vacunas*, translated as a 'vaccine', originated with the guerrillas, and was suggested to keep death and destruction away from those who paid them (Boudon, 1996).

[163] Medellín's drivers have been on strike several times as a result of the stress of extortion and violence directed towards them, for example; https://noticias.canal1.com.co/noticias/paro-buses-dos-comunas-medellin-enfrentamientos-armados-vacunas/.

Yes, right now they control the conditions. Last year we developed a project, the majority of the organisations here developed it... and they charged a *vacuna* so that we could implement it, so it was like you had to pay so that you could work... They are taking a percentage of the resources that you are investing. It's a pretty delicate issue and there are going to be some conditions. The system at the moment doesn't give any more and the criminal gangs are going to keep having power. In fact, right now, we are talking [with the gang] in a WhatsApp group that we have, where we are talking about this topic. In the group we already talked about, ah, if you don't like it we'll talk to you, and you already know who you are going to speak with or give in to and you stay quiet or they remove you. There are two options that you can take, there's not a third. It's not worth denouncing it ... Saying anything to the authorities, it's not worth anything. You know what the rules are.

Social organisations are often credited with many of the changes in the city. However, in Erika's account, it becomes apparent that their activity can depend on the approval and support of these groups.

In Altavista, Natalia similarly recounted how her work with the youth movement had to be suspended for some time as a result of the violence and threats made to the organisation directly. The *banda* had insisted upon inclusion within the youth group's activities, wanting to put their name on a Christmas mural designed and painted by the group. However, Natalia and the other organisers had started the youth group in order to offer alternatives for young people in the area. Their slogan "*mas educación, menos exclusion*" (more education, less exclusion) encapsulates their work to promote education and opportunities outside of the gangs, and they were adamant that their work had to remain distinct from the gang and their activities. Saying no to the gang's inclusion on the mural, however, meant that the group's activities were forced to cease for a number of months as they no longer had permission from the gang to run the youth club and classes. Criminal groups therefore shape and influence society in numerous ways, restricting and controlling what is possible within communities. Just as in the past, the gangs were governing at the margins. While the state's role had changed and also determined what was possible, for instance with state funding for the youth groups activities, the gangs controlled the area in other ways, the two significant actors holding sway, in often interconnected ways (Segato, 2003; Reguillo Cruz, 2013).

7.4 Conclusion

Within the transformed city, multiple violences are ongoing. These emerge from both state and non-state actors, and are often intertwined. The ongoing dominance of

criminal gangs queries the narrative of a shift of a transformation to safety, instead suggesting that Medellín has seen a shift between varying forms of insecurity. While many in the city may find their day-to-day life has moved away from the extreme violence of the past, such violence continues to dominate the lives of certain areas and subjects within the city. Whole neighbourhoods, such as Altavista, and particularly the poorer and often racialised men within them, are discounted as expendable, with the police commander General Gómez asserting that "here, they don't kill good people", instead downplaying such violence by stating that it is only a problem for those involved in criminal activity (Benavides, 2017). Such ongoing insecurities, despite being downplayed and normalised, and the overrepresentation of certain areas within the crime statistics, should be considered within discussions of the transformed city. Far from being the localised concerns of negative subjects, they speak to the ongoing inequalities and challenges facing large sections of the city and its population. While this should not detract from the real and tangible improvements for many, it does raise questions about how to provoke further change in the future. When inequalities across the city prevail, and even social organising is limited as a result of ongoing gang dominance, it is difficult to see how infrastructure developments or indeed a militarised approach that brings further insecurity, will prevent the dominance of such armed actors and their influence and control over vast swathes of the city.

In this chapter, I have also highlighted that both the continuum of violence and the security practices and apparatus in the city have gendered implications. However, in the approaches to and understandings of the insecurity in Medellín, gendered dimensions of the various forms of ongoing violence are not acknowledged or addressed. Low perceptions of security were used as a campaign tool for Mayor Gutiérrez, and since this point the security agenda has shifted further towards a militarised and defensive approach, despite contributing to a differentialised experience according to factors including class and gender. Rather than being a preventative measure, the securitization often generates greater insecurity, particularly for those in already marginalised positions. While the discussion in this chapter considers various forms of violence and insecurity, it is also worth highlighting that since Gutiérrez's mayorship there has also been a reverse in some of the gains even in the most extreme forms of direct violence, with an increase in homicides in 2017 and 2018. As a result, the tactics to securitise had coincided with further an increase, rather than decrease in violence and gang activity.

The militarism in Medellín (re)produces gendered norms and expectations within society, and a violent response becomes embedded within the urban landscape. This chapter has emphasised the oversights and general and gendered impacts of militarism, rather than the embodiment of militarised masculinities. I have therefore shown how the militarised response is experienced differently, along gendered lines, as well as

being intertwined with additional factors including race and class. A militarised approach fails to address the root causes of the (gendered) violence, and therefore becomes a further way in which such norms are reinforced and remain unchallenged. From this chapter, the gendered political geography of the securitization has therefore become apparent; in chapter eight I move to consider the everyday impacts and implications of the separation of gender from security in official discourse, highlighting the lived gendered implications of the security approach and the continuing insecurities in the urban environment.

Chapter 8

The everyday of violence and gender

Figure 14: Nariz Obrera, International Women's Day March 2017[164]

On International Women's Day 2017 the march through the centre of Medellín had an electrifying atmosphere. The crowd celebrated, sang, and danced, but with an underpinning and sombre message of violence against women and structures of gender inequality. The protest by *Nariz Obrera*, a clowning collective with an overt political focus, began in the busy central social hub of Plaza Botero and joined the protest march walking through the city centre (Figure 14). *Las Muñecas de Don George* ('Don George's girls' as their work was titled) addressed the theme of visible and invisible forms of GBV. The performance highlighted the patriarchal reality of the city, from its beauty standards to its violence. The lecherous Don George, wearing a drawn-on beard and adopting and emphasising stereotypically male mannerisms, led several high-heeled performers behind him, bound in chains. They moved between ideas of the feminine and the masculine, with a reversal of traditional gender roles that tinged the display with comedy, the crowd often laughing as Don George pushed the boundaries of personal space, standing too close to women and even touching his crotch as he leered at them. The exaggeration of stereotypically gendered behaviours made the protest

---

[164] http://narizobrera.blogspot.com/p/obras.html

even more striking, highlighting and questioning what was so often unremarkable in daily life. They, and others in the march, questioned the normalised violence that was part of the city's culture, rooted in the history of traditional gender roles and making connections between violence against women and the violence and violent actors such as narcos who have been so dominant in the city in recent decades.

Within this chapter I return to the everyday, considering the lived experiences of Medellín's securitization and ongoing violences. Referring back to the conceptual frame outlined in chapter two, security and violence are both part of the everyday. Following the prioritisations of policy makers and political leaders, particularly between 2016-2019 with the mayorship of Federico Gutiérrez, I focus primarily in this chapter (as in chapter seven) on the issues of crime and physical security. However, as discussed in chapter two, these are elements within a continuum of violences, which feed into and (re)produce gendered subjectivities (Moser, 2001; Cockburn, 2004; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Moser and McIlwaine, 2006). In drawing the discussion back to the everyday I highlight the contribution of my ethnographic methods in considering the policy and experience of urban change.

Drawing then on ethnographic insights and interviews, connecting to and exemplifying broader trends and understandings, this chapter emphasises that the multiple forms of violence in Medellín exist along a gendered continuum, and there are connections between what is traditionally framed as GBV and wider forms of violence (Hume, 2008; Segato, 2014a). Despite this and as shown in chapter seven, 'real' violence and insecurities, referring to examples such as gang violence, robberies and homicides, are often separated from discussions of gender in policy. While I do not classify all of these types of violence as GBV (see 2.3), I note that violence is always gendered, and consequently relates to GBV (Pearce, 2006). Once more emphasising perceptions of security and policy, I take the insights from various respondents seriously, assessing the implications of their understandings and concerns in relation to security. Building from the point of the notably unacknowledged implications of gender within the broader discussions of security as shown in chapter seven, this chapter highlights the implications of gendered violence and GBV being framed as a separate concern relating almost exclusively to violence against women. When separated it also becomes relegated from the *Alcaldía*'s priorities. Consequently, this chapter brings the discussions of various forms of violence together, showing how the continuing insecurities are (re)productive of gendered logics, embodiments and structures.

In this chapter I therefore consider continuing forms of lived insecurities in the city, illustrating how various forms of violence, both past and present, continue to generate insecurity, in addition to (re)producing particular gendered norms which continue to

shape and further gendered inequalities and violences. Violence as a continuum always connects to gendered expectations and subjectivities (Moser, 2001; Connell, 2002; Cockburn, 2004). Using an intersectional approach, paying attention to the ways in which security is differentially experienced according to gender, but also to class, race, and other factors, I show again how the transformation narrative relies on an othering, separation and downplaying of continuing forms of structural, symbolic and direct violence. Finally, I critique the separation of gender and GBV from other types of violence and consider the implications that this division has within policy. Missing from the broader narratives of change, or discussions of progress in the city with regards to security, is any consideration of the gendered nature and dynamics of the original security dilemmas, and of continuing insecurity in the city.

8.1 Gendering Medellín's insecurities and violence

As discussed in chapter seven, state actors, criminal groups and gangs are all implicated in expressions of violence and power within Medellín. The negative and violent masculinities associated with gangs, narco-traffickers, and other illegal actors are often overly simplistic,[165] but gangs and violent groups do have a role to play in the (re)production of masculinity. Such groups are largely dominated by men, and mostly young men; Baird found that in Medellín, the "heteronormative and hegemonic masculine traits of the gang acted as a formidable barrier to subordinate masculinities and non-conforming identities" (2018: 197). Violence, in the gangs he encountered, was a "symbolic male enactment", relating to the approved gendered subjectivities within these organisations. Such young men, involved with gangs, become feared and framed as being in need of being secured, rather than protected (Wilcox, 2015). In this chapter, I indicate how the continuing influence of gangs across the city results in a prioritisation of particular gendered subjects, and also how they tie into direct forms of GBV. Patriarchal conceptions and particular forms of hegemonic masculinities are therefore expressed within violent forms of power found in Medellín and left unchallenged.

In the intertwining powers of the state, and gangs, the masculinity associated with illegal groups becomes imbricated in the power structures. As Rita Segato (2003) argues, patriarchal structures are central to understanding all forms of violence. For Segato, violence has a key role in the reproduction of gender roles, and violence and gender are interdependent and both inherent to the forms of power from states and armed actors discussed in chapter seven. As a leading feminist voice on violence and gender in Latin America, her assertion that new and informal forms of war, such as drug related violence, organised crime and paramilitaries, are contributing to new forms of

---

[165] Even within such structures, individuals often express multiple forms of masculinity, relating to different roles within society (López Castañeda and Myrttinen, 2014).

gendered violence (Segato, 2014) is significant for understanding the complex forms of violence in Medellín. In considering Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants in Colombia, Theidon (2009) argues that adding gender must include an engagement with men and masculinities, to make these elements visible and query the way that gendered subjects are forged and sustained in conflict. In connections between weapons, masculinities and violence she sees masculinity not as "incidental to militarism; rather, it is essential to its maintenance" (2009: 2), calling for a transformation of the hegemonic militarised masculinities commonly performed by former combatants. Male violence, whether in formal conflict or in new forms of war (such as drug-related conflicts), is always gendered (Hume, 2008; Segato, 2014b). A similar approach to gender should be considered in tackling urban insecurities, considering the (re)production, of masculinities within criminal groups and state actors. Medellín, as an environment where male violence, predominantly in the form of gangs and criminal groups, is prominent, must therefore be approached with such connections in mind.

The militarised security approaches discussed in chapter seven therefore become part of a gendered performance, with particular and masculinised presence dominating the urban landscape. Such dominance takes on particular relevance within the gangs, with hierarchies of power, violence and gender being expressed intersectionally. In the poorer areas, the foot soldiers of the *bandas* and *combos* continue to inhabit a precarious form of violent power, where they are vulnerable to attacks, as those expendable in terms of protection from the state and liable to violence from other rival groups, just as they themselves attack others in similar positions.

Leena, a young woman who had grown up in *Comuna* 13 had recently moved away from the neighbourhood. She moved for practical reasons, now being much closer to the University where she was studying social sciences, but she also welcomed the greater tranquillity in her new neighbourhood. When talking about the role of the gangs in *Comuna* 13 she explained that the men involved in gangs, the "delinquents, they always know that they are going to die, so they want to have children, so they leave something in the world of themselves". With multiple partners, young men in these positions perform a stereotypical hegemonic masculinity of virility and strength (Hume, 2004). In these examples, she explained, drugs, alcohol and weapons dominate. Similar to accounts from nearly thirty years earlier explored in Alonso Salazar's *Born to Die in Medellín* (1990), Leena's view of those within gangs, with members expecting to live short lives and emphasising their legacy, meant that they needed to show that they are tough in the hope that it will give them a chance of surviving slightly longer.

Such patterns have been observed in various disadvantaged communities, with Elijah Anderson's seminal work on the 'Code of Conduct' drawing attention to the sexual promiscuity of young, and mostly black, men in inner-city America. Particularly, fathering children was seen to provide proof of sexual prowess and, consequently, masculinity. The values of virility, connected to a resignation towards their violent fate, are also common in depictions of gangs, for instance, in the documentary La Sierra (Dalton and Martinez, 2005) which follows three young men who are members of a paramilitary group in Medellín. Adam Baird (2012a, 2018) has explored a similar need to prove masculinity within the context of marginality and relatively few opportunities in and the *comunas* of Medellín. In Baird's text, women remain peripheral, with one respondent referring to women as objects to attain alongside money and motorbikes (Baird, 2012a: 35). Just as Anderson had found in the United States, women in Medellín have at times therefore become a way to demonstrate masculinity and achievement, often leaving a gendered burden of childcare behind (explored further below).

A recognition of the impact of gangs on broader gender relations was highlighted within my interviews. For instance, when I asked Leena whether gang violence has influenced gender relations she exclaimed "Yes! … the capacity to be a man is entrenched in the idea of being strong". She explained that men who are immersed in these types of violence have particular ideas of how to perform masculinity. For those in gangs, with few other opportunities, the gangs provide a route to financial gains and positions of power within the city. They also however contribute to the continuation of gangs as a way to reproduce 'successful' masculine identities (Baird, 2018). Additionally, the role of women within this context has its own gendered significance. Theidon (2009) explored how conflict has led to gendered understandings whereby women desire the same hegemonic masculinity for the protection it can serve. Within a violent context, those holding the weapons do not only threaten, but also provide security, with some women choosing a partner who is seen to be able to protect them. Again such expectations reinforce particular gendered norms and ideals.

In addition, though, men in marginal areas are often associated with violence and targeted, by gangs or other actors such as paramilitaries, for crossing *fronteras invisibles* or disobeying orders. They therefore become stigmatised by the violence of the broader areas, despite only a small fraction being actively involved in such groups (as shown in chapter six, there are great efforts to distance such communities from such a singular narrative). While violence can play into the gendered roles and expectations, the dominance of young men in crime and violence, and as victims of homicides, also influences broader societal and family structures. The prominence of armed and criminal groups also links to a specific performance of a violent masculinity, associated with their mainly young, and poor, male members (Baird, 2012b; Baird, 2018).

However, Carolina, a feminist activist and employee at the *Secretaría de las Mujeres* (women's department) in Medellín, reported that, "it is said that the violence in Medellín has a woman's face". She highlighted the impacts of numerous forms of violence on women,[166] and connected these to their commonly held roles as heads of both their families and communities (Murdock, 2008). While men were the vast majority of those involved in and killed in the direct violence, the women, particularly within the same marginal areas and groups, have faced their own struggles and challenges related to this violence.

Women in particular are seen to step in and care for communities, for instance due to the absence of fathers, both through violence and abandonment. The leaders of women's networks and groups that I spoke with reported such experiences. Sandra, the leader of the *Red de Apoyo para las Mujeres*, (introduced in chapter six) told me that after the violence, over eighty percent of the population in her neighbourhood were single mothers or grandmothers, looking after their families. The reproductive labour women undertake in their role can further reinforce gendered stereotypes and expectations. Anderson (1999) also highlighted the overburdening of older women within disadvantaged communities, as their role is often complicated by additional responsibilities particularly for younger children within such areas. When I asked Martha, from *Mujeres Caminando Por La Verdad*, why the group was specifically for women she told me that:

> We are only women, not because there *were* no men, but because the men from *Comuna* 13 are no longer there. Some of the men were killed, others were disappeared, and others [left] … Women are always the ones who are at the head of the household, the ones getting ahead, providing stability for our children and facing everything.

The women were left behind by violence, not only to navigate family life, but also to find answers and justice for violence. Family members outside of armed groups had been targeted in the past, lumped together with the armed actors and stigmatised purely based on the areas in which they live, and gendered and class-based expectations. She went on to state that:

> What we are looking for, what *I* am looking for, is to find the disappeared from my family … They haven't helped to repair me, they haven't wanted to repair me,

---

[166] At times throughout the thesis, I draw upon designations of women and men, where it is illustrative of broad trends between these groups, however recognising that this is problematic and limited, and resisting a homogenisation of the experiences of all women (see chapter 2).

for them [the state] there were *beneficios comunes* (common benefits) although we know that they were the paramilitaries who were paid by the State … I want young people today to understand the truth of the events, the true face of the state. The State shows us a face, but it is never the real one … Those directly affected are the ones that bear witness to that face.

While paramilitary activities often involved targeting those who were not connected to violent groups, they also helped to bring the areas under greater control and in the case of *Operación Orión* to expel the left-wing guerrilla threat. Women in communities that have experienced years of violence therefore not only take on the additional labour in the role of heads of household (due to violence and societal expectations), but also often take on the role of searching for truth and leading communities in such instances of violence.

Direct violence is consequently gendered in both its direct implications and legacies, in terms of who is targeted in addition to the shape of the communities left behind. However, as seen above, such violence also has broader implications. When I asked Ana, a lawyer working on gender inequalities, about the connection between the city's violent past and its gender relations she replied, in a long answer, worth quoting in full:

Well, the city of Medellín isn't just shaped by the history of violence, but by the patriarchal history too … with the establishment of male power represented in the drug gangs … In this whole thing it has produced situations of violence that have impacted so much, relationships between couples, relationships between families, that's started to impact sexual violence … There is an idea of a woman that begins to be created by the narco culture, the idea of a woman who can be used, raped, mistreated … We begin to generate relationships of violence… from a construction of the feminine identity, from the ideas of narco trafficking, that women can be used and abused. The process of domination [of men] over women. Drug trafficking in addition to all the other socio-political factors strengthens the patriarchal system. It's a phenomenon where men feel like the masculine system prevails, the prevalence of this system of masculine domination effectively means that women are in a situation of submission. This process creates a stereotype of women and the forms of relationships they have. In the city of Medellín, for example it creates the idea that, and this isn't only in narco trafficking but also in the *paisa* culture, that the male *paisa* is a strong man, a *berraco*… this is a really *paisa* word, to say that you're capable of everything, so you are a *berraca* or a *berraco*. This *paisa* culture produces and influences the forms of how gender relations between men and women are built, and how the violence begins… Girls, new generations, begin to act out those stereotypes that

were built from the narco culture. They see women as [needing to be] beautiful, perfect, but they also see that women have to put up with a partner who has three other girlfriends, they have to put up with physical mistreatment, with verbal attacks. In these violences clearly, I think there is still an influence.

Here Ana drew attention not only to the criminal gangs involved in drug trafficking directly, and their role creating such gendered norms and expectations, but linked them to the pre-existing *paisa* relations, ideas of *machismo,* and patriarchal societal organisation which was reproduced and exacerbated within such groups. Leena similarly connected the expectations of strength and virility as rooted not only within violent groups, but as emerging from, and reinforcing, gendered expectations throughout the wider society. Ana and Leena therefore connect the gendered norms of narco-culture and broader patriarchal structures, which both reproduce and reinforce one another, shifting particular forms of masculinity (Baird, 2018) in addition to a particular ideal of women which has had influence far beyond the criminal groups. The activities and behaviours of those in criminal groups are consequently both produced by, and productive of, gender norms (Hume, 2008; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004).

8.2 Gangs and GBV

In addition to the way that these activities and histories influence gender relations, they also have more direct links to GBV, demonstrating the role gender often plays in various forms of insecurity. Erika told me of cases of abuse and sexual violence that people had shared with her in *Comuna* 13. A woman in her 30's, Erika was animated and passionate about her community, keen to tell me about her experiences in detail. My position as an 'outsider' encouraged her to share details of the context and a wide breadth of examples, as she wanted to convey the complexities of the difficulties faced, in addition to the strength of community organisers within her neighbourhood. Because of her role, leading a small community group with an emphasis on strengthening family bonds, she told me that members of the community often came to her for advice and difficulties in the family. "There was this case", she told me, "it was a really sad one. This girl I knew, she was 14, was sexually assaulted in front of her father and he couldn't do anything". I asked who was involved and she replied:

> It was an armed group from the area, the *bandidos* (thugs) came to sexually abuse her … It wasn't long ago. So, what happens, the Dad doesn't denounce it out of fear. But it's not a fear issue, I feel it is a matter of values, dignity. You don't see women as equal … so the daughter is still seen as a woman to serve the pleasures of men more than as a person with her own worth.

She associates the issue not only to the power held by the armed groups who still control various parts of the city but saw the abuse alongside broader and engrained inequalities between men and women. She saw the fact that the father felt that he had to ignore this crime as a symbol of the devaluation of women within society, making direct connections between symbolic and direct violences on a gendered continuum (Dobash and Dobash, 1979) .

Erika made it clear that such cases were not exclusive to gangs. She told me of another case where a mother had turned a blind eye at the local shop owner repeatedly sexually assaulting her nine-year-old daughter when she went to pick up groceries, explaining:

> The mother didn't notice the first time, or the second, because she didn't want to believe the girl. The woman told me "no but it is just that she has to cooperate for something for the house", she said that it's the man from the store and he was giving them some things [for free] so she didn't see anything wrong [with it]. It was almost a consensual violation. At the moment they know the location of the rapist, who he is, and nothing happens.

She found the stories of child abuse particularly shocking and frustrating but again framed them as part of a wider failure of society with regards to women. She told me how she couldn't help but challenge people on the way they overlooked such violence, but she was clearly dissatisfied with their explanations. While Erika recognised the woman's financial pressures and the significance of the shop owners supposed generosity, she stated; "you don't have to respect her because you have a mother, or because you have grandmothers, not because you have sisters, but because she is a person and that's it. It doesn't matter whether she has a vagina". Erika suggested that the devaluation of women and girls within this patriarchal societal structure led to a situation whereby violence against women, by both gang members and other powerful figures within the community, was normalised and excused.

Either the threat of violence if they denounced such crimes, or living in poverty and the associated insecurities that brought, meant that such violence was overlooked. Structural inequalities and violences therefore connected to an acceptance of GBV, within a patriarchal society where such behaviours went unchallenged, with violence both produced by and productive of gender norms and expectations (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Shepherd, 2008). High levels of violence against women have been consistently reported in Medellín (Martínez C., 2003; Murdock, 2008) and at times normalised – a phenomena that women's movements in the city have worked to change (Marín Mira and Rivera Guzman, 2016; Martínez and Marín, 2017). The militarisation of daily life that was explored in chapter seven has also been connected, for instance by

Theidon (2009), to militarised masculinities and in turn an increase in domestic violence and violence against women. Within violent societies, such as Colombia, Pearce has also shown how gendered violence in particular can become obscured, in addition to noting the gender socialisation that might "transmit and reproduce violence" (2006: 42; 2013). As such, Erika's experiences coalesce with broader narratives of GBV within the city and also generaly within contexts of violence.

The above accounts exemplify how multiple factors often coalesce to produce various forms of violence. Violence is not just physical or direct, it relates to continuing stigmas, to geographical divisions and social fragmentation, and to gendered norms which devalue certain gender expressions including femininities but also alternative forms of masculinities. Social exclusion, poverty and lack of opportunities feed into the conditions ripe not only for gang recruitment and activity, but also for the continuation of associated and gendered violences. In considering the ways in which the enduring insecurities within Medellín are gendered, I further query the separation of GBV as a unique and divisible concern from the other multiple security issues in the city, instead showing the implications of a gendered continuum of violence.

8.3 Separation of crime and insecurity from gender

In spite of the above connections that have been demonstrated between gender relations and the ongoing and multiple violences, they are still separated out and GBV, usually referring to violence against women, is relegated accordingly. Following on from the discussion of gender mainstreaming in chapter five, where gender appeared to be synonymous with women, the gendered implications of violence are recognised only when discussing violence against women,[167] with the perpetrators, and victims, framed as occupying a particular gender (and often also class and race) identity. As Hume (2008) asserts, the false separation of these violences fails to understand the role of gender in all types of violence. It allows for the two phenomena to be discussed as completely separate entities, as opposed to intertwined components within a (gendered) continuum of violence. GBV, unlike security, is framed as a problem of safety, suggesting a need to protect women,[168] and make them more aware of how to protect themselves. Women's experiences of violence, however, cannot be separated from broader social relations, instead being the site "where micro interpersonal relations and wider social structures intersect" (Sutton, 2010: 160). Consequently, I

---

[167] Contrary to the separation of these terms and their supposedly different connotations, they tended to be used interchangeably.
[168] Critiques have been levelled at such a designation for imagining a particular and heteronormative understanding of 'victim' and 'woman', imagined as homogenous subjects. Instead Hagen (2016) suggests that we move beyond the binary categorization of gender and instead consider various vulnerabilities to GBV including, for instance, those specifically impacting the queer population.

examine the way that the GBV problem is considered and approached as a separable concern, arguing that this division produces a hierarchy whereby GBV is relegated below the supposedly more serious, and subsequently prioritised, security problems such as robberies and homicides.

Numerous voices within the city (at times literally) shout against such a relegation of GBV and consistently bring the issue to the fore in an attempt for recognition of its severity. Activists in the city describe what they term a 'humanitarian crisis of violence against women' in Medellín, calling the local government to account for what is seen as its failure to adequately recognise and address the problem. I first heard the term at an event dedicated to violence against women in the city. The enraged leader of a local human rights NGO showed statistics showing the scale of the problem of violence against women, while arguing that a declaration of a humanitarian crisis was necessary due to the inadequate attention given to the problem. The NGO leader and others continued to highlight the figures of sexual violence (2458 cases), intra-family violence (5743 cases, 84.18% against women) and femicide (93) in 2015 that had led to the original declaration.[169] Since 2015 the figures had remained high (as discussed in more detail below), leading to many groups using the declaration as a way to highlight the continuing and unacceptable scale of the crisis.

Such calls were echoed at a council meeting on GBV, where the hall was filled with activists from the women's movement and various groups and NGOs. The event had been heavily publicised, in an attempt to show discontent in numbers at the lack of urgency and prioritisation of the issue by the local government. In the large council chambers, the counsellors sat at desks at the front of the room, surrounded by a balcony full of people wearing purple.[170] The room was filled with the faces of activists from various women's NGOs and social movements throughout the city and the large attendance of activists aimed to hold the officials to account for what was seen as a failure to take the problem seriously.

Several speakers, including the counsellor Luz María Múnera, were openly critical of the government approach to GBV, stating that various departments were failing in their jobs and letting the responsibility for gender inequalities and GBV fall on the shoulders of women and feminist activists. When one of the speakers, another counsellor, described a reduction in violent incidents in the city, the room roared in anger and

---

[169] https://alianzaconlasmujeres.com/el-alto-indice-de-victimas-en-la-ciudad-de-medellin-a-causa-de-este-tipo-de-violencias-y-la-crisis-humanitaria-de-emergencia-que-ello-genera/

[170] As instructed by the publicity for the event, activists wore purple, as the colour associated with women's movements in the city and more broadly. Purple is internationally used to represent women, with the combination of purple, green and white symbolising women's equality from the early 1900's and the emergence of International Women's Day (see https://www.internationalwomensday.com/About).

women throughout the gallery stood up holding signs with the names and ages of women who had been killed in the previous year. They remained standing throughout the rest of his talk, silently protesting and rejecting his claims of reduced violence as an absurdity against a backdrop of the names of victims, who should not be ignored. In front of the council desks an artist worked throughout the talks with rose petals to create a large hourglass figure of a woman with the words *Ni Una Menos, Vivas Nos Queremos* (Not One Less of Us, We Want to Stay Alive). The activists here, as I had seen frequently over my time in Medellín, passionately denounced the government's supposed inaction and probed the failure to prioritise the issue, with frequent calls to 'stop the war against women'. Representing a diverse movement, there were activists from various groups with multiple priorities. In their collective resistance they challenged a further symbolic violence that exists in the lack of prioritisation and consequent silencing of such crimes. The marginalisation of GBV therefore becomes another form of violence which they are fighting in their collective protest.

The women's movements in Medellín emphasise violence against women, in order to redress what they claim to be the marginalisation of the issue by officials. The separation of violence against women is strategic, similar to the separation of what are seen as 'women's issues' in an attempt to bring to light a topic that has traditionally been neglected. As seen in the debates surrounding the terms GBV or VAW in chapter two, the emphasis on violence against women as distinct and severe, is part of raising the profile of GBV and its prioritisation as an issue (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). As Eva, the member of staff responsible for considering gender and security within the department of security explained:

> the security approach is focused on delinquents, on crimes that are traditionally considered, so that means robberies, homicides. It doesn't even include extortion, and displacement, which also enters here and critically this is another. Within this, I feel that women end up being left out. The crimes that affect women, like sexual violence, domestic violence, femicides, they are issues that end up being left out of the security focus, relegated.

She assured me that this was just her personal opinion, but her account aligned with the same concerns that led the activists to protest the council meeting, and in the emerging security priorities discussed in chapter seven. Similarly, Mariana reported that the security department are very focused on the issue of physical protection, emphasising theft and robberies. She stated however that "it should be them carrying the flag for security for women, but they are just not doing it", explaining that others instead have to take on the task of highlighting the problems of violence against women. In the prioritisation of homicides and robberies, we see that attention grabbing direct forms of

violence often receive greater attention, despite, as shown by conceptualising violence as a continuum, being intricately linked with other forms.[171] Here, then, I confirm that GBV is treated as a separate concern, outside of broader, and generally male-dominated, forms of insecurity. While GBV falls outside of this prioritised list of insecurities that these women aim to rebalance, it does have a place within the *Alcaldía*, even if it is considered as separate from other security concerns. I will now consider its placement and framing therefore within the *Alcaldía*.

8.4 Gender-Based Violence and *Mujeres Seguras*

Nationally, Colombia has a number of programmes and projects designed to eradicate gender-based violence, as well as having one of the most advanced legal frameworks for addressing violence against women and girls (Human Rights Watch, 2012). As explored in chapter one, Colombia has one of the most decentralised governance structures (Daughters and Harper, 2006), drawing particular attention to the municipal level for GBV policy. In June 2015, Medellín became one of the cities adopting the global UN resolution for 'Safe Cities for Women and Girls'.[172] Through joining the initiative, Medellín formally expressed an acknowledgement that security needs are gendered, and that insecurity experienced by women needs to be taken seriously. This also connects to broader discussions within Colombia, While I have indicated that violence against women is relegated from the security priorities, here I also acknowledge that gender-based violence is taken seriously in Medellín in numerous ways.

Claudia, who works in the women's department and leads the GBV project named '*rutas de atención y prevención',* working towards supporting those experiencing GBV and ultimately towards the prevention of GBV. During our interview, she recounted enthusiastically that the project includes a range of services designed specifically for women, and primarily those who are experiencing domestic violence. The work in *atención* aims to give psychological and legal advice to women who have suffered gender-based violence or the consequences of it, as well as accompanying them in denouncing such violence. The main part of this project is a public security programme, comprising of a 24-hour phone line staffed by *duplas,* or duos, of psychologists and lawyers, in addition to numerous sites across the city where women can drop-in for advice. If women are considered to be in immediate danger, the project also has a refuge

---

[171] Despite the focus on these particular crimes, they are not being fully tackled. Homicides and robberies also continue as ongoing challenges, and criticism is also levelled at the authorities for their failure to properly investigate and punish such crimes, El Tiempo reported an impunity rate of 94% in 2019 (Gossain, 2019).

[172] The Safe Cities initiative is a comparative programme evaluating and working towards the prevention of sexual harassment and violence against women and girls. The initiative includes partnerships between state actors, women's groups and other partners. It is centrally led by the UN but policies are decided at a local level, Medellín already had several measures in place at the point of joining the initiative. See more at - https://lac.unwomen.org/en/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2015/07/medellin-safe-cities

service where women (and their young children) can stay for up to 6 weeks, with support from a social worker alongside that of the *duplas*.

These services are in high demand but offer a comprehensive programme of attention for women experiencing violence. As part of their GBV programme, the women's department also runs a service with psychological support for the aggressors, working with men who have been violent towards their partners. However, the service is voluntary, and staff reported that the demand for accessing it is much smaller. The rest of the services, all working with victims, are all in very high demand, with Claudia acknowledging that the twelve refuge homes were not sufficient for the need in the city, and that their support teams were unable to cope with the demand for the service.

A significant pressure on their ability to cope with the demand for the GBV project services is financial. As explored in chapter five, the funding for the women's department had been consistently reduced in real terms across successive governments. The cuts under the Gutiérrez administration are seen to be justified on the basis of reallocating funds to the more important security concerns and agenda, with increased police presence and a supposed crack-down on gangs and criminal actors. Where previous local governments had also funded projects focused on preventative work (hence the project's name, emphasising attention *and* prevention), the budget cuts for the *Secretaría de las Mujeres* meant they instead focused almost entirely[173] on their work with those who had already experienced abuse, the services seen to address more urgent requirements.

Claudia informed me that, of the six programmes designed and run by the GBV team in the past, the reduction in funding meant that they were only able to continue running three. Claudia saw the work of this department as important but under increasing pressure and consequently more and more limited. She stated that:

> I hope that we get to a time where we don't need the women's department. But we are so far away. Every time the government cuts and cuts our budgets. If only we had more available. But for this government we only have these three [emergency response programmes], less and less money arrives.

The budgetary pressures felt here have worsened with consecutive governments in terms of the possible work of the women's department. Rooting GBV solely with women places it within a gendered binary that contributes to a feminised understanding of women's organisations which, as Hagen (2016) highlights, suffer more limited funding

---

[173] Some small pilot schemes were taking place, but it would be impossible to roll them out even if successful due to the lack of available funds.

compared to departments perceived as masculine, in this case the security department. The work attending to victims of GBV and abuse was attentive to the structural causes of such violence. Unable to attempt to address such factors due to budget cuts, the work is instead restricted to the most immediate needs of victims of violence. Just as the militarised approach to security could be seen to move away from societal inequalities and structural factors, the services for GBV similarly shifted away from challenging unequal gender relations and their connections to violence, to urgent response work and immediate and extreme forms of insecurity. In separating out the remit of such violence to the women's department, the *Alcaldía* were able to concurrently celebrate their gender sensitive approach, while at the same time reducing resources for it and the scope for preventative work.

Those working in the women's department were frustrated by the constraints put upon them, seeing larger structural shifts to more equitable gender relations as a prerequisite for reducing GBV, thus connecting structural and direct forms of violence along a continuum. While they emphasised physical harm in their services, everyone I spoke with at the women's department recognised a broader definition of GBV encompassing verbal harm, economic and psychological control, and linking to broader structural factors.[174] On my first visit to the department Claudia gave me a *Mujeres Seguras* 'kit', a pouch just larger than a pencil case containing various items made to promote their services and raise awareness of GBV. It included a torch, a mirror and pills (suspiciously similar to jelly beans) with the active ingredients of "autonomy, decision, respect, equality, self-determination and freedom". Claudia laughed as she talked me through the kit. Some of the items were seen to be a light-hearted attempt to discuss, raise awareness and probe debate around some of the themes relating to GBV.

However, more serious topics were also raised, for instance by the *Violentómetro*, a resource that was produced by the women's department.[175] The *Violentómetro* is a laminated ruler containing a warning system for women for when to be alert (for instance if a partner lies or controls relationships with your friends or family), to react (for example if he touches you aggressively, or stops you using contraception) and when the situation is urgent (with examples including threats of death, or forced sexual relations), at which point they advise you to look for help as your life is in danger (Appendix C). At the top of the list is femicide. While the scale simplifies forms of violence, it also shows GBV as a continuum. Less serious or downplayed forms of

---

[174] Reporting of Inter-family violence in Medellín showed that over 80% was directed towards women, and the cases included a spread of categories of violence, the most commonly reported being verbal and physical assaults (Full breakdown in Martínez and Marín, 2017).

[175] Originally the tool was designed and created at the *Instituto Politécnico Nacional* in Mexico, to raise awareness as part of a campaign for a campus free from violence (Tronco and Ocaña, 2011). Comparable resources have been produced in Colombia, directing victims towards a free national helpline.

violence, as the *Violentómetro* makes clear, are not unrelated from the most serious form of violence, femicide, as the killing of women as a direct consequence of their gender.[176] In the *Violentómetro*, a continuum of violence is displayed (albeit not quite as extensive as my own conceptualisation including broader structural imbalances, see chapter two), but aiming to encourage women to both recognise the signs of abuse, in its varied forms, and encouraging them to seek support from the government-run information line.

Civil servants working in this response work therefore unsurprisingly recognised the severity of the problem. However, the private nature of the majority of cases meant that it was easy to simply downplay its relevance; it was less visible than other forms of violence in the city. When I interviewed Marcela, a psychologist working at the front line of the GBV response programme in one of the *duplas* seeing women who drop in for advice, she told me that the majority of cases of GBV in Medellín were between couples and that domestic abuse tended to be hidden. As the activists had insisted, she asserted that violence against women was increasing, drawing my attention to the rise in femicide rates in 2017 (see Table 1). When I asked about the discrepancy between this and the celebrated reductions in many other types of direct violence she was both despondent and angry, she replied:

> I don't know why it is. I don't know why here. There is one thing that I debate every day, that is why men hate women so much. I don't know. A lot of the women you listen to say, 'he could kill me, I've seen it in his eyes, he could kill me'. And lots have them have actually tried to kill them. It has to be, it has to be to do with education, with the *machista* culture that we are living in … it is the patriarchal culture that has given the power to men, the inequity and the stereotypes. It is the idea that women go for *these* things and men for *those* … they will have sayings like 'women are from the house and men are from the street.'

Here she links domestic violence and the patriarchal structures which produce unequal expectations of gender roles and power relations, affirming the arguments of feminist scholars including True (2012) and Vargas (2007).

---

[176] Numerous cases of homicides of women do not have information about the perpetrator, however with the information available the number of women killed by partners or ex-partners, relatives or acquaintances was around 38% of all homicides, with varying figures for femicides committed by a stranger (8 cases in 2015 and 4 cases in 2016) (Martínez and Marín, 2017).

Table 1 – Homicides of women according to assumed aggressor, Medellín, 2016-2017

	2016	2017
Intimate femicide	24	34
Non-intimate femicide	9	6
Other	7	22
Total	40	62

Source: (Bustamante et al., 2018)[177]

Marcela, in the above quote, frames *machista* culture as a societal problem. However, when I asked whether her work differed across the city her answer was more complex. With only 6 *duplas* across the city, Marcela worked in different neighbourhoods over the course of each week, covering areas in different *estratos* with divergent social dynamics. Within *Comuna* 13, she said that:

> The forms, the expression of violence [is different]. Let's say, in comparison with *Comuna* 11[178] that is a different socio-economic stratum, in that part of the city you see more psychological violence, although there is also physical violence. But here [in *Comuna* 13] it is exacerbated, the levels are very high … It's very sharp, very cruel, it's a very strong expression of violence.

In her answer she makes comparisons between the forms of violence which are seen to be worse in working class neighbourhoods. Connecting to the discussion of Citizen Culture and new masculinities in chapter five, there was a differentiation of those with more problematic gender norms being those of particular (working class) subjects. While I do not deny that Marcela had encountered these trends in her experience working as a psychologist across the city, in framing GBV as a working class concern the issue can become limited to those who are already marked as the problem in society, seeing poorer men as more violent.

In particular, the violence that Marcela described as crueller within the poorer areas can connect to broader understandings of violence and working-class men. A breakdown of victims of sexual violence in 2016 by *Comuna* supports Marcela's assumption that this too is a violence disproportionately experienced in such areas, showing that there are higher recorded occurrences in San Javier – *Comuna* 13 (52) than Laureles-Estadio - *Comuna* 11 (29). However, the latter figure is not insignificant, and the report also shows that such violence occurs in all parts of the city at relatively high levels. Other poorer areas such as Altavista had in fact reported much lower figures

---

[177] Intimate femicide is defined in the report as being killed by men with whom the victim had an intimate relation, usually a partner or ex-partner.

[178] *Comuna* 11, Laureles/Estadio, is a middle-class neighbourhood, mostly in the fourth and fifth *estratos*.

(11) than the wealthier Laureles-Estadio (Martínez and Márin, 2017: 84). Despite this, Marcela's expectations were supported by a range of responses I encountered when discussing my work with people across the city. An expectation of violence of all kinds, including violence against women, was often framed as being a problem for poorer neighbourhoods, located within the *comunas* at the margins of the city, both literally and symbolically. Medellín's poorer neighbourhoods are connected to a wide range of forms of violence, with poverty and a range of societal challenges connecting to higher numbers of violent crimes including gang activities.

In addition to class difference, Marcela also mentioned race, and associated *costeños* (predominantly darker skinned) and people from La Guajira (a peninsula on the Caribbean coast of Colombia populated predominantly by poor mestizo populations with notable indigenous traits) with the worst forms of violence. While social exclusion has been connected to more extreme forms of violence (Koonings and Kruijt, 2007), labelling certain groups as more violent can essentialise and 'other' forms of violence which emerge within and from all sectors of society. In Antioquia, where there is a privileging of masculinity and whiteness rooted in colonial histories, the racialisation of violent subjects is problematic (Viveros-Vigoya, 2013). Violence against women, far from only affecting limited groups, is a universal problem, and while the experience of it may be influenced by intersecting categories, it is found in all ages, social classes and ethnic groups (Lagarde, 2006).

The comments from Marcela were reminiscent of others that I had heard during my time in Medellín (see also: Morgan, 2008). The stigma attached to working class men and marginalised ethnic groups can lead to an expectation of violence within these communities, without also considering the multiple forms of violence that exist and how they work to compound one another. Separating and distinguishing the problem as something for the 'other' can overlook the complexities inherent to a continuum of violence, connecting to all forms of violence including GBV. Such stigma is widespread across Colombia, whereby marginal neighbourhoods can be overwhelmingly stigmatised by the violence that exists within them, as dangerous and even '*desechable*' (disposable) (Alape, 2006; Griffin, 2019). Victims and perpetrators are valued differently depending on their social class, and GBV can then become an individualised flaw rather than a problem rooted in patriarchal structures (Falú, 2009).

A militarised approach to security assumes that gang activity and related forms of violence are separate problems to be uprooted and removed, as seen in chapter seven. Similarly, when GBV is framed as a "problem of others" (Dobash and Dobash, 1998: 141), the socially excluded and marginalised, it overlooks the existence of gendered norms, roles and hierarchies across society which contribute to the most extreme forms

of GBV (Vargas, 2009; True, 2012). It also overlooks the ways in which structural violences based within race and class can translate into interpersonal violence (Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). This critique is not unique to that of Medellín, but relates to a number of contexts where an individualised approach supersedes underpinning structural conditions and violences. Without denying the severity of the extreme violence that can be found in marginal neighbourhoods, the creation of a hierarchy of violence and those associated with different forms separates the problem of violence once more to one of the 'bad' men in those particular areas. It is therefore seen as an individualised problem, rather than a societal one.

With GBV consequently framed as a separate concern, it is placed outside of the prioritised security agenda discussed in chapter seven. While this allows for targeted campaigns, often drawing upon complex understandings of a continuum of GBV, it is also de-prioritised and underfunded. Under such pressures, the focus shifts to the most immediately necessary work on attention rather than prevention, and away from attempts to challenge the gender norms that underpin all forms of gendered violence. Certain men are presented as problematic, again reinforcing a narrative of the problem being outside of society, rather than violent masculinities being entrenched within it. Security therefore becomes a problem separate from, rather than intrinsic to, broader structures of power. Gender-based violence, separated out as it is in the above, continues to plague the city. Rather than being distinct though, GBV is connected with other forms of violence, including structural and symbolic violences, and impacts upon broader gender expectations within the city. Following Hume (2008; see also; Segato, 2014b; Baird, 2018), I expand upon how such actors and activities are gendered, and note their influence on, and influences from, gender relations in the city. Gender is one of the intersecting categories shaping both the experience of, and vulnerability to, insecurities (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). Gendered dimensions emerge in everything from structural factors including feminised poverty (Pearce, 1978; Chant, 2014) to the overrepresentation of young men in homicides.

8.5 Conclusion

Building upon the types of violence explored in chapter seven, the continuing and imbricated powers of state and armed actors reproduce hegemonic masculinities, directly contradicting the governments rhetoric of change. Looking to the everyday implications of the multiple and ongoing violences, ranging from gang violence and extortion to sexual violence and femicide, all relate directly to the structural violences of societal divisions and inequalities including, but not limited to, gender. Such violences cannot be separated from the social fabric of the city; they are instead products of the city's continuing exclusion, fragmentation and inequalities. Consequently, in thinking

about how the problem in Medellín is framed and understood, an intersectional feminist understanding helps in making visible the multiple dimensions of the violence in the city that have previously been left unchallenged.

While the multiple forms of violence that continue in Medellín both produce, and are produced by, gendered dynamics, the security approach in the city and the broader conceptualisation of violence within it artificially separates GBV from other forms of violence. As a tactic, separating out violence against women (from other forms of violence) can be a strategy of activists, both within and outside of government, to draw attention to the severity of the often-neglected issue. As seen above, it can also be helpful in illuminating direct and specific support systems for those experiencing domestic violence. Within Medellín's *Alcaldía* the services for victims of domestic violence are extensive and within the women's department they are seen to fit within an understanding of the continuum of GBV. However, such a separation does not only bring practical benefits, but also results in violence against women being largely unacknowledged and underfunded (leading to the declaration by activists declaration of a humanitarian crisis of violence against women in the city, as explored in 8.3). It also means that the gendered aspects of broader security concerns are overlooked. In failing to acknowledge the gendered dynamics of the continuing violence in the city, the approach to security will always be limited.

Drawing gendered violence together with the intersecting categories of class and race, the discussion in this chapter has indicated a tendency to assume the worst violence, both against women and more broadly, falls within the margins of the city, without a concurrent understanding of the related forms of structural and symbolic violence that feed into and reproduce the direct violence within such areas. The discussion of security has therefore shown that the transformation narrative relies on the separation and 'othering' of continuing forms of insecurity. Rather than seeing the way that the various forms of violence are interlinked, such a separation places the blame with certain areas and certain subjects, usually young, working class men, as being associated solely with violence. Contrary to this, the ongoing structural inequalities and the related nature of the differing forms of violence indicate a failure to ensure security for all, across the city. In examining continuing insecurities, I have indicated the connections between the structural, symbolic and direct forms of violence that continue, showing how gang violence, for instance, is directly connected to gender as well as being a consequence of inequalities and social exclusion. In connecting the structures and rhetoric of security explored in chapter seven, with the everyday implications of it, I trouble their separation, showing the multiple ways in which such violence, at multiple scales, is implicated in relations of gender and other structural divisions and inequalities.

Furthermore, the discussion in this chapter draws together the multiple themes covered throughout the thesis. An emphasis on the lived experiences of the policies draws out the contradictions of the policies, and the gaps and omissions within them. Here then I draw together aspects of each of my central research questions, ranging from understanding Medellín's original crisis, the integration of gender within policy, how gender informs the success story and the gendered contradictions that arise within the narrative of transformation. Looking to the everyday further highlights the contribution of the feminist ethnographic methods that form the basis of this research. Individual responses to insecurities, the rich data from interviews, and everyday insights, all highlight the ways in which the city's policies are experienced, while also highlighting the limits with regards to integrating gender and of the urban transformation more broadly. Through the urban everyday, the multifaceted implications of the continuum of violence suggest a need to demand further change, where gender (and other intersecting inequalities) are taken seriously to reach a secure and transformed city.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Over a decade has passed since Medellín's celebrated urban development approach began, and successive governments have kept on a similar trajectory, while encompassing slight shifts in their emphasis and direction for the city. Through differing approaches to governance, the city continues to attract attention for its transformational change, and is lauded as a "phoenix rising from the ashes" (Sotomayor, 2013), a "beacon for cities across the globe" (Stiglitz, 2014). In undertaking a critical feminist analysis of Medellín's urban transformation, this thesis unmasks the transformed city, contributing further to critical engagements of the urban development approach (Colak and Pearce, 2015; Franz, 2017), while also highlighting moments of genuine change. I have assessed the integration of gender within the policies developed to combat the city's past and continuing insecurities, how gender relations have (or have not) changed and within which spaces, and the gendered contradictions and resistances that continue. In doing so, the project combines an assessment of space, urban planning policy and security, all starting with a consideration of the everyday of the city, its spaces and its institutions.

A multi-scalar engagement with the city, considering government policy and civil servants, residents and civil society representatives, has allowed an understanding of the roles and limitations of various actors in (re)producing the urban environment, alongside the contradictions and contestations emerging within it. In this final discussion I draw conclusions across the different but connected themes addressed throughout the thesis, in addition to outlining the contributions of the thesis and its implications. The questions I ask throughout the thesis are interdisciplinary in nature; I consider different scales, spaces and places across the city, with mixed methods all rooted within critical feminist ethnography. The project therefore contributes to a variety of discussions, also informing future directions of research.

9.1 Findings

The thesis has assessed the urban transformation of Medellín, gendering the strategies and experiences of the policies and the city. It considered the following research questions:

1. In what ways has gender informed understandings of Medellín's urban crisis and the demands for transformation?

2. In what ways has gender been integrated into the policy changes in recent years, and which actors have been involved in this?
3. How is gender used as a measure of success in the city, and which women (and men), and spaces are considered within this?
4. What role does gender play in the contradictions that arise between the discourse, policy and urban everyday that characterise the transformative moment in Medellín?

In evaluating the case of urban transformation in Medellín, I consider various elements that have made up the celebrated changes, all relating to and illuminating the central juxtaposition of a city that is seen to be innovative and progressive, while remaining conservative and patriarchal. The thesis therefore brings together disparate themes, using an interdisciplinary approach. In each of the empirical chapters, I focus on different, but connected themes and areas of focus from within the narrative of change. Firstly, I focus on the strategies for change, the work to change the city and its inhabitants culture, and the claims of gender mainstreaming across the work of the *Alcaldía*. I then move to consider the implications of these strategies, first by outlining the changes within public space, before moving to assess security concerns, both past and present.

Engaging with urban development policies and the civil servants who design and implement them, shows that gender is considered to be a key element of the change, at least by some. The influence of women's movements, both locally and internationally, has had some sway over the rhetoric of the local government, and led to remarkable achievements, such as the notable provisions for victims of domestic violence. Simultaneously, however, gendered norms and cultures retain prominence in the *Alcaldía*, as in wider society, feeding back into an often-limited consideration of gender in practice, and a further entrenchment of gendered binaries within government policy. Gender is therefore integrated within policy, although primarily in terms of women and 'women's issues'. Such a designation reflects the difficulty of bringing a critique of masculinity and/or patriarchal cultures, particularly when the institutions themselves are not outside of the society that is shaped by such norms and values.

In the *Alcaldía*'s prioritisation of culture, there is some potential for patriarchal logics to be challenged. If the problem within the idea of culture relates to inclusion within political cultures and changes in norms and values, then the historical exclusion of gendered differences and inequalities could potentially be addressed. Despite the centrality of gender, and other social categories, to concepts of inclusion, politics and citizenship however, it is side-lined in aspects of the governments innovative approach,

that prioritises such areas. In Citizen Culture, for example, citizens are aspirationally, but ultimately artificially, separated from social divisions and fragmentations within the city. Instead, the approach to changing culture emerges from a pedagogical approach constructed around the frame of a neutral (masculine) subject, with the route to becoming a good citizen emerging without an attempt to tackle the persistent inequalities that impact each individual's potential to access citizenship. Throughout the thesis I show the multiple ways in which Medellín continues to be a patriarchal, neoliberal city, where gender (and other intersecting) inequalities and violences continue to be (re)produced. Within the policy of Citizen Culture and without a central recognition of this, the concept of the ideal citizen is both prescriptive and limited, without any challenge to structural inequalities. In extending the concept of a neutral citizen, the policy's flaws emerge from a recognition of the divisions and fragmentations across the city. While gender has been the central focus of the thesis, intersecting inequalities, and in particular class and race, are also relevant to the experience of the city and its policies. Gender, and other intersecting categories, should consequently be at the heart of such policies, and their neglect in the central policy of Citizen Culture raises concern as to the potential of the integration of gender within the *Alcaldía* more broadly.

As an institution that is rooted within, and constitutive of, the broader culture and environment, Medellín's *Alcaldía* requires internal engagement with its own gendered norms, logics and embodiments, as well as tools for effectively expanding a holistic gender-sensitive approach throughout its work. The *Alcaldía*, just as is the case with all institutions, is not monolithic, meaning that different actors are able to shape, and work to change, such cultures. There are, therefore, means by which employees and social movements 'work' the spaces within and surrounding institutions in ways that contribute to moments of change. A significant overlap between activists and civil servants, particularly the feminist activists working within the *Secretaría de las Mujeres*, means that the engagements and understandings of gender were often critical, engaging with gender as a relational concept and understanding the need for broad societal transformation. However, insights from both interviews and policies illuminated a tendency towards the reliance on such gender experts rather than an integrated approach. The incorporation of gender was ultimately limited and based on individual preferences and priorities, beyond the boundaries of the women's department. I found a lack of confidence in approaching gender issues from those who did not consider themselves experts, however well-meaning, as well as active resistance from some against the inclusion of gender and any broader consideration of gendered impacts and implications within government.

The lack of challenging institutional cultures provokes further questions about the ways in which a persistent patriarchal culture shapes the city itself, as seen through closer consideration of Medellín's public space and security dialogues. Gender, then, as a measure of success is incorporated within urban planning, but in a restricted way, without meaningful engagement with the extent to which gender shapes and informs the experience of everything from culture to public space (as highlighted throughout the thesis). A consideration of public space shows the limitations and restrictions that emerge when considering how the city and the spaces within it are used and appropriated. Gendered divisions are multifaceted, meaning that cultural divisions and inequalities are lived through gendered spaces, labours and responsibilities. Without an integrated approach, the impressive and celebrated interventions in infrastructure and public space in Medellín do not challenge these divides. Further contradictions then emerge when considering the rhetoric of inclusion that is so central to Medellín's *Alcaldía*, and the continuing restrictions in access to public space. Even when interventions in space are designed to overcome concerns often raised by feminist critiques of planning, such as open and well-lit spaces, without concurrent challenges to patriarchal structures and cultures, gendered restrictions remain.

Similarly, as explored in chapter seven and eight, the ongoing insecurities in the city illuminate not only contradictions in the narrative of transformation, but also draw attention to the urgent need for transformative structural change. Starkly, gender-based violence is left out of the story of Medellín as a city that has achieved transformational change and greater security. Despite the limited but commendable interventions to support women who are victims of violence, such violence is separated and erased from the story of greater security in the city. Notably, within the Gutiérrez government's emphasis on security, gender is left out. In recognising violence as a continuum that is always gendered (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; Hume, 2008), such an omission has repercussions. Ongoing insecurities in the city include gender-based violence, alongside gendered fears and restricted access to particular spaces. Additionally, the ongoing direct violence involving predominantly young and working-class men, in addition to structural and symbolic insecurities such as stigma and poverty, also continue to be experienced along gendered lines and intersecting identity categories. Such insights suggest that the transformation has not secured the city for all of its residents, instead relying on a prioritisation of particular spaces and subjects within the city.

Additionally, masculinities emerged as being key to a gendered understanding of Medellín's urban transformation. Understanding gender as relational (Peterson, 2005; Butler, 2006; Chisholm, 2017), I was interested in speaking to and including various

voices and perspectives in relation to gender, and considering the views of various men and women within my research. Consequently, I assessed how gendered constructions within the city related to the experiences of women and femininities, as well as the ways in which men have experienced forms of masculinity. Such findings draw attention to the need for a gendered approach to the city to engage with the relational dimensions of gender, that connect to the city's violent past and ongoing forms of violence. In particular, considering not only violence against women, but also considering the gendered constructions of space that continue to "produce and reproduce the relational dynamics which embed and perpetuate violence" (Pearce, 2006: 45). Consequently, I found the impact of violent masculinities to have an impact on both men and women, and highlighted the need to address these within the city's approach to urban change. I do so, hoping not to draw attention away from the valuable emphasis on women, but to explore and consider the multiple dimensions of gendered performances, norms and experiences within the changing urban landscape.

Through considering cultures, institutions, space and insecurities, it becomes apparent that structural inequalities remain intact, and feed directly into the ways in which gender subjects are constructed, reproduced and lived. Incremental changes have altered the daily experience of the city for many residents, often significantly, and such change should not be understated. However, the limits of such change become clear when looking at the limited integration of gender in the strategies for change and the subsequent continuation of gendered inequalities across the city. Despite the limitations that have been emphasised throughout the thesis, there are also moments of change within the city, even with regards to gender. Civil society demands, civil servants' work, and a variety of protests and simple daily practices also show challenges and resistance to gendered norms and expectations, illuminating the potential for shifts, albeit until now generally remaining within the limits of a binary understanding of gender. Medellín's urban landscape therefore remains complex and multifaceted, with contestations and contradictions that complicate the city's narrative of transformation, but also highlight moments of, and possibilities for, change.

9.2 Contributions and Implications of the Research

Critical feminist scholars, as explored in chapter two, have drawn attention to the gendered nature of institutions, space, and violence within the urban everyday. Throughout the thesis I add to each of these debates, while drawing out connections between them, contributing to discussions within development studies, urban planning, geography and International Relations. Expanding upon previous critiques of the limitations of the city's lauded urban development approach (Abello-Colak and

Guarneros-Meza, 2014; Abello Colak and Pearce, 2015; Franz, 2017), a gendered analysis of Medellín's urban transformation brings to the fore the contestations and contradictions between the narrative of change and the everyday lived experience of the city. Separating gender out illuminates these complexities, as well as indicating the need for further considerations of the impact of intersecting categories. While the significance of the themes of race and class have emerged through various examples and experiences discussed in the thesis, there is a need for a much broader and more in-depth engagement with these and other intersecting categories which were largely beyond the scope of this project, including age, sexuality and disability.

In illuminating the ways that structural and symbolic violences continue to have prevalence in the city, and the gendered experience and restrictions within space and urban planning, I draw attention to the problematic employment of the term 'transformation'. Just as terms including gender, empowerment and others have become development buzzwords (Cornwall and Brock, 2006; Batiwala, 2010), I argue that transformation has become a term used to erase complexities and contradictions. Medellín has seen great change, and moments of change that are promising, but that remain fundamentally limited. In the narrative of transformation, gendered inequalities (as others including class and race) are overlooked, in an effective city branding campaign that artificially removes and separates gendered dimensions of violence from the overall narrative of change. I demonstrate throughout that, when removed from its radical roots, transformation falls into the traps of similar buzzwords in overlooking and failing to challenge multiple ongoing problems and structural inequalities.

The thesis also raises questions about the potential of the state as an agent for change, connecting to discussions surrounding urban planning and gender mainstreaming. The innovative urban development approach is worth celebrating in many ways, and has brought services and interventions to the city that have benefitted the lives of residents. In spite of this, the state remains implicated in numerous forms of violence, and its actions, however innovative, do not challenge the cultures that I have shown to remain entrenched within neoliberal, patriarchal systems, which continue to inform unequal social relations in the city. The *Alcaldía*'s approach to gender mainstreaming is a clear example of the gap between the policy rhetoric and strategies and the institutional everyday. I show how gendered norms and relations thus remain intertwined within the institutional cultures and logics (Mackay and Krook, 2011) within Medellín's *Alcaldía*.

While broader cultures may be seen as a fundamental limitation of urban governance (Fainstein, 2014), the promises and scope of Medellín's government have potential

beyond their current implementation (Pearson, 2005; Walby, 2005; Allwood, 2013). Challenges to entrenched and unequal cultures, both within and outside of the city's institutions, are avoided at an institution-wide level. However, individuals working within the institutions demonstrate that their appetite and scope for change goes beyond the limited boundaries currently observed. There are tensions inherent to keeping gender analysis and policy work complex, while making its integration possible across heterogeneous institutions (Hagen, 2019). However, the clear limitations of individual and incremental change demands that institutional cultures are recognised and challenged. The limitations suggest that urban development policy must therefore work to change institutional cultures, to have any potential to change broader cultures, finding ways to work across departments in ways that meaningfully engage with gender and embedding the pedagogical tools to make such change possible.

Without meaningful mainstreaming, gendered inequalities and violences become othered; in Medellín for instance the separation of gender experts was demonstrated (Wittman, 2010). As such, the findings of the thesis encourage challenges to institutional structures and cultures, showing the limitations of mainstreaming within otherwise unchallenged environments (Smyth, 2007; Allwood, 2013). I therefore add to debates surrounding gender mainstreaming, recognising its potential contribution to change, but echoing concerns surrounding its current implementation. In Medellín's *Alcaldía*, gender mainstreaming is claimed, but here I show the value in probing the understandings of what this means according to civil servants and policy decisions. Holding institutions to account for the claims they make allows for observing the gaps or limitations that such rhetoric can have, and the need to find a level of consensus alongside practical tools to effectively include a gender sensitive approach throughout.

However, the state, and other non-state institutions, are not monolithic. I have also drawn attention to the ways in which civil servants, social movements and activists work neoliberal, patriarchal spaces (Larner *et al.*, 2005), in ways that carve out opportunities for moments of change. Rather than institutional change, such moments rely on individual commitments, priorities and actions. Political leaders can have a large impact on the direction of such change and the election of Daniel Quintero,[179] a progressive independent, as Mayor in October 2019 may again have an impact on the direction of governance in Medellín which will be significant to monitor. It is not just the leaders, however, but multiple actors, both within the city and internationally, that

---

[179] In a move away from the traditional political elite Quintero was elected to succeed Gutiérrez. As an advocate and campaigner for the Colombian peace process he is a divisive figure who has declared his distance from political movements, made criticisms that angered local business elites and received death threats during his campaign (https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/por-que-gano-daniel-quintero-en-medellin/638851). His election could signify appetites for further change in the city.

shape and alter the course taken within urban governance, as has been shown to be the case in Medellín (Maclean, 2014). My thesis contributes a gendered dimension to understanding this complexity. Tussles for power between progressive social movements and conservative actors, including the Catholic church, inform the expressions of issues such as gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive policies within Medellín's urban governance. Activists and residents working both within and outside of government buildings and policy find ways to challenge and resist gendered divisions and expectations (although, as explored, generally doing so in ways that continue to cling to a gendered binary). The multi-scalar approach taken within the project has consequently illuminated complexities in both the narrative of urban transformation, and in its critiques. The story of the city is not simply a case of success or failure of urban development policy, but of moments of change both within the institutions and beyond. While such change queries the narrative of transformation, such moments have significance across the city and provoke further change.

As reiterated throughout the thesis, neither space nor gender are entirely fixed entities. Within the various examples and accounts which I draw upon, we see examples of potential shifts and changes as a result. Within spaces inside and outside of the government, I illuminate how the gendered dynamics of urban space can reproduce, but also shift and challenge, particular ideas and expectations of gendered performances within urban space (McDowell, 1997; Chant and McIlwaine, 2013), for instance with the hip-hop artists reclamation of public space challenging hegemonic masculinities. From looking to the everyday, the gendered dynamics of the urban environment, even as it has shifted and altered with huge investment in public space and infrastructure, remain clear. To challenge the gendered nature of urban space therefore, requires changes in broader gendered cultures and logics across society. While street lights and public transport can improve the ease of access to certain spaces for certain subjects, gender (and other intersecting factors) continues to shape and restrict access to spaces within the city.

Each of the above themes conflates in the gendered everyday of violence in Medellín, that intimately relates to the spatial configurations of the city. Returning to the initial driving force of the research project, I have drawn upon GBV as a significant form of violence, that is implicated within all other forms of violence, and which cannot be overlooked in success stories of development and change. I emphasise that GBV cannot be addressed without also considering the hegemonic masculinities associated with other forms of violence (Connell, 2002; Hume, 2004). Contributing further to insights into these connections, I have shown that GBV is often associated with violent actors in the city and rooted in gender inequalities and broader structural violences throughout

society. In adding a spatial dimension to a gendered political economy of violence (True, 2012), I emphasise the restricted access particular gendered subjects face in urban spaces (Vargas, 2007), bringing together discussions that further illuminate a gendered continuum of violence. Working to prevent GBV, far from being cut as the result of differing governmental priorities, must be integrated throughout governmental planning strategies and implementation, across institutions and beyond. I have shown the limits of addressing such violence in this way, and argue that the 'problem' to be 'solved' within the violent city must begin with a complex understanding of violence that recognises gender. Far from being separated as an individualised concern, gendered violence is rooted within societal structures, and experienced in multiple forms. Gender inequalities and violences are rooted throughout societal norms and cultures and are not merely a problem of poor or racialized subjects (Dobash *et al.*, 1998; Falú, 2009; Viveros-Vigoya, 2016). Gender relations need to be challenged across society, and not only among marginalised subjects and communities (Wright, 2019) but also among policymakers, and by those privileged in society, to avoid the imposition of further racialized, classed and colonial logics, as seen within the current approach.

I have also drawn attention to the precarious character of change in the city, within the limits of non-transformational or reformist change, as it fails to account for and address structural inequalities and violences. There is precarity in the continual dominance of violent actors such as paramilitaries and gangs, even within the supposed centres of transformation. Since I left the city in 2017, there have been further spates of violence, even within *Comuna* 13,[180] further alerting to the uncertainty of peace and security in the city. There is also, however, insecurity within the gendered forms of informal labour that rely on the consistent arrival of tourists, and on the gender-sensitive policies and practices that rely on political will and individual actions and priorities. Unfortunately, this means that many in the city are vulnerable to a host of potential problems, including the potential resurgence of violence, and also situations such as that of the global pandemic of COVID-19, which is having a huge impact on the informal workers including those relying on tourism in Medellín. Again, therefore, in order to address entrenched inequalities, multiple forms of (gendered) violence must be recognised as being within a continuum and therefore as connected elements. Given the various elements that currently remain finely balanced, the sustainability of Medellín's change is also called into question.

In an urban development approach that considers culture, gender mainstreaming, and spatial interventions, Medellín's urban change has great potential. Throughout this thesis however I illuminate that the gendered limitations coalesce in ways that restrict

---

[180] https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/sigue-violencia-en-la-comuna-13-de-medellin-230912

the urban change and result in forms of precarity and insecurity across the city. In order to aim for transformative urban planning, strategies must therefore be inclusive of and responsive to the gendered dimensions and implications of institutions, cultures, spaces, and violences. In the gendered analysis of the urban development approach I speak not just to the case of Medellín, but to the limitations that may be seen when considering similarly placed development interventions. Beyond Medellín, the connections I have drawn between institutions, space, culture and violence have a much broader scope. In urban planning, violence and GBV have become significant areas of attention, and this research calls for continuous and in-depth analysis of the potential of innovative models for development for gender inequalities and violences. Such conversations have particular relevance in post-conflict or violent settings, and connect to the increasing inclusion of gender within peace talks and accords[181] (Theidon, 2009; Donny, 2016; Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, 2018). The themes of the research therefore have significance not only to urban planning but also to approaches to governance and development more broadly, considering what is possible from planning perspectives and how interventions in space and culture may impact upon gender norms, relations and embodiments across various contexts .

9.3 Further Research

In considering the changes in Medellín using an interdisciplinary, multi-scalar approach, the research opens up several future avenues for further research. Within Medellín itself, numerous dimensions deserve further attention. A gendered approach to the city has provided a vital insight into the shortfalls of Medellín's urban change, and while racial exclusion and class divisions were mentioned briefly throughout, an intersectional approach to the urban change deserves expansion. I have, at numerous points, queried the reliance upon the gender binary, working with just women *or* men, in ways that can ultimately reinforce a dichotomous understanding of gender logics, even if attempting to shift exact positions within the masculine and/or feminine. In future research it would be pertinent to include a further examination of such an approach, queering the urban change by considering the implications of such a binary understanding of gender and looking into the concurrent conflation and separation of gender and sexuality in both civil society and across governments.

In mentioning the tourism industry and boom in Medellín, I focused on the gendered political economy of the changing public space in relation to tourism. I have not had the

---

[181] The Colombian peace accords have been celebrated for their inclusion of gender and women's voices, understanding the differentiated gendered impacts of the decades-long conflict and including this within the final agreement (Bouvier, 2000). The impact of such discussions in practical terms is heavily debated.

scope here to explore the gendered implications of both tourism and security in the city, but this would provide another important insight into the transformed city. Tourism relates closely to sexual violence, with huge increases in sex trafficking and sex tourism across Colombia, and especially in Medellín. Relating to colonial legacies, and the securitisation and protection of valuable tourist subjects (Tucker *et al.*, 2004; Enloe, 2014; Becklake, 2016), this area of study has significant implications for the encouragement of foreign investment and tourism that is so central to the urban development plan. It also connects once more to the implications of the neoliberal model of urban governance, attracting capital and wealth above equality.

While the case of Medellín has great potential for future avenues of research, the thesis also encourages engagement with claims of transformation, both in urban planning and beyond. The distinction between transformative and incremental change and the connections between gender, institutions, violence and urban space can be developed in other settings. Similar approaches to overcome urban violence, and gender mainstreaming for example should be probed for their recognition of the connections between the gendered urban violence of the everyday. Such discussions are especially pertinent where urban planners and broader development approaches are celebrated for innovation and reductions in violence, where it is easy for gender and GBV to be erased. Unfortunately, in Medellín, as across the globe, GBV persists, and as such, research to further understand its multifaceted dimensions across various spaces including institutions, remains urgent and necessary. Examining moments of success and holding such cases to account for gendered failures is consequently required. While change and improvements should be celebrated, the continuation of various violences demands further change. Identifying the limitations of such policies and connections with gendered violence should continue to be a priority across planning, research and movements for progressive change in order to learn from and incorporate ways to overcome such violence and work towards transformative change.

Bibliography

Abello Colak, A. and Pearce, J. (2015) 'Securing the global city?: an analysis of the ' Medellín Model' through participatory research', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15(3), pp. 197-228.

Abello-Colak, A. and Guarneros-Meza, V. (2014) 'The role of criminal actors in local governance', *Urban Studies*, 51(15), pp. 3268-3289.

Acevedo, B. and Carreira, A.M. (2010) 'Hybrid Cities: Narratives of Urban Development and Popular Culture, the Case of Medellín (Colombia)', in Sonda, G., Coletta, C. and Gabbi, F. (eds.) *Urban Plots, Organizing Cities*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, pp. 49-66.

ACI Medellín (2019) *La inversión extranjera directa ha impulsado la competitividad de Medellín en los últimos años*. Available at: https://www.acimedellin.org/la-inversion-extranjera-directa-ha-impulsado-la-competitividad-de-medellin-en-los-ultimos-anos/ (Accessed: 3 February).

Ackerly, B.A. (2008) 'Feminism and Methodological Reflection', in Klotz, A. and Prakash, D. (eds.) *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 28-42.

Agathangelou, A.M. and Ling, L.H.M. (2004) 'The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism 1', *International Studies Review*, 6(4), pp. 21-50.

Aguinaga, M., Lang, M., Mokrani, D. and Santillana, A. (2013) 'Development Critiques and Alternatives: A Feminist Perspective', in Lang, M. and Mokrani, D. (eds.) *Beyond Development: Alternative Visions from Latin America*. Quito: Fundación Rosa Luxemburg, pp. 41-59.

Alape, A. (2006) 'Voces en el "taller de la memoria"', *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, (24), pp. 21-26.

Alcaldía de Medellín (2001) *Plan de Desarrollo 2001-2003. Medellín: Ciudad de Oportunidades*. [Online]. Available at: http://cdim.esap.edu.co/BancoMedios/Documentos%20PDF/pd-medell%C3%ADn-antioquia-2001-2003-(170%20pág%20-%20892%20kb).pdf (Accessed: 10 June 2017).

Alcaldía de Medellín (2008) 'Del Miedo a la Esperanza: Alcaldía de Medellín 2004-2007'. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín.

Alcaldía de Medellín (2016) *Plan de Desarrollo: Medellín cuenta con vos 2016-2019*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/pccdesign/SubportaldelCiudadano_2/PlandeDesarrollo_0_17/Publicaciones/Shared%20Content/Documentos/2016/Proyecto%20de%20Acuerdo%20Plan%20de%20Desarrollo.pdf (Accessed: 12 June 2017).

Alejandro Leal, P. (2007) 'Participation: the ascendancy of a buzzword in the neo-liberal era', *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), pp. 539-548.

Allwood, G. (2013) 'Gender mainstreaming and policy coherence for development: Unintended gender consequences and EU policy', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 39, pp. 42-52.

Alvarez, S. (1990) *Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Alvarez, S. (1999) 'Advocating Feminism: The Latin American feminist NGO 'Boom'', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1, pp. 181-209.

Alvarez, S. (2009) 'Beyond NGO-ization? Reflections from Latin America', *Development*, 52(2), pp. 175-184.

Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2002) *Cities : reimagining the urban*. Cambridge: Polity.

Amnesty International (2005) *Colombia: The Paramilitaries in Medellin: Demobilization or Legalization?* . [Online]. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/019/2005/en/.

Anderson, E. (1999) *Code of the street : decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. New York : Norton.

Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. (1983) 'Contextualizing Feminism -- Gender, Ethnic and Class Divisions', *Feminist Review*, 15, pp. 62-75.

Arias, E.D. (2017) *Criminal enterprises and governance in Latin America and the Caribbean*. New York : Cambridge University Press.

Ariza-Sosa, G.R., Gaviria, S.L., Geldres-García, D.A. and Vargas-Romero, R. (2015) 'Hombres cuidadores de vida: formación en masculinidades género-sensibles para la prevención de las violencias hacia las mujeres en Medellín', *Revista colombiana de psiquiatría.*, 44(2), pp. 106-114.

Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1998) 'Ethnography and Participant Observation', in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage, pp. 110-136.

Baird, A. (2012a) 'Negotiating Pathways to Manhood: Rejecting Gangs and Violence in Medellín's Periphery', *Journal of Conflictology*, 3(1).

Baird, A. (2012b) 'The violent gang and the construction of masculinity amongst socially excluded young men', *Safer Communities*, 11(4), pp. 179-190.

Baird, A. (2017) 'Breaking Bad: recognising the role of masculinities can help prevent gang formation in Latin America and the Caribbean', *LSE Latin America and Caribbean*. Available at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2017/07/18/breaking-bad-recognising-the-role-of-masculinities-can-help-prevent-gang-formation-in-latin-america- and-the-caribbean/.

Baird, A. (2018) 'Becoming the 'Baddest': Masculine Trajectories of Gang Violence in Medellín', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 50(1), pp. 183-210.

Barbara, V. and Rivke, J. (2011) 'Save the World in a Week: Volunteer Tourism, Development and Difference', *European Journal of Development Research*, 23(1), p. 111.

Barker, G. (2005) 'Dying To Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion'. Abingdon: Routledge.

Barreto Rozo, A. (2011) 'La generación del estado de sitio: El juicio a la anormalidad institucional en la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de 1991'. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.

Barrig, M. (2014) *Transversalizando el Género: Encuentro de Mecanismos de la Mujer y Género del Orden Nacional y Territorial*. Available at: http://www.equidadmujer.gov.co/ejes/Documents/Informe-transversalizacion-genero-Colombia.pdf (Accessed: 12th August).

Basham, V.M. (2018) 'Liberal militarism as insecurity, desire and ambivalence: Gender, race and the everyday geopolitics of war', *Security Dialogue*, 49(1-2), pp. 32-43.

Basset, Y. (2018) 'Claves del rechazo del plebiscito para la paz en Colombia', *Estudios Políticos*, (52), p. .

Bateman, M., Durán-Ortiz, J.P. and Maclean, K. (2011) 'A post-Washington Consensus approach to local economic development in Latin America? An example from Medellín, Colombia.'. Overseas Development Institute.

Batiwala, S. (2010) 'Taking the power out of empowerment - an experiential account', in Cornwall, A. and Eade, D. (eds.) *Deconstructing Development Discourse: Buzzwords and Fuzzwords*. Oxford: Oxfam, pp. 111-122.

Becklake, S. (2016) *Making 'Destino Guatemala': Everyday Enactments of 'Global Tourism Competition' in La Antigua Guatemala*. Lancaster University.

Beckwith, K. (2005) 'A Common Language of Gender?', *Pol Gen*, 1(1), pp. 128-137.

Bedoya, J.J. (2006) 'Seguridad y Ciudadanía en los 90s en Medellín: El Surgimiento de las Empresas Colombianas de Protección Violenta', *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 31(62), pp. 87-130.

Beebe, K., Davis, A. and Gleadle, K. (2012) 'Introduction: Space, Place and Gendered Identities: feminist history and the spatial turn', *Women's History Review*, 21(4), pp. 523-532.

Beebeejaun, Y. (2017) 'Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life', *Journal of Urban Affairs*.

Bejarano, A.M. (2001) 'The Constitution of 1991: An Institutional Evaluation Seven Years Later', in Bergquist, C., Peñaranda, R. and Sánchez, G.G. (eds.) *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, pp. 53-74.

Benavides, Z. (2017) '"Aquí a la gente de bien no la asesinan": General Gómez Heredia', *El Colombiano*edn). [Online] Available at: http://www.elcolombiano.com/antioquia/los-homicidios-empanan-la-semana-de-las-flores-FX7055362.

Benschop, Y. and Verloo, M. (2006) 'Sisyphus' Sisters: Can Gender Mainstreaming Escape the Genderedness of Organizations?', *Journal of gender studies*, 15(1), pp. 19-33.

Bergman, M. and Szurmuk, M. (2001) 'Gender, Citizenship and Social Protest: The New Social Movements in Argentina', in Rodríguez, I. (ed.) *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 383-401.

Bernal-Franco, L. and Navas-Caputo, C. (2013) 'Urban violence and humanitarian action in Medellín - Humanitarian Action in Situations Other than War Discussion Paper 5'. Available at: http://www.alnap.org/resource/8742 (Accessed: 12 July 2017).

Berney, R. (2011) 'Pedagogical Urbanism: Creating Citizen Space in Bogota, Colombia', *Planning Theory*, 10(1), pp. 16-34.

Bicchieri, C. (2006) 'The Grammar of Society: The Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blanco, C. and Kobayashi, H. (2009) 'Urban Transformation in Slum Districts Through Public Space Generation and Cable Transportation at Northeastern Area: Medellin, Colombia', *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(8), pp. 75 - 90.

Boal, A. (2008) *Theater of the oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.

Boesten, J. (2008) 'Narrativas de Sexo, Violencia y Disponibilidad: Raza, Género y Jerarquías de la Violación en Perú', in Wade, P., Urrea, F. and Viveros, M. (eds.) *Raza, Etnicidad y Sexualidades: Ciudadanía y Multiculturalismo en América Latina*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, pp. 199-220.

Boesten, J. and Henry, M. (2018) 'Between Fatigue and Silence: The Challenges of Conducting Research on Sexual Violence in Conflict', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 25(4), pp. 568-588.

Boesten, J. and Wilding, P. (2015) 'Transformative gender justice: Setting an agenda', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 51(C), pp. 75-80.

Bondi, L. (1998) 'Gender, Class and Urban Space: Public and Private Space in Contemporary Urban Landscapes', *Urban Geography*, 19(2), pp. 160-185.

Bondi, L. (2005) 'Gender and the reality of cities: Embodied identities, social relations and performativities', *Soziale Welt*, 56, pp. 363-376.

Bondi, L. and Davidson, J. (2005) 'Situating Gender', in Nelson, L. and Seager, J. (eds.) *A companion to feminist geography*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 15-31.

Bondi, L. and Rose, D. 10 (2003) 'Constructing gender, constructing the urban: A review of Anglo-American feminist urban geography'. Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 229-245.

Boserup, E. (1986) *Woman's role in economic development*. Aldershot, England : Gower.

Boudon, L. (1996) 'Guerrillas and the state: The role of the state in the Colombian peace process', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 28, p. 279.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.

Bouvier, V.M. (2016) 'Gender and the role of Women in Colombia's Peace Process'. New York: UN Women.

Brand, P. and Dávila, J.D. (2011) 'Mobility innovation at the urban margins: Medellín's Metrocables', *City*, 15(6), pp. 647-661.

Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) 'Cities and the Geographies of " Actually Existing Neoliberalism"', *Antipode*, 34(3), pp. 349-379.

Brickell, C. (2000) 'Heroes and Invaders: Gay and Lesbian pride parades and the public/private distinction in New Zealand media accounts', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 7(2), pp. 163-178.

Bridge, G. and Watson, S. (2000) 'City Imaginaries', in Bridge, G. and Watson, S. (eds.) *A Companion to the City*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 7-17.

Browitt, J. (2001) 'Capital punishment: The fragmentation of Colombia and the crisis of the nation-state', *Third World Quarterly*, 22(6), pp. 1063-1078.

Burgess, G. (2008) 'Planning and the Gender Equality Duty – why does gender matter?', *People, Place and Policy Online*, pp. 112-121.

Bustamante, G.M., Ortíz, N.A. and López, S.R. (2018) 'XVI Informe Sobre la Situación de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres en Territorios de Medellín y Antioquia, con Énfasis en Violencias Sexuales Contra Niñas y Adolescentes'. Medellín: Corporación Vamos Mujer y Corporación Para la Vida Mujeres que Crean.

Butler, J. (2006) *Gender trouble : feminism and the subversion of identity*. 3rd edn. London: Routledge.

Caballero, M.C. (2004) *Academic turns city into a social experiment*. Available at: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2004/03/academic-turns-city-into-a-social-experiment/ (Accessed: 9 December).

Caicedo-Velásquez, B., Álvarez-Castaño, L.S., Marí-Dell'olmo, M. and Borrell, C. (2016) 'Evolución de las inequidades en mortalidad por causas externas entre los municipios de Antioquia (Colombia)', *Gaceta Sanitaria*, 30(4), pp. 279-286.

Caldeira, T.P.d.R. (2000) *City of walls : crime, segregation, and citizenship in São Paulo*. London: University of California Press.

Cameron, D. (2001) *Working with spoken discourse*. London: SAGE.

Canagarajah, S. and Sethuraman, S.V. (2001) *Social Protection and the Informal Sector in Developing Countries: Challenges and Opportunities.* Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Capan, Z.G. (2017) 'Decolonising International Relations?', *Third World Quarterly*, 38(1), pp. 1-15.

Carmona Muñoz, C.A. (2018) 'Alcalde Federico Gutiérrez apoya presencia del Ejército en los barrios de Medellín', *LAFM* edn). [Online] Available at:

https://www.lafm.com.co/colombia/alcalde-federico-gutierrez-apoya-presencia-del-ejercito-en-los-barrios-de-medellin (Accessed: 1st March 2019).

Carver, T. (1996) 'Gender is Not a Synonym for Women'. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Ceballos Melguizo, R. and Cronshaw, F. (2001) 'The Evolution of Armed Conflict in Medellín: An Analysis of the Major Actors', *Latin American Perspectives*, 28(1), pp. 110-131.

Chant, S. (2002) *Gender in Latin America*. London: Latin America Bureau.

Chant, S. (2013) 'Cities through a 'gender lens': a golden 'urban age' for women in the global South?', *Environment and Urbanization*, 25(1), pp. 9-29.

Chant, S. (2014) 'Exploring the "feminisation of poverty" in relation to women's work and home-based enterprise in slums of the Global South', *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 6(3), pp. 296-316.

Chant, S. and Gutmann, M. (2000) *Mainstreaming men into gender and development : debates, reflections and experiences*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Chant, S. and McIlwaine, C. (2013) *Gender, Urban Development and the Politics of Space*. Available at: http://www.e-ir.info/2013/06/04/gender-urban-development-and-the-politics-of-space/ (Accessed: 29th May).

Chen, M.A. (2001) 'Women in the informal sector: A global picture, the global movement', *SAIS Review ; a Journal of International Affairs*, 21(1), pp. 70-82.

Chisholm, A. (2017) 'Clients, contractors, and the everyday masculinities in global private security', *Critical Military Studies*, 3(2), pp. 120-141.

Chisholm, A. and Stachowitsch, S. (2016) 'Everyday Matters in Global Private Security Supply Chains: A Feminist Global Political Economy Perspective on Gurkhas in Private Security', *Globalizations*, 13(6), pp. 815-829.

Civico, A. (2012) '"We are Illegal, but not Illegitimate." Modes of Policing in Medellin, Colombia', *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 35(1), pp. 77-93.

Clark, T. (2008) ''We're Over-Researched Here!' Exploring Accounts of Research Fatigue within Qualitative Research Engagements', *Sociology : the Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 42(5), p. 953.

Coburn, E. (2019) 'Trickle-down gender at the International Monetary Fund: the contradictions of "femina economica" in global capitalist governance', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 21(5), pp. 768-788.

Cockburn, C. (1983) *Brothers : male dominance and technological change*. London : Pluto Press.

Cockburn, C. (2004) 'The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace', in Giles, W. and Hyndman, J. (eds.) *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones.* Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press., pp. 24-44.

Cockburn, C. (2010) 'Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A Feminist Standpoint', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 12(2), pp. 139-157.

Cohn, C. (2013) *Women and wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Colak, A.A. and Pearce, J. (2015) 'Securing the global city?: an analysis of the ' Medellín Model' through participatory research', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15(3), pp. 197-228.

Cole, S. and Phillips, L. (2008) 'The Violence Against Women Campaigns in Latin America: New Feminist Alliances', *Feminist Criminology*, 3(2), pp. 145-168.

Collins, P.H. (2009) *Black feminist thought : knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Confortini, C.C. (2006) 'Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies /Feminism Alliance', *Peace & Change*, 31(3), pp. 333-367.

Connell, R. (1987) *Gender and power : society, the person, and sexual politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R. (2015) 'Meeting at the edge of fear: Theory on a world scale', *Feminist Theory*, 16(1), pp. 49-66.

Connell, R.W. (2000) *The men and the boys*. London: Polity.

Connell, R.W. (2002) 'Masculinities, the Reduction of Violence and the Pursuit of Peace', in Cockburn, C. and Zarkov, D. (eds.) *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping - Bosnia and the Netherlands*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 33-40.

Connell, R.W. (2005) *Masculinities*. 2nd ed.. edn. Cambridge: Polity.

Cook, I. and Crang, M. (1995) *Doing ethnographies*. Norwich: Institute of British Geographers.

Corbin, J.M. and Strauss, A.L. (2008) *Basics of qualitative research : techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cornwall, A. (2007a) 'Buzzwords and fuzzwords: deconstructing development discourse', *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), pp. 471-484.

Cornwall, A. (2007b) 'Revisiting the 'gender agenda'', *IDS bulletin*, 38(2), pp. 69-78.

Cornwall, A. and Brock, K. (2006) *Beyond Buzzwords: 'Poverty Reduction', 'Participation' and 'Empowerment' in Development Policy.* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Cornwall, A., Gideon, J. and Wilson, K. (2008) 'Introduction: Reclaiming Feminism: Gender and Neoliberalism', *IDS Bulletin*, 39(6), pp. 1-9.

Correa, R.J.J. and Acevedo, T., Álvaro (2007) 'Sociabilidades, visiones de ciudad y cultura ciudadana El civismo en Pereira', *Revista Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana*, (9), pp. 181-202.

Coward, M. (2012) 'Between us in the city: materiality, subjectivity, and community in the era of global urbanization', *Environ. Plann. D*, 30(3), pp. 468-481.

Craske, N. (1999) *Women and politics in Latin America*. Oxford: Polity.

Craske, N. (2003) 'Gender, Poverty and Social Movements', in Chant, S. and Craske, N. (eds.) *Gender in Latin America*. London: Latin American Bureau, pp. 46-70.

Crehan, K.A.F. (2002) *Gramsci, culture, and anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crehan, K.A.F. (2016) *Gramsci's common sense : inequality and its narratives*. Durham : Duke University Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991) 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), pp. 1241-1299.

Cupples, J. (2005) 'Love and Money in an Age of Neoliberalism: Gender, Work, and Single Motherhood in Postrevolutionary Nicaragua', *Environment and Planning A*, 37(2), pp. 305-322.

Cárdenas, M., Junguito, R. and Pachón, M. (2008) 'Political Institutions and Policy Outcomes in Colombia: The Effects of the 1991 Constitution', in Stein, E. and Tommasi, M. (eds.) *Policymaking in Latin America: How Politics Shapes Policies*. Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, pp. 199-242.

Céspedes-Báez, L. and Ruiz, F. (2018) ''Peace without women does not go!' Women's struggle for inclusion in Colombia's peace process with the FARC', *Colombia Internacional*, 94(94), pp. 83-109.

La Sierra (2005) Directed by Dalton, S. and Martinez, M. [Online]. USA.

Damyanovic, D. (2016) 'Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy for Sustainable Urban Planning', in Sánchez de Madariaga, I. and Roberts, M. (eds.) *Fair Shared Cities: The Impact of Gender Planning in Europe*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 177-192.

Daughters, R. and Harper, L. (2006) 'Fiscal and Political Decentralisation', in Lora, E. (ed.) *The State of the Reforms of the State in Latin America*. Washington D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, pp. 213-262.

Davies, M. (2016) 'Everyday Life as Critique: Revisiting the Everyday in IPE with Henri Lefebvre and Postcolonialism', *International Political Sociology*, 10(1), pp. 22-38.

Davis, A.Y. (1999) *Women, race & class*. New York: Random House.

de Certeau, M. (2011) *The practice of everyday life*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

De Souza, M.L. (2006) 'Social movements as 'critical urban planning' agents', *analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action*, 10(3), pp. 327-342.

De Souza, M.L. (2009) 'Cities for people, not for profit—from a radical‑libertarian and Latin American perspective', *City*, 13(4), pp. 483-492.

Debusscher, P. (2014) 'Gender mainstreaming on the ground? The case of EU development aid towards Rwanda', *European integration online papers*, 18(1), pp. 1-23.

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S. and Liamputtong, P. (2009) 'Researching sensitive topics: qualitative research as emotion work', *Qualitative Research*, 9(1), pp. 61-79.

Doan, P.L. (2010) 'The tyranny of gendered spaces – reflections from beyond the gender dichotomy', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 17(5), pp. 635-654.

Dobash, R.E. and Dobash, R. (1979) *Violence against wives : a case against the patriarchy*. New York: Free Press.

Dobash, R.E., Dobash, R. and Harry Frank Guggenheim, F. (1998) *Rethinking violence against women*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Dolan, C. (2014) 'Letting go of the gender binary: Charting new pathways for humanitarian interventions on gender-based violence', 96(894), pp. 485-501.

Domingo, P. and Menocal, A.R. (2015) 'Progress Despite Adversity: women's empowerment and conflict in Colombia'. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Domingues, J. (2009) 'Global Modernization, 'Coloniality' and a Critical Sociology for Contemporary Latin America', *Theory, Culture & Society*, p. 112.

Donny, M. (2016) 'Justicia de género y tierras en Colombia: Desafíos para la era del 'pos-acuerdo'', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 0(102), pp. 89-100.

Doty, R. (1993) 'Foreign policy as social construction: A post-positivist analysis of U.S. counterinsurgency policy in the Philippines', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37(3), p. 297.

Doyle, C. (2016) 'Explaining Patterns of Urban Violence in Medellín, Colombia', *Laws*, 5(3), pp. 1-17.

Drummond, H., Dizgun, J. and Keeling, D.J. (2012) 'Medellin: a city reborn?', *Focus on Geography*, 55(4), p. 146.

Du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Mackay, H. and Negus, K. (1997) 'Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman'. London: Sage.

Durán-Martínez, A. (2018) *The Politics of Drug Violence: Criminals, Cops and Politicians in Colombia and Mexico*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Echeverri, A. and Orsini, F.M. (2011) 'Informalidad y urbanismo social en Medellín', *Sostenible?*, 12, pp. 11-24.

Elias, J. and Roberts, A. (2016) 'Feminist Global Political Economies of the Everyday: From Bananas to Bingo', *Globalizations*, pp. 1-14.

Ellis Calvin, C. (2014) *Small scale/Global Ambition: Strategies of Architechtural production and global urban competitiveness in Medellín, Colombia*. Columbia University.

Elshtain, J.B. (1982) 'On beautiful souls, just warriors and feminist consciousness', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5(3), pp. 341-348.

England, K.V.L. (1991) 'Gender relations and the spatial structure of the city', *Geoforum*, 22(2), pp. 135-147.

Enloe, C. (1990a) *Bananas, beaches & bases : making feminist sense of international politics*. 1st U.S. ed.. edn. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C. (2000a) *Maneuvers : the international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C. (2008) 'Afterword: Hegemonic Masculinities in International Politics', *Men and Masculinities*, 10(4), pp. 457-459.

Enloe, C. (2010) 'The Risks of Scholarly Militarization: A Feminist Analysis', *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(4), pp. 1107-1111.

Enloe, C. (2011) 'The Mundane Matters', *International Political Sociology*, 5(4), pp. 447-450.

Enloe, C. (2015) *How to Take Militarized Masculinities Seriously Without Losing your Feminist Curiosity (video) Keynote speech at the Critical Intersections conference, George Mason University*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQCbpGexPsU (Accessed: 15 August).

Enloe, C.H. (1990b) *Bananas, beaches & bases : making feminist sense of international politics*. 1st U.S. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C.H. (2000b) *Maneuvers : the international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C.H. (2004) *The curious feminist Searching for women in a new age of empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C.H. (2007) *Globalization and militarism : feminists make the link*. Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield.

Enloe, C.H. (2014) *Bananas, beaches and bases Making feminist fense of international politics*. 2nd edn. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, C.H. (2017) *The big push : exposing and challenging the persistence of patriarchy*. Oxford : Myriad.

Escobar, A. (2010) 'LATIN AMERICA AT A CROSSROADS: Alternative modernizations, post-liberalism, or post-development?', *Cultural Studies*, 24(1), pp. 1-65.

Escobar, C. (2002) 'Clientelism and Citizenship: The Limits of Democratic Reform in Sucre, Colombia', *Latin American Perspectives*, 29(5), pp. 20-47.

Escobar Hoyos, L. (2017) *Análisis comparativo de la Agenda Ciudadana de las Mujeres para Medellín 2015-2019, el Programa de Gobierno del actual alcalde y el Plan de Desarrollo de Medellín 2016-2019*. Medellín: Mujeres que Crean.

Estrada Álvarez, J. (2006) 'Orden neoliberal y reformas estructurales en la decada de 1990: un balance desde la experiencia colombiana', *Ciencia Política*, (1), pp. 141-178.

Fainstein, S.S. (2014) 'The just city', *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 18(1), pp. 1-18.

Fainstein, S.S. and Servon, L.J. (2005) *Gender and planning : a reader*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Fals-Borda, O. and Rahman, M.A. (1991) *Action and knowledge : breaking the monopoly with participatory action research*. New York: Apex Press.

Falú, A. (2009) 'Violencias y discriminaciones en las ciudades', in Falú, A. (ed.) *Mujeres en la Ciudad: De violencias y derechos*. Santiago de Chile: Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina, pp. 15-38.

Farnsworth-Alvear, A., Palacios, M. and Gómez López, A.M.a. (2017) 'Introduction', in *The Colombia reader : history, culture, politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1-10.

Feijoó, M.d.C. and Nari, M.M.A. (1994) 'Women and Democracy in Argentina', in Jaquette, J. (ed.) *The Women's Movement in Latin America: Participation and Democracy*. Boulder: Westview, pp. 109-129.

Fenster, T. (1999) 'Space for Gender: Cultural Roles of the Forbidden and the Permitted', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 17(2), pp. 227-246.

Fenster, T. (2005a) 'Gender and the City: The Different Formations of Belonging', in Nelson, L. and Seager, J. (eds.) *A Companion to Feminist Geography*. Malden: Blackwell, pp. 242-256.

Fenster, T. (2005b) 'The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(3), pp. 217-231.

Fischer, C. (2012) 'Intersectional mainstreaming and Sightsavers' Lady Health Workers Programme in Pakistan', *Gender and development*, 20(3), pp. 563-571.

Fisher, J. (1993) *Out of the shadows : women, resistance and politics in South America*. London : Latin America Bureau

Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and punish : the birth of the prison*. London: Penguin.

Franco, S., Mercedes, C., Rozo, P., Gracia, G.M., Gallo, G.P., Vera, C.Y. and García, H.I. (2012) 'Mortalidad por homicidio en Medellín, 1980-2007', *Ciênc. saúde coletiva*, 17(12), pp. 3209-3218.

Franz, T. (2017) 'Urban Governance and Economic Development in Medellín', *Latin American Perspectives*, 44(2), pp. 52-70.

Fraser, N. (2009) 'Feminism, capitalism and the cunning of history', *New Left Review*, (56), pp. 97-117.

Fraser, N. (2016) 'Capitalism's Crisis of Care', *Dissent*, 63(4), pp. 30-37.

Freire, P. (1998) *Pedagogy of freedom : ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Frenzel, F. (2016) *Slumming it : the tourist valorization of urban poverty*. London : Zed Books.

Gago, V.n. (2017) *Neoliberalism from below : popular pragmatics and baroque economies*. Durham : Duke University Press.

Galtung, J. (1969) 'Violence, peace and peace research', *Journal of peace research*, 3, pp. 167-190.

Galtung, J. (1990) 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), pp. 291-305.

Garcia Ferrari, S., Smith, H., Coupe, F. and Rivera, H. (2018) 'City profile: Medellin', *Cities*, 74, pp. 354-364.

Gardner, N., Cui, J. and Coiacetto, E. (2017) 'Harassment on public transport and its impacts on women's travel behaviour', *Australian Planner*, 54(1), pp. 8-15.

Garzon-Ramirez, S. (2018) 'Unveiling the technocracy of a global South City', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 25(4), pp. 607-611.

Gent, D. (2014) 'Finding fluency in the field: ethical challenges of conducting research in another language', in Lunn, J. (ed.) *Fieldwork in the Global South: Ethical challenges and dilemmas*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 49-58.

Gibson‑Graham, J.K. (1994) '‘Stuffed if I know!’ : Reflections on post‑modern feminist social research', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1(2), pp. 205-224.

Gill, S. (2008) *Power and resistance in the new world order*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Giroux, H.A. (2001) *Theory and resistance in education : towards a pedagogy for the opposition*. Rev. and expanded edn. Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey.

Giroux, H.A. (2004) 'Proto-fascism in America: neoliberalism and the demise of democracy'. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation: Bloomington.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory : strategies for qualitative research*. New Brunswick: Aldine de Gruyter.

Glebbeek, M.-L. and Koonings, K. (2016) 'Between Morro and Asfalto. Violence, insecurity and socio-spatial segregation in Latin American cities', *Habitat International*, 54(1), pp. 3-9.

Goffman, E. (1968) *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

González Montoya, S. (2009) 'Políticas públicas de mujer y género: el case de Medellín', *La manzana de la discordia*, 4(1), pp. 33-40.

González-Martínez, M. (2019) 'La paz sin las mujeres ¡No va! El proceso de paz colombiano desde la perspectiva de género', *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, (121), pp. 113-134.

Gordon, R. (2019) ''Why would I want to be anonymous?' Questioning ethical principles of anonymity in cross-cultural feminist research', *Gender & Development*, 27(3), pp. 541-554.

Gossain, J. (2019) 'De cada cien delitos, en Colombia solo se castigan seis', *El Tiempo*edn). [Online] Available at: https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/delitos/colombia-de-cada-cien-delitos-solo-se-castigan-seis-419136 (Accessed: 20 October 2019).

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Greed, C. 64 (2005) 'An investigation of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a means of integrating the needs of women and men into spatial planning in the United Kingdom'. pp. 241-242.

Griffin, A. (2019) *Reading the Walls in Bogotá: Imaginaries of Violence in the Urban Visual Landscape*. Newcastle University.

Gutiérrez Rivera, L. (2017) *The Secretary for Women in Medellin -product of the city's Women's and Grassroots Movements*. Available at: https://genderandcityinlatinamerica.blog/2017/09/14/the-secretary-for-women-in-medellin-product-of-the-citys-womens-and-grassroots-movements/ (Accessed: 2018).

Gutiérrez Sanín, F. and Jaramillo, A.M. (2004) 'Crime, (counter-) insurgency and the privatization of security – the case of Medellín, Colombia', *environ urban*, 16(2), pp. 17-30.

Gutiérrez Sanín, F., Pinto, M.T., Arenas, J.C., Guzmán, T. and Gutiérrez, M.T. (2009) 'Politics and Security in Three Colombian Cities', *Crisis States Working Papers Series*, 2(44).

Gutmann, M.C. and Viveros Vigoya, M. (2005) 'Masculinities in Latin America', in Kimmel, M., Hearn, J. and Connell, R.W. (eds.) *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. London: Sage, pp. 114-128.

Género, O.d.A.d. (2015) 'Consejeria Presidencial Para La Equidad de La Mujer: Encuentro de Mecanismos de Género'. Bogotá: Presidencia de la República.

Hagen, J. (2019) 'What is gender and who are women? Queer Questions for the Women, Peace and Security Architecture', *Gender and Politics Seminar Series*. Newcastle University, 22nd November.

Hagen, J.J. (2016) 'Queering women, peace and security', *International Affairs*, 92(2), pp. 313-332.

Hall, S. (1997) *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage.

Hall, S. and O'Shea, A. (2013) 'Common-sense neoliberalism', *Soundings*, (55), pp. 8-24.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) 'Ethnography principles in practice' 3rd ed.. Ebooks, C. London: Routledge.

Hancock, A.-M. (2014) 'Bridging the Feminist Generation Gap: Intersectional Considerations', 10(2), pp. 292-296.

Hanisch, C. (2006) 'The Personal is Political'. Available at: http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PersonalIsPol.pdf (Accessed: 6th June 2018).

Hansen, L. (2006) *Security as practice : discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, D. (1988) 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), pp. 575-599.

Harrison, D. (1992) *Tourism and the less developed countries*. London : Belhaven Press.

Harvey, D. (1988) *Social justice and the city*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (1989) 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 71(1), pp. 3-17.

Harvey, D. (2000) *Spaces of hope*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, D. (2003) 'The right to the city', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), pp. 939-941.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2007) 'Neoliberalism and the City', *Studies in Social Justice*, 1(1), p. 2.

Harvey, D. (2008) 'Right to the city', *New Left review*, 53, pp. 23-42.

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel cities : from the right to the city to the urban revolution*. New York: Verso.

Henry, M. and Natanel, K. (2016) 'Militarisation as diffusion: the politics of gender, space and the everyday', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 23(6), pp. 850-856.

Hobson, J.M. and Seabrooke, L. (2007) *Everyday politics of the world economy*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Holston, J. (1999) *Cities and citizenship*. Durham [N.C.]: Durham N.C. : Duke University Press.

hooks, b. (1994) 'Teaching To Transgress'. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

hooks, b. (2014) *Feminism is for everybody : passionate politics*. [Second edition]. New York : Routledge.

Hooper, C. (2012) *Manly states Masculinities, international relations, and gender politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Howell, A. (2018) 'Forget "militarization": race, disability and the "martial politics" of the police and of the university', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 20(2), pp. 117-136.

Hubbard, P. (2004) 'Revenge and Injustice in the Neoliberal City: Uncovering Masculinist Agendas', *Antipode*, 36(4), pp. 665-686.

Human Rights Watch 12 (2000) 'The Ties That Bind: Colombia and Military-Paramilitary Links'. 1 (B). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/colombia/.

Human Rights Watch (2012) *Rights Out of Reach: Obstacles to Health, Justice and Protection for Displaced Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Colombia*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Hume, M. (2004) '"It's as if you don't know, because you don't do anything about it": gender and violence in El Salvador', *Environment & Urbanization*, 16(2), pp. 63-72.

Hume, M. (2007) 'Unpicking the threads: Emotion as central to the theory and practice of researching violence', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30(2), p. 147.

Hume, M. (2008) 'The myths of violence: Gender, conflict, and community in El salvador', *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(5), pp. 59-76.

Hume, M. (2009) 'Researching the Gendered Silences of Violence in El Salvador', *IDS Bulletin*, 40(3), pp. 78-85.

Humphrey, M. (2013) 'Violence and Urban Governance in Neoliberal Cities in Latin America', *Arena Journal*, (41/42), pp. 236-259,283.

Hunt, S.L. (2009) *State Fragmentation and Citizen Education: Creating a Culture of Citizenship in Bogotá, Colombia*. Rutgers.

Hunt, S.L. (2015) 'Cultura ciudadana. Una nueva mirada al límite entre el estado y la sociedad.', *Íconos*, 19(52), pp. 119-141.

Hylton, F. (2007) 'Remaking Medellín', *New Left review*, 44, pp. 71-90.

Jahan, R. (1995) *The elusive agenda : mainstreaming women in development*. London: Zed Books.

Jaramillo, A. and Gil, M. (2014) 'Medellín en Su Laberinto: Criminalidad y Violencia en los Comienzos del Siglo XXI', in Jaramillo, A. and Perea, C.M. (eds.) *Ciudades en la Encrucidada*. Medellín: Corporación Region, pp. 119-185.

Jarvis, H., Kantor, P. and Cloke, J. (2009) *Cities and gender*. London: Routledge.

Johnston, L. (2007) 'Mobilizing pride/shame: lesbians, tourism and parades', *Social & Cultural Geography: Lesbian Geographies*, 8(1), pp. 29-45.

Jones, K. (1993) 'Compassionate Authority: Democracy and the Representation of Women.'. New York: Routledge.

Ke, K.y. (2013) *El hombre que sembró una escalera eléctrica en la Comuna 13*. Available at: https://www.kienyke.com/historias/cesar-hernandez-construyo-escaleras-electricas-en-la-comuna-13.

Kenny, M. (2014) 'A Feminist Institutionalist Approach', *Politics & Gender*, 10(4), pp. 679-684.

Kenny, M. and Mackay, F. (2009) 'Already Doin' It for Ourselves? Skeptical Notes on Feminism and Institutionalism', *Pol & Gen*, 5(2), pp. 271-280.

Kingstone, P. (2011) 'The Political Economy of Latin America: Reflections on Neoliberalism and Development'. London: Routledge.

Kirk, G. (2018) 'Demilitarization for Social Justice', *Feminist Formations*, 30(3), pp. 34-44.

Kloosterman, J., Benning, E. and Fyles, R. (2012) ''Measuring the unmeasurable': gender mainstreaming and cultural change', *Gender and development*, 20(3), pp. 531-545.

Koonings, K. and Kruijt, D. (2007) *Fractured cities : social exclusion, urban violence and contested spaces in Latin America*. London : Zed Books Ltd.

Koonings, K. and Kruijt, D. (2009) *Megacities : the politics of urban exclusion and violence in the global south*. London: Zed Books.

Korol, C. and Castro, G.C. (2016) *Feminismos Populares: Pedagogias y Politicas*. Bogota: La Fogata Editorial.

Krumer‐Nevo, M. (2009) 'From voice to knowledge: participatory action research, inclusive debate and feminism', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(3), pp. 279-295.

Lagarde, M. (2006) 'El derecho humano de las mujeres a una vida libre de violencia', in D'Angelo, V.M. (ed.) *Mujeres, globalización y derechos humanos*. Madrid: Catédra, pp. 477-534.

Larner, W., Craig, D., Kothari, U., Simpson, K., Laurie, N., Andolina, R., Radcliffe, S., Bondi, L., Richardson, D., Fyfe, N., Dolhinow, R., Nightingale, A., Power, M., Jenkins, K., Blomley, N. and Katz, C. (2005) 'Working the spaces of neoliberalism: activism, professionalisation and incorporation', *Antipode*, 37(3), pp. 402-631.

Larner, W. and Walters, W. (2000) 'Privatisation, governance and identity: the United Kingdom and New Zealand compared', *Policy & Politics*, 28(3), pp. 361-377.

LaRosa, M.J. and Mejía, G.R. (2013) 'Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History'. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Laurie, N. and Bondi, L. (2005) *Working the spaces of neoliberalism : activism, professionalisation, and incorporation*. Malden : Blackwell.

Laurie, N. and Bonnett, A. (2002) 'Adjusting to Equity: The Contradictions of Neoliberalism and the Search for Racial Equality in Peru', *Antipode*, 34(1), pp. 28-53.

Lazar, M.M. (2007) 'Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis 1', *Critical Discourse Studies*, 4(2), pp. 141-164.

Lazar, S. (2015) ''This Is Not a Parade, It's a Protest March': Intertextuality, Citation, and Political Action on the Streets of Bolivia and Argentina', *American Anthropologist*, 117(2), pp. 242-256.

Lee, R.M. and Stanko, E.A. (2003) *Researching violence : essays on methodology and measurement*. London : Routledge.

Lefebvre, H. (1996) *Writings on cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lemaitre, J. (2012) 'By reason alone: Catholicism, constitutions, and sex in the Americas', *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 10(2), pp. 493-511.

Levy, C. (2013) 'Transport, Diversity and the Socially Just City: The Significance of Gender Relations', in Dávila, J.D. (ed.) *Urban Mobility and Poverty: Lessons from Medellín and Soacha*. Medellín: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, pp. 23-29.

Lewin, J.E. (2016) *Federico, el independiente*. Available at: https://lasillavacia.com/historia/federico-el-independiente-52750 (Accessed: 21 January).

Lewis, C. (1996) 'Woman, Body, Space: Rio Carnival and the politics of performance', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 3(1), pp. 23-42.

Lister, R. (1997) *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*. Houndmills: Macmillan.

Lloyd, M. (2005) *Beyond identity politics : feminism, power & politics*. London: SAGE.

Longhurst, R. 26 (2002) 'Geography and gender: a 'critical' time?'. pp. 544-552.

Lotero, L., Hurtado, R.G., Floría, L.M. and Gómez-Gardeñes, J. (2016) 'Rich do not rise early: spatio-temporal patterns in the mobility networks of different socio-economic classes', *Royal Society Open Science*, 3(10).

Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2012) *Sidewalks : conflict and negotiation over public space*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.

Lozano Lerma, B.R. (2010) 'El feminismo no puede ser uno porque las mujeres somos diversas. Aportes a un feminismo negro decolonial desde la experiencia de las mujeres negras del Pacífico colombiano.', *La manzana de la discordia*, 5(2), pp. 7-24.

Lugones, M. (2007) 'Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System', *Hypatia*, 22(1), pp. 186-209.

Lugones, M. (2010) 'Toward a Decolonial Feminism', *Hypatia*, 25(4), pp. 742-759.

Lumsden, L. (2001) *Tourism in Latin America*. New York : Continuum.

López Castañeda, D. and Myrttinen, H. (2014) *Re-Examining Indentities and Power: Gender and peacebuilding in Colombia*. London: International Alert.

López, M. (2016) 'Paisajes hídricos urbanos en disputa: Agua, poder y fragmentación urbana en Medellín, Colombia'. Medellín: CONFIAR.

López-López, M.V., Pastor-Durango, M.D.P., Giraldo-Giraldo, C.A. and García-García, H.I. (2014) 'Delimitación de fronteras como estrategia de control social: el caso de la violencia homicida en Medellín, Colombia', *Salud colectiva*, 10(3), p. 397.

Macedo, M., Lotero, L., Cardillo, A., Barbosa, H. and Menezes, R. (2019) 'Gender Patterns of Human Mobility in Colombia: Reexamining Ravenstein's Laws of Migration'.

Mackay, F. and Krook, M.L. (2011) *Gender, politics and institutions : towards a feminist institutionalism*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan.

Maclean, K. (2014) 'The 'Medellin Miracle': The politics of crisis, elites and coalitions'. Developmental Leadership Program: Policy and Practice for Developmental Leaders, Elites and Coalitions Research Paper 24.

Maclean, K. (2015) 'Social Urbanism and the Politics of Violence: The Medellín Miracle'. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maclean, K. (2017) 'Disarming charisma? Mayoralty, gender and power in Medellín, Colombia', *Political Geography*, 59, pp. 126-135.

Mannell, J. (2012) ''It's just been such a horrible experience.' Perceptions of gender mainstreaming by practitioners in South African organisations', *Gender and development*, 20(3), pp. 423-434.

Mara, V.-V. (2007) 'De diferencia y diferencias. Algunos debates desde las teorías feministas y de genéro', in Arango, L.G. and Puyana, Y. (eds.) *Género, Mujeres y Saberes en América Latina*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, pp. 175-190.

Marcuse, P. (2009) *Searching for the just city : debates in urban theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

Martha Alter, C. (2001) 'Women in the informal sector: A global picture, the global movement', *SAIS Review ; a Journal of International Affairs*, 21(1), pp. 70-82.

Martz, J.D. (1996) *The politics of clientelism : democracy & the state in Colombia*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Martínez C., P. (2003) *Políticas Públicas de Equidad de Género Para las Mujeres. Programa Promoción de Equidad de Género Para las Mujeres en los Municipios del Area Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá*. Medellín: Municipio de Medellín.

Martínez, V.A. and Marín, C.P. (2017) 'Entre Silencios, Culpas y Negligencias: Reflexiones y Cifras sobre las Violencias Contra las Mujeres y las Rutas de Atención. XV Informe Sobre la Situación de Violación de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres en Medellín y Territorios de Antioquia 2016'. Medellín: Corporación Vamos Mujer y Corporación Para la Vida Mujeres que Crean.

María Virginia, M. (2017) 'Escisión y dos modos de ser "Madres de Plaza de Mayo": tensión y complejidad en la socialización de la maternidad', *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios de Género de El Colegio de México*, 3(6), pp. 36-68.

Marín Mira, C.P. and Rivera Guzman, E. (2015) 'Construir La Paz: También Un Camino Para La Eliminación De Las Violencias Contra Las Mujeres'. Medellín: Corporacion Vamos Mujer.

Marín Mira, C.P. and Rivera Guzman, E. (2016) 'Construir La Paz: También Un Camino Para La Eliminación De Las Violencias Contra Las Mujeres: XIV Informe Sobre la Situación de Violación de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres 2015'. Medellín: Corporación Vamos Mujer y Corporación Para la Vida Mujeres que Crean.

Massey, D.B. (1994) *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge: Polity.

Massey, D.B. (2005) *For space*. London: SAGE.

McCammon, H.J. (2003) '"Out of the Parlors and into the Streets": The Changing Tactical Repertoire of the U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements', *Social Forces*, 81(3), pp. 787-818.

McDowell, L. (1983) 'Towards an Understanding of the Gender Division of Urban Space', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1(1), pp. 59-72.

McDowell, L. (1997) *Capital culture : gender at work in the city*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

McGahern, U. (2017) 'Protesting at the crossroads: Framing 'in-between places' in spatial analyses of contention', *Political Geography*, 59, pp. 92-102.

Mcilwaine, C. and Moser, C. (2007) 'Living in Fear: how the urban poor perceive violence, fear and insecurity', in Koonings, K. and Krujit, D. (eds.) *Fractured Cities: Social exclusion, urban violence and contested spaces in Latin America* London: Zed books, pp. 117-137.

Medellín, A.d. (2016) *Plan de Desarrollo: Medellín cuenta con vos 2016-2019*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.medellin.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/pccdesign/SubportaldelCiudadano_2/PlandeDesarrollo_0_17/Publicaciones/Shared%20Content/Documentos/2016/Proyecto%20de%20Acuerdo%20Plan%20de%20Desarrollo.pdf (Accessed: 12 June 2017).

Mejía Quintana, O. (2007) 'Elites, eticidades y Constitución. Cultura política y poder constituyente en Colombia', in Hoyos Vásquez, G. (ed.) *Filosofía y teorías políticas entre la crítica y la utopía*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, pp. 235-256.

Mignolo, W. (2005) *The idea of Latin America*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, C. and Razavi, S. (1995) 'From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and development discourse' *UNRISD Occasional Paper No. 1.* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

Minton, A. (2009) *Ground control : fear and happiness in the twenty-first-century city*. London : Penguin Books.

Mitchell, D. (2003) *The right to the city : social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mockus, A. (2012) 'Building "citizenship culture" in Bogotá', *Journal of international affairs*, 65(2), pp. 143-146.

Mohanty, C.T. (1988) 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Feminist Review*, (30), p. 61.

Molyneux, M. (2001) *Women's movements in international perspective : Latin America and beyond*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Moncada, E. (2013) 'Business and the Politics of Urban Violence in Colombia', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 48(3), pp. 308-330.

Moncada, E. (2016) 'Urban Violence, Political Economy, and Territorial Control: Insights from Medellín', *Latin American Research Review*, 51(4), pp. 225-248,294-295,299.

Montoya, A. (2018) *The Violence of Democracy Political Life in Postwar El Salvador*. Cham : Palgrave Macmillan.

Morgan, N. (2005) 'Ese oscuro objeto del deseo: raza, clase, género y la ideología de lo bello en Colombia'. Bogotá: CEJA.

Morgan, N. (2008) '¿Para vivir todos del mismo lado?: representación, violencia simbólica y multiculturalismo en Colombia', *Revista Iberoamericana*, 74(223), p. 513.

Moritz, S. (2016) 'Beyond Gang Truces and Mano Dura Policies: Towards Substitutive Security Governance in Latin America', *Stability : International Journal of Security and Development*, 5(1).

Moser, C. (2001) 'The Gendered Continuum of Violence and Conflict: An Operational Framework', in Moser, C. and Clark, F. (eds.) *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*. London: Zed Books, pp. 30-52.

Moser, C. (2012) 'Mainstreaming women's safety in cities into gender-based policy and programmes', *Gender & Development*, 20(3), pp. 435-452.

Moser, C.O.N. (1993) *Gender planning and development : theory, practice and training*. London: Routledge.

Moser, C.O.N. 16 (2004) 'Urban Violence and Insecurity: An Introductory Roadmap'. pp. 3-16.

Moser, C.O.N. and McIlwaine, C. (2006) 'Latin American Urban Violence as a Development Concern: Towards a Framework for Violence Reduction', *World Development*, 34(1), pp. 89-112.

Moser, C.O.N. and McIlwaine, C. 26 (2014) 'New frontiers in twenty-first century urban conflict and violence'. pp. 331-344.

Mostafanezhad, M. (2013) 'THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS IN VOLUNTEER TOURISM', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43, pp. 150-169.

Motta, S.C. (2013) '"We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For": The Feminization of Resistance in Venezuela', *Latin American Perspectives*, 40(4), pp. 35-54.

Motta, S.C. and Cole, M. (2014) *Constructing twenty-first century socialism in Latin America : the role of radical education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Motta, S.C. and Seppälä, T. (2019) 'Feminized Resistances', *Journal of Resistance Studies*, 2(2), pp. 5-32.

Munoz, L. (2018) '"Recovering" public space and race: Afro-Colombian street vendors in Bogotá, Colombia', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 36(4), pp. 573-588.

Murdock, D. (2003) 'Neoliberalism, Gender, and Development: Institutionalizing Post-Feminism in Medellin, Colombia', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 31(3/4), pp. 129-153.

Murdock, D. (2008) *When Women Have Wings: Feminism and Development in Medellin Colombia*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Murillo, M.A. (2013) 'Colombia: Introduction', in Ross, C. and Rein, M. (eds.) *Until the Rulers Obey: Voices from Latin American Social Movements*. Oakland: PM Press, pp. 151-157.

Myrttinen, H. (2004) ''Pack your heat and work the streets'--weapons and the active construction of violent masculinities', *Women and Language*, 27(2), p. 29.

Myrttinen, H., Khattab, L. and Naujoks, J. (2017) 'Re-thinking hegemonic masculinities in conflict-affected contexts', *Critical Military Studies*, 3(2), pp. 103-119.

Méndez, J., O'Donnell, G. and Pinheiro, P.S. (1999) 'The (Un)rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America'. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Naef, P. (2016) 'Touring the ' comuna ': memory and transformation in Medellin, Colombia', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, pp. 1-18.

Naef, P. (2018) '"Narco-heritage" and the Touristification of the Drug Lord Pablo Escobar in Medellin, Colombia', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 74(4), pp. 485-502.

O'Bryen, R. (2018) 'Más allá del silencio de los fusiles - Preliminary Reflections on the 'Continuum' of Violence in Colombia Post-2016', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 27(4), pp. 417-432.

Oakley, A. (1981) 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms?', in Roberts, H. (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge, pp. 30-61.

Olarte Sierra, M.F. and Díaz Del Castillo Hernández, A. (2014) ''We Are All the Same, We All Are Mestizos': Imagined Populations and Nations in Genetics Research in Colombia', *Science as Culture*, 23(2), pp. 226-252.

Orlando Melo, J. (1994) 'Hacia una política de convivencia: la experiencia de Medellín', *Consenso, Revista de Cultura Política*, 2, pp. 7-17.

Orrego, J.A. (2013) 'Ojalá Nunca Amaneciera: Guapos y homosexuales en el Medellín de Aire de Tango', *Perífrasis*, 4(8), pp. 87-103.

Pain, R. (1991) 'Space, sexual violence and social control: integrating geographical and feminist analyses of women's fear of crime', *Progress in Human Geography*, 15(4), pp. 415-431.

Pain, R. (2001) 'Gender, Race, Age and Fear in the City', *Urban Studies*, 38(5-6), pp. 899-913.

Palacios, M. (2001) 'De populistas, mandarines y violencias.'. Bogotá: Planeta.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G.B. (2018) 'Introduction: Urban Ethnography Matters-Analtical Strength, Theoretical Value and Significance to Society', in Pardo, I. and Prato, G.B. (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-20.

Parker, B. (2016) 'Feminist Forays in the City: Imbalance and Intervention in Urban Research Methods: Feminist Forays in the City', *Antipode*, 48(5), pp. 1337-1358.

Pateman, C. (1988) *The sexual contract*. Cambridge: Polity.

Peake, L. (1999) *Gender, ethnicity and place : women and identity in Guyana*. London: Routledge.

Pearce, D. (1978) 'The Feminisation of Poverty: Women, Work and Welfare', *The Urban and Social Change Review*, (11), pp. 23-36.

Pearce, J. (2006) 'Bringing Violence 'Back Home': Gender Socialisation and the Transmission of Violence through Time and Space', in Glasius, M., Kaldor, M. and Anheier, H. (eds.) *Global Civil Society*. London: Sage, pp. 42-60.

Pearce, J. (2007) *Violence, Power and Participation: Building Citizenship in Contexts of Chronic Violence*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Pearce, J. (2010) 'Perverse state formation and securitized democracy in Latin America', *Democratization*, 17(2), pp. 286-306.

Pearce, J. (2013) *Give Peace a Chance: Towards Violence Reduction not Reproduction after War. Lessons for Colombia from the Central American Peace Processes*. LSE.

Pearson, R. (2005) 'The rise and rise of gender and development', in Kothari, U. (ed.) *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, institutions and ideologies*. London: Zed Books, pp. 157 - 179.

Peck, J. (2012) *Constructions of neoliberal reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (2002) 'Neoliberalizing Space', *Antipode*, 34(3), pp. 380-404.

Peláez Mejía, M.M. (2001) *La Política de Género en el Estado Colombiano: Un camino de conquistas sociales.* Universidad de Antioquia.

Peterson, S. (2005) 'How (the meaning of) gender matters in political economy', *New Political Economy*, 10(4), pp. 499-521.

Peterson, V.S. and Runyan, A.S. (1993) *Global gender issues: Dilemmas in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Peña, X., Cárdenas, J.C., Ñopo, H. and Castañeda, J.L. (2013) 'Mujer y Movilidad Social'. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes - Documentos CEDE.

Phillips, L. (2014) *Contesting publics feminism, activism, ethnography*. London: Pluto Press.

Phillips, L. and Cole, S. (2009) 'Feminist Flows, Feminist Fault Lines: Women's Machineries and Women's Movements in Latin America', *Signs*, 35(1), pp. 185-211.

Porter, F. and Sweetman, C. (2005) 'Mainstreaming Gender in Development: A Critical Review'. Oxford: Oxfam.

Portes, A. and Roberts, B. (2005) 'The free-market city: Latin American urbanization in the years of the neoliberal experiment', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 40(1), pp. 43-82.

Portes, A. and Schauffler, R. (1993) 'Competing perspectives on the Latin American informal sector', *Population & Development Review*, 19(1), pp. 33-60.

Posada Carbó, E. (2001) 'Reflexiones sobre la cultura política colombiana.'. Bogotá: UNIANDES.

Prato, G. and Pardo, I. (2013) 'Urban Anthropology', *Urbanities*, 3(2), pp. 80-110.

Prokhovnik, R. (1998) 'Public and Private Citizenship: From Gender Invisibility to Feminist Inclusiveness', *Feminist Review*, 60(1), p. 84.

Prügl, E. (2011) 'Diversity Management and Gender Mainstreaming as Technologies of Government', *Politics & Gender*, 7(1), pp. 71-89.

Prügl, E. (2014) 'Neoliberalising Feminism', *New Political Economy*, pp. 1-18.

Pécaut, D. (1999) 'From the Banality of Violence to Real Terror: the Case of Colombia', in Koonings, K. and Krujit, D. (eds.) *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.

Quijano, A. (2000) 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *International Sociology*, 15(2), pp. 215-232.

Radford, J., Kelly, L. and Hester, M. (1996) 'Introduction', in Hester, M., Kelly, L. and Radford, J. (eds.) *Women, Violence and Male Power: Feminist Activism, Research and Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press, pp. 3-12.

Rappaport, J. (2005) *Intercultural utopias : public intellectuals, cultural experimentation, and ethnic pluralism in Colombia*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Reardon, B. (1985) 'Sexism and the War System'. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Recreando, C. (2017) *Carnaval de la 13*. Available at: http://www.recreando.com.co/carnaval-de-la-13/ (Accessed: 1st May).

Reeves, H. and Baden, S. (2000) 'Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions'. Brighton: University of Sussex.

Reguillo Cruz, R. (2013) 'Guarded (In)visibility: *Violencias* and the Labors of Paralegality in the Era of Collapse', in Gambetti, Z. and Godoy-Anativia, M. (eds.) *Rhetorics of Insecurity: Belonging and Violence in the Neoliberal Era*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 196-212.

Restrepo, J.R. (2008) 'Medellín: Fronteras de Discriminación y Espacios de Guerra', *La Sociología en Sus Escenarios*, 18(11).

Reyes, C. (1996) *La vida cotidiana en Medellin, 1890 - 1930.* Santafe de Bogota: Colcultura.

Riaño Alcalá, P. (2006) *Dwellers of memory : youth and violence in Medellín, Colombia*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

Rincón, O. and Hoyos, M.P. (2013) 'A Bogotá le encanta la independencia', *Nueva Sociedad*, 243, pp. 131-141.

Rinehart, R.E., Barbour, K.N. and Pope, C.C. (2013) *Ethnographic worldviews : transformations and social justice*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Rita Laura, S. (2014) 'Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres', *Sociedade e Estado*, 29(2), pp. 341-371.

Rivas Gamboa, A. (2005) 'Una Década de Politicas de Seguridad Ciudadana en Colombia', in Casas Dupuy, P., Rivas Gamboa, A. and González Cepero, P. (eds.) *Seguridad urbana y policía en Colombia*. Bogotá: Molher, Ltda., pp. 86-166.

Roberts, A. (2017) 'Gendered States of Punishment and Welfare: Feminist Political Economy, Primitive Accumulation and the Law'. London: Routledge.

Rodgers, D. (2006) 'The State as a Gang: Conceptualizing the Governmentality of Violence in Contemporary Nicaragua', *Critique of Anthropology*, 26(3), pp. 315-330.

Rodriguez, S.M. (2018) 'Building civilian militarism: Colombia, internal war, and militarization in a mid-term perspective', *Security Dialogue*, 49(1-2), pp. 109-122.

Rogers, D. (1999) *Youth Gangs and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Literature Survey* (4). Washington DC: The World Bank.

Roldán, M. (2003) 'Wounded Medellin: Narcotics Traffic Against a Background of Industrial Decline', in Schneider, J. and Susser, I. (eds.) *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World*. Oxford: Berg.

Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenthal, A. (2000) 'Spectacle, fear, and protest: a guide to the history of urban public space in latin america', *Social Science History*, 24(1), p. 33.

Rozema, R. (2008) 'Urban DDR- processes: paramilitaries and criminal networks in Medellín, Colombia *', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 40(3), pp. 423-452.

Ruibal, A. (2014) 'Movement and counter-movement: a history of abortion law reform and the backlash in Colombia 2006-2014', *Reproductive Health Matters*, 22(44), pp. 42-51.

Salazar, A. (1990) 'Born to Die in Medellín'. London: Latin America Bureau.

Salazar, A. (2011) 'Informe final de gestión: Plan de Desarrollo 2008-2011'. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín.

Salcedo Fidalgo, A. and Zeiderman, A. (2008) 'Antropología y ciudad: hacia un análisis crítico e histórico', *Antípoda: Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*, (7), pp. 63-97.

Sandler, J. and Rao, A. (2012) 'The elephant in the room and the dragons at the gate: strategising for gender equality in the 21st century', *Gender and development*, 20(3), pp. 547-562.

Sangasubana, N. (2011) 'How to Conduct Ethnographic Research', *Qualitative Report*, 16(2), pp. 567-573.

Santoro, W.A. and McGuire, G.M. (1997) 'Social Movement Insiders: The Impact of Institutional Activists on Affirmative Action and Comparable Worth Policies', *Social Problems*, 44(4), pp. 503-519.

Saskia, S. (2013) 'Does the city have speech?', *Public Culture*, 25(2 70), p. 209.

Scharff, C. (2014) *Gender and Neoliberalism: Exploring the Exclusions and Contours of Neoliberal Subjectivities*. Available at: https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/christina-scharff-on-gender-and-neoliberalism/ (Accessed: 6 February).

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1993) *Death without weeping the violence of everyday life in Brazil*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scheper-Hughes, N. and Bourgois, P.I. (2004) *Violence in war and peace*. Oxford: Oxford : Blackwell.

Schrock, R.D. (2013) 'The Methodological Imperatives of Feminist Ethnography', *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, (5), pp. 48-60.

Scorer, J. (2016) *City in common : culture and community in Buenos Aires*. Albany : State University of New York Press.

Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana de Medellín (2015) *Retos y Oportunidades de la Cultura Ciudadana en Medellín*. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín.

Segato, R. (2003) 'Las Estructuras Elementales De La Violencia'. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.

Segato, R.L. (2014a) 'El Sexo y La Norma: Frente Estatal, Patriarcado, Desposesión, Colonidad', *Estudios Feministas*, 22(2), pp. 593-616.

Segato, R.L. (2014b) 'Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres', *Sociedade e Estado*, 29(2), pp. 341-371.

Segovia Marín, O. (2009) 'Convivencia en la diversidad: una mirada de género al espacio público', in Falú, A. (ed.) *Mujeres en la Ciudad: De violencias y derechos*. Santiago de Chile: Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina, pp. 145-162.

Shepherd, L.J. (2008) *Gender, violence and security : discourse as practice*. London : Zed Books.

Shepherd, L.J. (2010) 'Gender matters in global politics a feminist introduction to international relations'. London: Routledge.

Silva, A. (2006) 'Imaginarios Urbanos'. Bogotá: Arrange Editores Ltda.

Silva, E. (2009) *Challenging neoliberalism in Latin America*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Singh, S. (2006) 'Deconstructing 'gender and development' for 'identities of women'', *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 16, pp. 100-109.

Sjoberg, L. (2013) 'Viewing Peace Through Gender Lenses', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 27(2), pp. 175-187.

Sjoberg, L. and Via, S. (2010) 'Introduction', in Sjoberg, L. and Via, S. (eds.) *Gender, war and militarism: feminist perspectives*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, pp. 1-16.

Skinner, T., Hester, M., Malos, E. and Hester, M. (2005) *Researching gender violence : feminist methodology in action*. Cullompton: Willan.

Smith, D.M. (1994) *Geography and social justice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Smith, L.T. (2014) 'Social Justice: Transformation and Indigenous Methodologies', in Rinehart, R.E., Barbour, K.N. and Pope, C.C. (eds.) *Ethnographic Worldviews: Transformations and Social Justice*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 15-20.

Smith, V.L. (1989) *Hosts and guests : the anthropology of tourism*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Smyth, I. (2007) 'Talking of gender: words and meanings in development organisations', *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), pp. 582-588.

Sommer, D. (2006) 'Introduction: Wiggle Room', in Sommer, D. (ed.) *Cultural Agency in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1-28.

Soto, H.d. (1990) *The other path : the invisible revolution in the Third World*. 1st Perennial Library ed.. edn. New York: Harper & Row/Perennial Library.

Sotomayor, L. (2013) *Medellín: the new celebrity?* Available at: https://planninglatinamerica.wordpress.com/2013/08/26/medellin-the-new-celebrity/ (Accessed: 26th October 2016).

Sotomayor, L. (2017) 'Dealing with Dangerous Spaces: The Construction of Urban Policy in Medellín', *Latin American Perspectives*, 44(2), pp. 71-90.

Spivak, G.C. (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, pp. 271-313.

Stacey, L.H. (2015) 'Cultura ciudadana. Una nueva mirada al límite entre el estado y la sociedad.', *Íconos*, 19(52), pp. 119-141.

Staeheli, L.A. (1997) 'Citizenship and the search for community', in Staeheli, L., Kodras, J. and Flint, C. (eds.) *State Devolution in America: Implications for a Diverse Society*. London: Thousand Oaks, pp. 60-75.

Staeheli, L.A. (2003) 'Cities and Citizenship', *Urban Geography*, 24(2), pp. 97-102.

Staeheli, L.A., Kofman, E., Peake, L., Staeheli, L. and Ebooks, C. (2004) *Mapping women, making politics : feminist perspectives on political geography*. New York.

Stiglitz, J. (2014) *Medellín's metamorphosis provides a beacon for cities across the globe*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/08/medellin-livable-cities-colombia (Accessed: 26 October 2016).

Stratigaki, M. (2005) 'Gender Mainstreaming vs Positive Action: An Ongoing Conflict in EU Gender Equality Policy', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 12(2), pp. 165-186.

Subrahmaniam, R. (2007) 'Making Sense of Gender in Shifting Institutional Contexts: Some Reflextions on Gender Mainstreaming', in Cornwall, A., Harrison, E. and Whitehead, A. (eds.) *Feminisms: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges in Development*. London: Zed Books, pp. 112-121.

Sutton, B. (2010) 'Bodies in Crisis: Culture, Violence and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina'. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press.

Sweet, E.L. and Escalante, S.O. (2010) 'Planning responds to gender violence: evidence from Spain, Mexico and the United States', *Urban studies (Edinburgh, Scotland)*, 47(10), p. 2129.

Sweetman, C. (2012) 'Introduction', *Gender and Development*, 20(3), pp. 389-403.

Sánchez, G. (2011) *Desplazamiento forzado en la comuna 13: la huella invisible De la guerra*. Bogota: Taurus.

Tacoli, C. and Satterthwaite, D. 25 (2013) 'Gender and urban change'. pp. 3-8.

Tankel, Y. (2011) 'Reframing 'Safe Cities for Women': Feminist articulations in Recife', *Development*, 54(3), p. 352.

Theidon, K. (2009) 'Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Colombia', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31(1), pp. 1-34.

Thomas, F. (2015) 'A nueva mujer, nuevo hombre', in Moncayo C., V.M. (ed.) *Antología del pensamiento crítico colombiano comtemporáneo*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.

Thwaites, R. (2017) '(Re)Examining the Feminist Interview: Rapport, Gender "Matching," and Emotional Labour', *Frontiers in Sociology*, 2.

Tickner, A. (2003) 'Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World', *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 32(2), pp. 295-324.

Tidy, J. (2019) 'War craft: The embodied politics of making war', *Security Dialogue*, 50(3), pp. 220-238.

Tivers, J. (1978) 'How the Other Half Lives: The Geographical Study of Women', *Area*, 10(4), pp. 302-306.

Tomei, J. (2014) ''I always carried a machete when travelling on the bus': ethical considerations when conducting fieldwork in dangerous places', in Lunn, J. (ed.) *Fieldwork in the Global South: Ethical challenges and dilemmas*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 25-33.

Torres, L. (2018) 'Latinx?', *Latino Studies*, 16(3), pp. 283-285.

Tronco Rosas, M.A. and Ocaña López, S. (2011) 'El Instituto Politécnico Nacional innovando en políticas en prevención de violencia con perspectiva de género', *Innovación Educativa*, 11(57), pp. 195-205.

True, J. (2010) 'Mainstreaming Gender in International Institutions', in Shepherd, L.J. (ed.) *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A feminist introduction to International Relations*. London: Routledge, pp. 189-203.

True, J. (2012) *The Political Economy of Violence Against Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tubb, D. (2013) 'Narratives of citizenship in Medellín, Colombia', *Citizenship Studies*, 17(5), pp. 627-640.

Tucker, H., Hall, C.M. and Ebooks, C. (2004) *Tourism and postcolonialism contested discourses, identities and representations*. Abingdon: Routledge.

United Nations Development Programme (2013) *Citizen Security With A Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America*. New York: UNDP.

UNODC (2013) *Estudio Mundial Sobre El Homicidio*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_Report_ExSum_spanish.pdf (Accessed: 6th June 2019).

Uprimny, R. (1989) 'Legitimidad, clientelismo y política en Colombia. Un ensayo de interpretación', *Cuadernos de Economía*, 10(13), pp. 113-164.

Uran, O. (2010) 'Medellín: Participatory creativity in a conflictive city', in Pearce, J. (ed.) *Participation and democracy in the 21st century city*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 127-153.

Urban Development Vienna (2013) 'Manual for Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development'. Vienna: Urban Development and Planning.

Uribe López, M. (2010) 'The state, democracy and violence in Latin America', *Colombia internacional*, 71, pp. 189-210.

Uribe, Á. (2002) 'Manifiesto Democrático - 100 Puntos'. Available at: https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-85269_archivo_pdf.pdf (Accessed: 24th October 2019).

Urry, J. (2002) *The tourist gaze*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.

Utting, P. (2006) 'Introduction: reclaiming development agendas', in Utting, P. (ed.) *Reclaiming Development Agendas: Knowledge, Power and International Policy Making*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vargas Alzate, L.F., Sosa, S. and Galeano David, H.J. (2015) 'The Evolution of Security in south America: a Comparative Analysis between Colombia and Brazil', *Revista de Relaciones Internacionales, Estrategia y Seguridad*, 10(1), pp. 41-63.

Vargas, V. (1992) 'The Feminist Movement in Latin America: Between Hope and Disenchantment', *Development and Change*, 23(3), pp. 195-214.

Vargas, V. (2007) 'Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All: Public Spaces, Citizen Safety and Gender-Based Violence Reflections emerging from debates in Latin America in 2006-2007.'. UNIFEM.

Vargas, V. (2009) 'La violencia de género: pistas para un análisis', in Falú, A. (ed.) *Mujeres en la Ciudad: De violencias y derechos*. Santiago de Chile: Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina, pp. 55-60.

Verdad Abierta (2013) *Mujeres víctimas de la Operación Orión en Medellín*. Available at: https://verdadabierta.com/mujeres-victimas-de-la-operacion-orion-en-medellin/ (Accessed: 1st May).

Verloo, M. (2005) 'Displacement and Empowerment: Reflections on the Concept and Practice of the Council of Europe Approach to Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12(3), pp. 344-365.

Vieira Costa, A.L. (2018) 'Political Culture and Democracy in Latin America: Perspectives on Brazil and Colombia', *Encuentro Latinoamericano*, 5(1), pp. 45-65.

Viveros-Vigoya, M. (2013) 'Genero, raza y nacion. Los reditos politicos de la masculinidad blanca en Colombia', *Maguaré*, 27(1), pp. 71-104.

Viveros-Vigoya, M. (2016) 'Masculinities in the continuum of violence in Latin America', *Feminist Theory*, 17(2), pp. 229-237.

Wade, P. (1995) *Blackness and race mixture : the dynamics of racial identity in Colombia*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wade, P. (2009) *Race and sex in Latin America*. London: Palgrave macmillan.

Walby, S. (2005) 'Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12(3), pp. 321-343.

Waylen, G. (2014) 'Informal Institutions, Institutional Change, and Gender Equality', *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(1), pp. 212-223.

Welland, J. (2013) 'Militarised violences, basic training, and the myths of asexuality and discipline', *Review of International Studies*, 39(4), pp. 881-902.

Werbner, P., Webb, M. and Spellman-Poots, K. (2014) 'The Political Aesthetics of Global Protest: The Arab Spring and Beyond'. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Weyers, J.R. (2016) 'Medellín Cuenta con vos: The changing role of voseo in written communication', *Comunicación*, (35), pp. 67-81.

Whitzman, C. (2007) 'Stuck at the Front Door: Gender, Fear of Crime and the Challenge of Creating Safer Space', *Environment and Planning A*, 39(11), pp. 2715-2732.

Wibben, A. (2011) 'Feminist Security Studies: A narrative approach'. London: Routledge.

Wieringa, S. (1994) 'Women's Interest and Empowerment: Gender Planning Reconsidered', *Development and Change*, 25(4), pp. 829-848.

Wilcox, L.B. (2015) *Bodies of violence : theorizing embodied subjects in international relations*. New York : Oxford University Press.

Williams, C. (2008) 'Ghettourism and Voyeurism, or Challenging Stereotypes and Raising Consciousness? Literary and Non‐literary Forays into the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 27(4), pp. 483-500.

Williams, R. (1981) *Culture*. London : Fontana.

Williams, R.L. and Guerrieri, K.G. (1999) *Culture and customs of Colombia*. London : Greenwood Press.

Williamson, J. (1993) 'Democracy and the "Washington consensus"', *World Development*, 21(8), p. 1329.

Wittman, A. (2010) 'Looking local, finding global: paradoxes of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive', *Rev. Int. Stud.*, 36(1), pp. 51-76.

Woodward, A.E. (2008) 'Too late for gender mainstreaming? Taking stock in Brussels', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 18(3), pp. 289-302.

Wright, H. (2019) '"Masculinities Perspectives": advancing a radical Women, Peace and Security agenda?', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, pp. 1-23.

Xiang, B. (2013) 'Multi-scalar ethnography: An approach for critical engagement with migration and social change', *Ethnography*, 14(3), pp. 282-299.

Young, A. (2019) 'Creative Resistance in Medellín's Changing Public Space', *NACLA*, 51(4), pp. 341-347.

Young, K. (1993) *Planning with Women: Making a World of Difference*. London: Macmillan.

Young, K. (1997) 'Gender and Development', in Visvanathan, N., Duggan, L., Nisonoff, L. and Wiegersma, N. (eds.) *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*. London: Zed Books, pp. 51-54.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006) 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), pp. 193-209.

Zalewski, M. (2000) 'Questions About Change and the Traditional Male Approach to International Politics', in Breines, I., Connell, R. and Eide, I. (eds.) *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence: A Culture of Peace Perspective*. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 95-194.

Zalewski, M. (2010) ''I don't even know what gender is': a discussion of the connections between gender, gender mainstreaming and feminist theory', *Rev. Int. Stud.*, 36(1), pp. 3-27.

Zambrano Benavides, D. (2017) '¿Cuánto cuesta sostener el nuevo helicóptero de Medellín?', *El Colombiano* edn). [Online] Available at: https://www.elcolombiano.com/antioquia/seguridad/costos-de-mantenimiento-del-helicoptero-de-la-alcaldia-de-medellin-FI6497052 (Accessed: 4th March 2019).

Zanotta Machado, L. (2009) 'Sin violencia hacia las mujeres, ¿serían seguras las ciudades para todas y todos?', in Falú, A. (ed.) *Mujeres en la Ciudad: De violencias y derechos*. Santiago de Chile: Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina, pp. 127-136.

Zapata, K. and Dary Ruíz, L. (2016) 'Juntar historia: La guerra como realidad a transformar y la paz como posibilidad a generar.', *Visión 8* (Edición Especial: Mujeres y construcción de paz edn).

Álvarez Villegas, J.M., Sinisterra Londoño, R., Uribe Gómez, F.A., Penilla Sánchez, G.A., Dávila Cañas, P.A., Martínez Diazgranados, T.M., Gómez Salazar, J.C. and Marín Ríos, E. (2013) 'Plan de Acción Transversalización del Enfoque de Género'. Pereira: Corporación Autonoma Regional De Risaralda.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interviews:

Name		Type of Interview	Date
Yuliana	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	17/07/2017
Leidy	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	25/09/2017
Luis	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	12/09/2017
Jhon	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	14/08/2017
Paulo	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	19/10/2017
Sara	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	05/09/2017
Andrea	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	05/09/2017
Laura	Resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	13/10/2017
Mateo	LGBTQ Activist and resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	19/09/2017
Jaime	Member hip-hop collective and resident – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	28/09/2017
Jorge	YMCA – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	09/10/2017
Juan, Andres, Diego and William	Representatives of JAL – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	12/10/2017
Erika	Leader, family and social inclusion NGO – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	18/10/2017
Santiago	Mujeres en la 13 researcher – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	23/10/2017
Juan	Arts organisation – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	26/10/2017
Sandra	*Red de Apoyo de las Mujeres – Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	31/10/2017
Paula and Maria	Women's collective – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	08/11/2017
Martha	*Mujeres Caminando por la Verdad - Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	10/11/2017
Gloria	Women's collective – *Comuna* 13	Semi-structured	12/11/2017
Catalina	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017

Paola	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Sebastian	*Vendedor – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Diana	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Felipe	*Vendedor – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Jasmin	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Veronica	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Tatiana	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Lina	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017
Sandra	*Vendedora – Comuna* 13	Vox Pop	07/09/2017

Claudia	*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	04/06/2017
Diana	*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	04/06/2017
Liliana	*Centro para Diversidad*	Semi-structured	04/10/2017
Luis	*Secretaría de Inclusión*	Semi-structured	09/10/2017
Claudia	*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	17/10/2017
Marisol	*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	17/10/2017
Andres	*Secretaría de Participación*	Semi-structured	17/10/2017
Eva	SISC	Semi-structured	24/10/2017
Carlos	*Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana*	Semi-structured	31/10/2017
Carolina	*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	02/11/2017
Eduardo	*Casa de Justicia*	Semi-structured	03/11/2017
Marcela	*Casa de Justicia and Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	03/11/2017
Catalina	*Secretaría de Educación*	Semi-structured	10/11/2017

Tatiana	Women's NGO	Semi-structured	22/09/2017
Ana	Academic	Semi-structured	15/09/2017
Natalia	Youth Education Organisation Leader - Altavista	Semi-structured	26/03/2017
David	Previous *Personero*	Semi-structured	06/10/2017
Daniela	Women's NGO	Semi-structured	27/10/2017
Luz Elena	Ex-*Secretaría de las Mujeres*	Semi-structured	03/11/2017

Foro de Justicia Mujer		Talk, recording	03/03/2017

Relatos de Antioquia, Universidad de Los Andes		Talk, recording	29/03/2017
Tertulia Cuanto Suelo		Talk, recording	02/11/2017
Resultados Mujeres en la 13		Talk, recording	10/11/2017
Meeting – LGBTQ group		Discussion, recording	10/09/2017

Example of the symbol accompanying programmes and projects related to gender in the development plan:

3.2.3.3. **Proyecto: Transversalización de la equidad de género**

Medellín avanza en la transversalización de la equidad de género en instancias públicas y privadas, para la sensibilización sobre las desigualdades de género que afectan a las mujeres, jóvenes y niñas, a partir de un trabajo de coordinación e incidencia que generen acciones en beneficio de la igualdad de género.

Violentómetro – Alcaldía de Medellín