Citizen participation, collective action and digital media:

Seeking spatial justice in Manizales, Colombia

Laura Pinzón Cardona

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at

Newcastle University

January 2021

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was a process I enjoyed. However, at times it also felt heavy and stressful, mainly while being pregnant and then becoming a mother during a global pandemic. Thankfully, I was lucky enough to rely on the company, support, friendship and love from friends and family, who were always there, some miles away too, to encourage and inspire me to do my best and reminding me to be kind to myself.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Geoff Vigar, Sebastian Weise and Peter Kellett, who took their supervisory roles with great interest and dedication. I was fortunate to have their diverse expertise and insights guiding me through this academic journey. They also provided me with timely personal advice during challenging times, and for that, I am immensely thankful too. Peter became more than a formal mentor; he and his wife have been friends to share interests and have conversations about gardening, parenting, and the joy and challenges of life between two continents.

I want to thank the Research Excellency Academy and the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University for funding my research. I am also grateful for the Mobility Award provided by the Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS), which made my first fieldwork possible.

During this process, I also met many people at Newcastle University with similar interests, who enriched my experience of the PhD by having fascinating conversations and taking on parallel projects. I want to thank my colleagues and friends at the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, Open Lab, CLACS, the writing group from the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, the Ethnography Reading group, and the Rebel BAME book-club run by friends from the Schools of Education and Business.

The research would not have been possible without all those who took part in different roles. I owe my gratitude to participants in Manizales, particularly to Doña Marta, Juan, Gilsan, Tatiana, and members of the collectives *Comunativa, Subámonos al bus del POT, Todos Somos Rio Blanco, Fuego en el Aire, Mala*

Abstract

This thesis explores the possibilities and limitations of citizen participation and collective action for spatial justice across the online and offline spaces of the everyday. It uses the case study of Manizales, Colombia; a city that proclaims itself as innovative, socially inclusive and participatory. Two hypotheses informed the research design. One, that despite city's efforts on digital innovation, local government in Manizales had yet to use the collaborative potential of digital media, in order to improve participatory and collaborative processes of city-making. And two, that there are significant differences in the perceptions from local government and social collectives, about the transforming potential of collective action and digital media uses for inclusion and participation. Consequently, the research questions explore the relationships between governmental initiatives and the everyday life of socio-territorial movements seeking spatial justice, as well as the ways in which citizens mobilise, the local roles of digital media in collective action, and the implications of the findings to transform debates about spatial justice in Manizales and beyond.

Drawing on five months of place-based participant observation in Manizales, a year and a half of netnographic exercises (online participant observation), complemented by interviews and perception exercises, the thesis provides an empirical analysis that is grounded in the everyday processes of city-making, from the formal protocols to the informal and alternative. Three socio-territorial movements in the city served as the sub-cases of study, which included several individuals and collectives that became crucial participants in this research.

Overall, this thesis highlights the importance of understanding local socio-political contexts in relation to processes and efforts around digital innovation for participation and collective action. Additionally, it argues that the expansion of urban planning, as a practice that embraces and makes the most of the chaos of participation – both online and offline, requires recognition and integration of city-making practices outside of hegemonic structures of power. Moreover, the findings reveal a case of urban contestation as an exercise of transgressive, rather than insurgent citizenship,

which can enrich current debates about the Right to the City and practical approaches towards data and spatial justice in the city.

Laura Pinzón Cardona

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Diagrams

List of Images

Acronyms

ACUC   Citizen and University Alliance for the Comuna San Jose

AR   Action Research

CCC   Corporación Cívica de Caldas

CfSC   Communication for Social Change

ECPs   Emancipatory Communication Practices

HCI   Human-Computer Interaction

ICT   Information and Communications Technology

MCV   Manizales Como Vamos

MinTIC   Colombian Ministry of ICT

NDP   National Department of Planning

POT   (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial) Land Use and Regulation Plan

RCCV   Red de Ciudades Como Vamos

RttC   The Right to the City

SABPOT   Subámonos al Bus del POT

TSRB   Todos Somos Rio Blanco

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene: Participation, communication and digital innovation in the Colombian city

The effects of new media technology in urban development have been extensively discussed in both academia and professional practice. The use of digital media has become an increasingly important element of the communication strategy of local government and planning offices in Latin American countries. Digital media uses range from interactive websites to mobile applications designed around particular local issues and a higher and more active presence of official institutions on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Twitter. Such an online presence can be understood as a government's effort to engage with larger audiences and promote public collaboration in planning, constructing and managing their city (Foth et al., 2011). Social media is used in a similar way in citizen-led collective action, to promote events and organise groups of actors with various levels of commitment, as it naturally happens online (Miller, 2011; Castells, 2009; Shirky, 2009; Garrett, 2006)[1]. The implications of these efforts, and the possibilities of citizen participation in everyday life, however, remain essential questions to be answered at a city level.

This thesis illustrates and explores why digital communication and the city should be studied jointly when looking at urban and social development, especially as digital media is more and more integrated into daily life (Graham, 2004; Foth et al., 2011). As new media technology evolves, and digital spheres of information become more accessible it permeates all aspects of urban life. Further, the ways in which people and organisations interact with each other and with urban spaces are also changing. Consequently, this research originates from recognising that the study and understanding of local communication patterns in cities is needed now more than ever to enrich and advance participatory planning strategies. This implies recognising the ways in which urban groups mobilise online and offline

---

[1] From now on in this thesis, the term 'collective action' always imply that is citizen-led.

communication tools for collective action, and critically exploring the ways in which governmental planning initiatives relate to them.

Building on ideas from a wide range of interdisciplinary literature including critical urban studies, planning, urban geography, communication, Civic Media and computer-human interaction (CHI), the overarching objective of this research is to explore the possibilities and limitations of citizen participation and collective action for spatial justice across the online and offline spaces of the everyday life. To do so, I use the case study of Manizales, Colombia, a city that proclaims itself to be innovative, socially inclusive, and participatory. Additionally, I use three socio-territorial movements in the city, also referred here as sub-cases of study, as a mechanism to approach the inside and the everyday life of collective action.

Through a qualitative and ethnographic approach, this thesis explores several actors' everyday lives from various sectors of Manizales' society between the online and offline. Although this exercise was done with the natural restrictions of time and resources proper of doctorate research, it allowed me to gather crucial views from people working in five secretariats of the Municipality, two in the Ministry of ICT (Information and Communications Technology), three from the private sector, two from NGOs, three in academia, and the members of ten citizen-led collectives, from which five were directly linked with the socio-territorial movements. Reflections and findings from the fieldwork are brought into dialogue with ideas drawn from the literature, assisting me in developing the examination to give a rich case study of Manizales – which is similar to other cities in the Global South.

Going beyond the case study, this research relates insights gained from Manizales to the global debate on the potentials and limitations of digital media in transforming citizen participation in urban development, by placing emphasis on understanding socio-territorial movements, cultural and political influences, technological accessibility and appropriation for a richer understanding of communication and participation at city scales.

The main argument of this research is that the supposed improvement potential associated with the increase and variety in digital media for citizen participation needs to be critically approached on a case-by-case basis. In other words, the

potential of digital innovation in city-making can only be understood through the analysis of local socio-political contexts. Additionally, the relations among local authorities, citizen initiatives, and other possible actors in the everyday life – of experiencing and transforming the city – need to be explored to find limitations and possibilities of citizen participation and collective action.

1.2 Context of the research

Colombia provides a rich landscape for exploring public participation and digital media innovation for social integration and development. Since 2009 the ICT Ministry (MinTIC) has been leading efforts to encourage social organisations and entrepreneurs to design and implement digital media tools to improve public engagement in local and national governance. The Ministry recently produced a Policy Manual for Digital Government (*Manual de Gobierno en Linea*) (MinTIC, 2018), which was designed to be implemented in all government scales in the country. The Policy Manual compels all urban municipalities to implement digital government and participation mechanisms, independent of their size and population. The Policy Manual seeks, as an ultimate goal, to extend, improve, and sustain the relationship between citizens and local authorities through digital channels (MinTIC, 2018). In response, regional and municipal government strategies in the shape of best practices, have been promoted to encourage innovation in the use of new media technology in cities, towns, and rural areas.

In terms of urban planning, Colombia has a national law for Urban Land Use Regulation (*Ley de Regulación Urbana 388 de 1997*) that defines the main instruments to plan, implement and evaluate urban development in all cities and municipalities in the country (*Ley 388 de 1997).* According to this law, each municipality needs to develop its Land Use and Regulation Plans (*Planes de Ordenamiento Territorial –* POT) through participatory processes integrating academic groups, private and public sectors interested in urban planning, and the general public. Moreover, this law was developed by following principles from "The Right to the City" (from Lefebvre and Harvey, according to Sanabria, 2016), which is why POTs refer to objectives such as equity, inclusion, participation, and the protection of common interest over individual ones. However, this generates a constant conflict in practice because of the country's neoliberal model, which is a

global problem for planning (Watson, 2006), where the success of urban development plans mostly depends on how attractive these can be for private investment. Additionally, urban planning in Colombia has roots in Rational Planning influenced by the Modernist movement in the second half of the 20th century. The remaining legacy of such origins poses another conflict in the professional practice today, between the transformative possibility of citizen participation – as praised by the regulation – and the tradition of trusting decision-making to expert knowledge only.

Besides the existing legal framework advocating public participation, such as the Urban Land Use Regulation (*Ley 388 de 1997*) and the Colombian Political Constitution of 1991 (Constitución Política de Colombia, 1991), several non-governmental initiatives share similar purposes. For example, since 2005, there is an established network of Colombian cities called *"Red de Ciudades Como Vamos"* (RCCV, n.a.), an open community made up of public and private institutions, as well as social and educational organisations. RCCV was created to share, publish, compare, and evaluate changes in urban policies, urban management, and development strategies in 15 cities. Their objectives are framed around the idea of having more participatory, sustainable, and democratic cities by enhancing transparency, accountability, and debate around Colombian cities.

The city of Manizales is part of the RCCV network. Manizales is a medium sized city in the Colombian context with an estimated population of 400,436 in 2018 (last population census by DANE, 2018), and known in Colombia for its leading role in digital media innovation and social development (ElTiempo, 2016; RCCV, 2016). In the last decade, the local government of Manizales, with the support of private and public institutions, have framed short and long-term plans in the city around the idea of making Manizales the 'best city in which to live' in the country (ElTiempo, 2015), focusing not only on economic growth but on how this translates into citizens well-being. There have been different models of development used by recent mayors in the last decades. What all of these models have in common, however, is the praising of education, knowledge, and technology innovation as the values that can make Manizales a better city compared to similar size cities in Colombia and Latin America. In 2017, Manizales occupied the first position in the country, with the higher

Social Progress Imperative, according to RCCV (ElTiempo, 2016; RCCV, 2016). In terms of digital media and social media innovation, the city stands out in the country because of the local investment and efforts in innovation processes and digital development for the last fifteen years, according to MinTIC (Luna, 2015) and ViveLab Manizales (ViveLab, n.a.). Despite this and other similar recognitions, Manizales and many other Colombian cities still struggle to reduce poverty, unemployment, and urban marginalisation.

Approaching the so-called progress of Manizales from a critical perspective regarding its transformative potential posed some preliminary questions which motivated this research project: How can digital media innovation serve as a facilitator in local democracy? How is the city's supposed digital progress affecting the everyday working of social organisations and activists in the city? Are there cases of new media technology closing the gap between people and decision-making processes in the city? To what extent can people feel empowered by digital innovation to promote and gain support over their local urban struggles? How is the transformative potential of new media technology integrated into the discourse and indicators of local social progress in Manizales? Such initial queries informed the formulation of the research questions presented in the following section.

Even though there is a political framework already established in Colombia to support initiatives about digital media innovation and public participation, digital media's impacts in the participatory dynamics at city scales have not yet been studied in the national context. There are however, studies exploring the relationship of the Internet in the political opportunities of social movements at larger scales (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014), which served to frame the discussion of my research in the Latin American and Colombian context.

While the academic debate around new media communication and urban development increases, the need for studies at city and neighbourhood scales becomes more relevant, particularly in contexts that in principle encourage digital media innovation and public participation - as is the case with Colombian cities. That is why a study of Manizales produces relevant results by critically learning from this particular experience to enrich the regional urban debate in the quest for more democratic, inclusive, and collaborative ways to construct cities.

1.3 Research Questions

The preliminary hypotheses of this research were that local planning authorities in Manizales had yet to use the collaborative potential that digital and social media represent to their full potential. Most of the communication appeared to remain unidirectional, sharing information, and receiving feedback without any further responsibilities. A second hypothesis was that there were significant differences in the city's imaginaries from local government to social collectives, concerning the roles of collective action and digital media for inclusion and participation in city-making.

Framed around the general concern on the possibilities that digital-media practices may have in transforming local participation dynamics, and based on the current context of Manizales, Colombia, the main questions for this research are:

RQ1. How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to the everyday lives of social organisations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city?

RQ2. How do citizens mobilise - online and offline - towards spatial justice in a city self-proclaimed as democratic, inclusive, and innovative?

RQ3. How do online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in the city?

RQ4. What are the implications of the research for local landscapes of collective action and participation to transform debates about data justice and spatial justice?

These questions provided a framework to examine different elements in testing assumptions of correspondence between digitalisation, innovation, and democracy at city levels[2]. RQ1 focuses on the government's existing initiatives in Manizales while addressing the relation to the everyday of collective action at the planning

---

[2] As a secondary outcome of this research, I have a chapter published in the book *The Politics of Technology in Latin America, Volume 2: Digital media, daily life and public engagement.* (Ramirez Plascencia et al., 2021 ed.). That chapter (Pinzon Cardona, 2021) explores RQ1 and RQ3, and served as a preliminary and summarised version of this thesis' chapters 5 and 6.

system's margins to understand the main issues and recognise opportunities in the field. RQ2 seeks to find out local practices of civic mobilisation and collective action, unpacking factors influencing dynamics found in the field, for a better understanding of the possibilities of digital and non-digital media in improving participation. RQ3 places digital media at its core to identify and interpret its transformative potential grounded in the context previously studied through RQ1 and RQ2. Finally, RQ4 seeks to go beyond the case study and individual elements of analysis, enabling a discussion of the findings of this research for broader debates about citizen participation in urban planning and spatial justice.

1.4 Essential concepts

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this research, the key concepts used in this study were divided into four groups: (a) urban planning and citizen contestation; (b) communication and collective action; (c) everyday digital media for participation; and (d) the transformative potential of digital media in city-making. These divisions relate to the sections in which Chapter 2 is divided, what follows is a brief outline of each group and its relation to this research.

Urban planning and citizen contestation

The debates grouped under this tittle, and the order in which they are presented, serve to introduce two elements that became crucial to analyse the findings and the tensions between urban planning practices and citizen contestation in Manizales. One is the Right to City (RttC), and the second one is Transgressive Citizenship (Earle 2012; 2017). To understand such concepts in context, it is necessary to first explore issues around power in city-making (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Bayat, 2004; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004; Castells, 2016; Frediani & Cociña, 2019), since the lack of recognition of bottom-up experiences as legitimate city-making contributions, and general power struggles, are recurrent topics throughout the thesis.

The following part of the section explores the legacy of Rational Planning – and particularly of Comprehensive Planning - in Colombia, and its link with the possibilities and limitations for citizen participation in the country (Valdivia, 2000; Ramirez Rios, 2011). Despite urban planning institutions in Colombia have moved

away from the closed and segregated approach in decision-making influenced by Rational Planning, its legacy can be found in remaining technocratic views and the limiting roles of citizen engagement in planning.

After reviewing the historical context of planning as a professional practice in Colombia, the next part discusses citizen participation theories with a focus on post-collaborative planning (Watson, 2009; Miessen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2011; Vigar et al., 2017). This focus embraces and promotes spaces for conflict in participation in order to challenge established relations of power in decision-making conventions (Watson, 2009; Korn & Voida, 2015). Drawing from Frediani & Cociña (2019), participation is approached not as a device for planning but as planning itself, recognising city-making processes happening at the margins of the formal planning protocols.

The Right to the City (RttC) is a fundamental notion underpinning this research. Its undeniable value comes from both, the literature and the experiences during fieldwork. That is how the RttC works here as a confluence point, where theory and the empirical come into dialogue using the same language, but also as a confluence among diverse discourses on participation, citizenship and social movements. Works on the RttC, from Lefebvre's original work in the 1960's ([1968] 1996), but also from the many authors who have further developed and discussed this idea from various perspectives (Harvey, 2008; Soja, 2010; Marcuse, 2014; Sassen, 2015), guided me in developing a particular interpretation of the concept in the geographical and interdisciplinary context of this research. Moreover, literature grounded on Latin American and Colombian contexts (Lopes de Souza, 2010; Carrion & Erazo, 2016; Acebedo, 2014; Naranjo & Hurtado, 2002; Torres-Tovar, 2015; Ramirez, 2008; Duque, 2015), as well as literature exploring the RttC in connection to the roles of ICT in place-making, activism, and participation (Forth et al., 2011, 2015; Shaw & Graham, 2017; Sassen, 2015; Lotan, 2014) became crucial to formulate this research's topics and the case study.

The concept of 'transgressive citizenship' (Earle, 2012, 2017) is central to the thesis contribution. It is necessary to present it situated within debates on citizenship and participation in order to understand its relevance in connection with the case studied. Drawing from Earle's work, 'transgressive citizenship' explains how social

movements can act in ambiguous ways in and out of formality (Earle, 2012, 2017). In her work in Sao Paulo in Brazil, Earle exposes how groups claiming the RttC and contesting the spatial injustice sometimes utilise regulations supporting their causes, besides using transgressive approaches to highlight the flaws of local government and improve the quality of life in their communities.

Finally, Latin American Critical Thinking (LACT) (Fals Borda, 1996; Escobar, 2016; de Sousa Santos, 2018; Ocampo Gonzales, 2018) complements the theoretical background to discuss citizenship and socio-territorial movements in the Colombian context. Fieldwork observations about the use and possible meanings of concepts such as 'thinking-feeling' and 'pluriverse' by several collectives in Manizales evidenced the link with the LACT school of thought.

Communication and collective action

The uses of various media for citizen participation and collective action deal, in the first stage, with matters around communication. Therefore, this section in Chapter 2 begins by exploring the roles of communication in local democracy and its relevance in unpacking power struggles and unbalances in city-making processes. To do so, I draw reflections from authors such as Castells (2009, 2016; Castells & Dawsonera, 2007), Miraftab (2018), Ercan et al. (2019), Brownhill & Parker (2010), Bennett (2003), and Goodin (2003), among others, in which the exploration of communication issues is directly related to understanding participation and activism.

The second part of this section focuses on collective action and socio-territorial movements (Raffestin, 1993; Fernandes, 2005). Collective action is intentionally separated from the earlier section on participation, as a critical intention to highlight city-making processes excluded from formal participation, which can propose 'unthinkable' (Elwood & Lawson, 2018) alternatives for constructing a just city. Readings from complexity theory and self-organisation (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Teisman et al., 2009; DeMarrais & Earle) complement the notion of collective action found in Latin American Political Science authors, such as Garreton M. (2002), Touraine (1997), Gonzales Gil (2006), Fals Borda (1984), De Sousa Santos (2014), and Escobar (2016).

Everyday digital media for participation

The concepts in this group explore digital infrastructures for civic engagement and collective action, drawing from Korn & Voida's matrix of political participation paradigms and everydayness (see section 2.4.1) (2015). The categories of technological deployments which this research utilises are those proposed by Kleinhans et al. (2015), given the shared interest between uses of accessible digital media and citizen participation. Thus, section 2.4.1 presents descriptions and some initial reflections on categories such as Geo-visualisation interfaces (i.e., Google Maps, Open Street Map), social media, digital government (or e-government), and mobile participation (e-participation).

The second part of this section presents reflections from Civic Media, collecting interdisciplinary approaches studying links between civic empowerment and media (Rodriguez, 2001; Milan, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Gordon & Mihailidis, 2016; Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016). Concerning this, a brief part deals with the risks associated with data commodification (Polani, 1944; Juris, 2012; Han, 2017; Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018) since most of the digital uses in collective action in Manizales seemed to come from social media.

Drawing from the work of Foth et al. (2011, 2015), Gurstein (2003), Korn & Voida (2015), McCullough (2005), Conroy and Evans-Cowley (2006), and Shirky (2009), the last part of this section outlines essential reflections regarding the relational engagement of digital media uses in everyday life.

City-making transformation

As the last group of concepts, this section in Chapter 2 seeks to bridge notions on citizenship, contestation, participation, and digital media possibilities, by approaching discussions analysing power structures and their possibilities or obstacles for transformation in participatory practices and planning. The transformative potential of digital media in participation is explored through readings discussing the digital divide and accessibility (Foth et al., 2015; Messeter, 2015; Bugs, 2014; Elwood and Leszczynski, 2012; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2015), self-organisation for action (Horelli et al., 2015; Penneey, 2017; Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015), control and autonomy (Castells, 2009; Shirky, 2009; Messeter, 2015; McCullough, 2005;

DiSalvo, 2007, 2011; Vines et al., 2013; Korn & Voida, 2015), and the materialisation of digital participation (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015; Horelli *et al.*, 2015; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2015; Kleinhans et al., 2015). Finally, following recent works from the Global South, but also from Nordic literature, section 2.5.2 argues that urban planning needs a timely re-examination that reflects the emerging demands of city-making processes, happening in and out of formally established protocols (Frediani & Cociña, 2019; Staffans and Horelli, 2014; Horelli et al., 2015; Hemmersam et al., 2015; Niederer & Priester, 2016; Sassen, 2015).

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. As introduced in section 1.4, **Chapter 2** sets out the key concepts needed to develop this research. Additionally, the last section of this chapter presents the analytical framework as a concluding outcome of the literature review. Three points form the analytical framework; (a) power and interests around participation and digital innovation for citizen engagement in city-making processes, (b) practices of citizen contestation for spatial justice in the everyday, and (c) recognition and integration of collective action in the expanding of citizen participation. These points served to structure my fieldwork plans, and to organise and analyse the data collected.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology used in this research, based on a qualitative approach and employed participant observation methods (online and offline), interviews, and perception exercises. A section in the chapter is used to introduce Manizales as a case study as well as the three sub-cases, or socio-territorial movements, studied by this research. The chapter also presents vital elements for the research design, such as the influence of Action Research, the timelines, how I introduce myself to participants (online and offline), and methods used to collect, organise, and analyse data. In the last section, I present some final reflections on the experience of carrying this project out in a place that was both familiar and unknown for myself as a researcher before offering some concluding remarks about the methodology.

Chapter 4 sets the research context, going from the national to the local and very-local scale (i.e., neighbourhood or a particular urban struggle). Thus, the chapter

starts with a section outlining critical aspects of participation and collective action in Colombia's recent political history. The following section presents Manizales' context, including perceptions of the city from the local government, territorial planning and participatory tools and some notes on the alternative views on the city outside governmental frameworks. That last section introduces the three sub-cases of study, referred to as the three socio-territorial movements: San Jose, Rio Blanco, and the Right to the City – Manizales. The next section presents four key and representative stories of participants (anonymised), followed by the last section, depicting three defining moments (or vignettes) from my fieldwork experience. Both the stories and the vignettes help to connect concepts and reflections made in further chapters.

Chapter 5 aims to address research questions RQ1 and RQ2 (see section 1.3). Therefore, the first part of the chapter explores the relation and disassociations between governmental initiatives around participation and digital innovation and collective action in the city. To do so, it presents a summary of crucial perceptions found in the field around participation, innovation, and collective action, while also highlighting local particularities about participation and exploring whether improving the digital correlates with advancing citizen participation. This part concludes by analysing the relationship in question as one of limited interest. The second part looks into how citizens mobilise toward spatial justice in a city that claims to be democratic and inclusive. In that way, I explore issues about individual and collective identities and the various factors perceived as influencing collective action in Manizales as a basis to answer the question. This part also presents a discussion between the concepts of insurgent and transgressive citizenship (Earle, 2012, 2017), as well as reflecting on how collective action challenges *normalising planning power* (understood as the authority carried by protocols that have become the 'norm' in decision-making; or those supported by local authorities).

Chapter 6 addresses research question RQ3, dealing with digital media's roles in structuring, performing, and transforming collective action opportunities for spatial justice. The first part of the chapter explores digital media tools and uses in the everyday of collective action, highlighting processes to produce and re-produce information, the relation between the online and offline spaces, and the most common sources of frustration among different participants. The second part

presents the media uses found in Manizales, supported by fluvial diagrams connecting the socio-territorial movements, the various types of media used, and purposes associated with collective action in the city. The first two parts of the chapter set the scene for presenting five key roles of digital – and non-digital – media in collective action towards spatial justice. The final section focuses on the missing roles, understood as opportunities with local potential but yet to be developed and recognised in the case of Manizales.

Chapter 7 aims to bring together reflections, from the empirical chapters, into a discussion with the key concepts explored in the literature while addressing research question RQ4 (see section 1.3). The structure of the chapters follows the points identified in the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2. Thus, the first section looks into the conflict between power and interests in city planning, spatial justice, and digital innovation. It examines individual and common interests reflected in urban planning initiatives, as well as in digital innovation efforts in the city. A reflection at the end of the section calls for a redistribution of power in the common good's interest. The second section of the chapter looks into epistemological and conceptual influences in Manizales' civic contestation. In doing so, local meanings of collective action and their potential for urban transformation can be better understood. The section proposes a reacquiring of the Right to the City through regional epistemologies. It complements the discussion considering urban contestation in the case study as an exercise of '*transgressive*' instead of '*insurgent citizenship*.' The last section of the chapter discusses issues around the legitimacy of socio-territorial movements as fitting actors of transformation, the expanding of citizen participation in urban planning, and the potential of digital media promoting change in those scenarios. This chapter concludes by proposing an approach to expanding urban planning as a practice embracing the chaos of participation – online and offline - which calls for recognition, redistribution, and integration of collective action into the '*legitimate*' ways of city-making.

Chapter 8 presents a comprehensive set of conclusions from this research, summarising the principal findings and critical arguments concerning the four research questions. This chapter also presents sections on contributions to

knowledge, reflections on the research methods employed, and some ideas for future research topics that emerged from the present work.

1.6 Why does it matter?

We live in an era in which digital innovation has become more relevant than ever, and in which the uneven consequences of urban development patterns have shown their most dramatic and unfair face in the context of the current pandemic. This research seeks to contribute to current debates, shedding light on some of the dynamics that explain the interaction between new media technology, participation and urban development. In doing so, it looks to contribute to the understanding of more democratic and just forms of city production that recognise collective action and engage with citizen-led uses of online and offline tools. In the pages ahead, the experiences of Manizales show how citizen participation is appropriated and challenged in between formal and alternatives spaces, and through citizen practices that are interwoven amid the online and offline of collective action.

Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

As presented in the previous chapter, this research explores the possibilities of collective action and the uses of digital media in transforming local participation in city-making processes (see section 1.3 for Research questions), using the case study of Manizales, Colombia. The nature of the research questions' concern in this study requires an interdisciplinary approach to understand the most relevant debates in the literature. Therefore, this chapter explores theoretical and empirical discussions from urban planning, urban geography, CHI, communication and urban studies, with a critical interest in citizen participation, advocacy, social inclusion and representation in decision-making structures at the city level.

The first section of the chapter, section 2.2, examines literature around power in city-making, urban planning practices, and citizen participation, covering perspectives and the tensions between collaborative and more radical approaches. The order of elements in this section builds the ground to discuss the possible meanings for the Right to the City in the context studied and present the concept of 'Transgressive Citizenship' (Earle, 2012, 2017), which is essential for the research analysis and contributions of the thesis. Section 2.3 examines communications debates and collective action, starting with an exploration of communication and its relevance in democratic processes in the city. It finishes with a depiction of collective action and socio-territorial movements in Latin America. The following part of the chapter, section 2.4, presents various views on digital media for citizen participation and the main categories of deployments relevant for this research. It also includes a section on Civic Media and the commodification of data in relation to collective action. Thus, this section focuses on the possibility of participatory conditions digital deployments can recreate and their common problems and limitations in the everyday of civic participation and contestation. Section 2.5 addresses matters around the transformative potential of digital media in city-making structures. This section ends by supporting the call made by different authors, from South and North, about the need to expand and re-evaluate urban planning notions, to place participation – as part of, or out of the formal protocol – at the core of the field and practice. The

chapter ends with some concluding reflections and presents the analytical framework, as the structural outcome of this literature review.

2.2 Planning practices and citizen contestation

In order to talk about collective action and participation in city-making, it is crucial to set the conceptual background in which relevant debates for the context studied take place. That is why the following points in this section explore readings about power in city-making, urban planning practices, and citizen participation. Reflections highlighted from the literature could apply to cases beyond Colombia and Latin America; however, some reflections highlight relevant particularities directly to the Colombian case. The last three points deal with citizen contestation through examining the concepts of the Right to the City, Transgressive Citizenship and the field of Latin American Critical Thinking. The relevance of these three elements was anticipated from the literature studied before fieldwork. Nevertheless, its significance, particularly of the concept of Transgressive Citizenship and the local understandings and uses of the Right to the City, became undeniable during and after fieldwork (see chapter 4, and sections 5.3 and 7.3).

The exploration of literature around insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2008; O'Donnell, 1999) in relation to the fieldwork experience led me to identify the concept of Transgressive Citizenship (Earle, 2012, 2017) as a crucial theoretical arena, which allowed me to construct some meaningful observations, and to elaborate a research contribution around the concept of Creative Transgressive Citizenship (see section 5.3.3). In order to discuss 'Transgressive Citizenship', it is necessary to explore how different authors have approached citizen participation inside and outside formal structures of governance and in-between collaboration and advocacy. Similarly, it is essential to talk about the Right to the City and the implications of such a concept in participation and activism. The relevance of the RttC as a concept in this research is that it links the literature on citizen participation with Insurgent Citizenship (Holston, 2008; O'Donnell, 1999) and Transgressive Citizenship (Earle, 2012, 2017). Moreover, the RttC principles were shared among crucial actors and elements in the case of Manizales and Colombia, despite the varied interpretations and appropriations of the concept concerning the source. For instance, urban planning

regulatory frameworks in Colombia uses principles from the RttC to foster participation and the social responsibilities of private developers in the city. At the same time, groups contesting urban planning decisions find motivation in the RttC; and the concept is regularly referenced in their discourses.

2.2.1 Power in city-making

Discussing citizen participation, and the potential uses of digital media in transforming democratic city-making processes, is intrinsically related to developing a critical understanding of power in the city. Moreover, the evolution of planning theory has been driven mainly by understanding power through different perspectives, reflecting diverse approaches towards participation. In the words of Flyvbjerg and Richardson (2002), "power may become the acid-test of planning theory" (2002:44). In their view, discourses about power cannot be carelessly allocated to planning theories but should be consistent, demonstrating a good understanding of the complex realities around power dynamics. This link between understandings of power and planning approaches to participation accompanies other sections in this chapter and the analysis of findings presented in chapters 5 to 7.

The following quote from Manuel Castells (2016) frames how this research approaches the concept of power in city-making.

> *"[…] power is the key to understanding the primary source of social structuration and dynamics. I consider power relationships as the foundational relationships of society because they construct and shape the institutions and norms that regulate social life. Moreover, those social actors who exercise power construct the dominant institutions and organisations in any given society according to their own values and interests, in a configuration that is specific to each society—and which is derived from its history, geography, and culture. I understand power as the relational capacity that enables certain social actors to asymmetrically influence the decisions of other actors in ways that favour the empowered actors' will, interests, and values." (Castells, 2016:2)*

However, power is not only a concept used to understand perspectives from those who traditionally take decisions in society; power is constituted in a relational capacity, as presented by Castells above. Therefore, it can also be unsteady and potentially challenged. In order to complement the notion of power, this research draws on the idea that ordinary people and their actions to provide local change and improve their everyday life can challenge powerful and established structures of formality in the city (Bayat, 2004). This is an idea prevalent in literature on informality, citizenship and advocacy from the Global South, particularly from case studies in Latin America and South Asia (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004).

Moreover, in this research, I identify and discuss city-making and urban planning as different practices. As a reflection from Global South urban studies and literature contesting restrictive approaches of citizen participation in planning, city-making is understood here as an exercise including formal and informal ways to experience and transform the city. Here, informal acts of city-making - which abound in the everyday of Global South cities - are read as forms to challenge official power structures of planning.

In that sense, the pending task for the evolution of urban planning is to embrace the plurality and diversity in city-making to better respond locally to growing problems of social and spatial injustice (Frediani & Cociña, 2019; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004). This challenge primarily concerns planning practices with historical Rational Planning foundations, which nowadays present more collaborative and inclusive diversity principles in their visions and plans, without them having a significant impact on urban transformation. Such conditions briefly describe the state of urban planning in Colombia.

2.2.2 The legacy of Rational and Comprehensive planning practices in Colombia

The second half of the 20th century shaped the professional practice and regulatory frameworks for urban planning in Colombia. In particular, academics and experts influenced by the Modernist movement present in the International Congresses for Modern Architecture, and by North American and European discourses of Rational Planning, and particularly of Comprehensive Planning theories, played an important role (Ramirez Rios, 2011; Valdivia, 2000). Comprehensive Planning sought to

incorporate a systemic and organisation-oriented interest in the field, where territorial, socio-economic and geographic aspects could define urban development paths, as well as architectural principles that have traditionally ruled planning decisions so far (Ramirez Rios, 2011). Comprehensive Planning pretended to encompass all needed knowledge to provide answers to urban problematics, leaving decision-making exclusively in the hands of experts.

Since the late 40s, when urban planning started gaining a place in the country's political structures, professionals and academics have been trying to influence national politics and urban development plans in the country, according to their understanding of urban planning. In this regard, Ramirez Rios (2011) presents a detailed overview of urban planning discourses and influences in Colombia from the 60s to the 80s, which he claims could be projected to the first decade of 2000. In his work, Ramirez Rios (2011) divided professionals and academics discussing urban planning into three groups. These groups follow different discourses with a basis in the Modern movement and Comprehensive Planning:

The technical-methodological discourse: this discourse of procedural nature referred to an understanding of planning directly related to and driven by the national economy, where the future paths of cities should be envisioned, organised and guided from the national level. This vision led to creation of a national government body, the National Department of Planning (NDP). However, since the 80s, the NDP has mainly dealt with the national economy and social development plans, showing little interest in urban planning. The legacy of this discourse remains present in how urban planning considerations are defined from national levels and protected by a political institutionality, which translates into a lack of understanding of the local urban realities that such frameworks are trying to regulate.

The socio-technical discourse, also of procedural nature, claimed that urban planning needed to acknowledge local and regional socio-political contexts. In that sense, non-economic variables and citizens' opinions needed to be part of decision-making. The Colombian Association of Planning and the Centre of Planning and Urbanism, a research centre in a recognised university in Bogota (Universidad de Los Andes), led this vision. However, both organisations disappeared in the 80s without significantly affecting the politics of planning in Colombia.

The reactive discourse of the technical role of urban planning: this substantive discourse was a critique of the procedural understandings of planning, influenced by Castells, Harvey, Lefebvre and Latin American academics interpreting urban planning from a postcolonial approach, such as Fernando Cardoso, Jaime Valenzuela, Jorge Bernes and Emilio Pradilla, among others. This discourse significantly impacted academic groups and professional associations, claiming that urban planning in Colombia has not resulted from a deep understanding of the cities but a response to developmental goals derived from capitalist thinking. Ramirez Rios (2011) states that apart from academic outcomes, people influenced by this discourse have not managed to impact regulatory frameworks and everyday practices of planning. However, as seen in sections 2.2.4 and 4.2, the current Land Use Regulation in Colombia integrated principles of the RttC, which could be seen as a positive impact of this reactive discourse, independent of the conflicts such principles find in everyday life practices of planning.

In line with Comprehensive Planning, Manizales' governance and planning practices relate to what authors from the global South and North describe as technocratic (Watson, 2006; Carrion, 2007; Acebedo, 2014), where experts with technical and scientific knowledge became the main actors in decision-making and public management of cities. Here, political trust is placed in the hope that professional knowledge can inform governments in taking the best decisions in the public interest and towards social, economic and environmental sustainability (Acebedo, 2014).

Meanwhile, national regulatory frameworks - influenced by international standards - govern planning practices, decision-making protocols, citizen participation, and multimedia uses for citizen engagement, including online and offline means (as presented in sections 4.3 and 5.2.2). In general, national regulations such as the Colombian Political Constitution (*Constitución Política de Colombia 1991)*, the Land Use Regulation (*Ley 388 de 1997*), and the Digital Government Manual (MinTIC, 2018) highlight the need for good practices of citizen participation led by municipalities and government bodies. In this context, a clear link was evidenced between municipality-led participation and the legacy of Comprehensive Planning, with national regulation praising participation that often turns into temporary exercises controlled by local authorities. In such an approach, citizen participation is

a procedural exercise seeking to reach consensus (Arnstein, 1969) as a requirement from national regulations and good international practices. Moreover, these conditions do not give room to different forms of participation as legitimate means and contributions to city-making (Frediani & Cociña, 2019) (see Chapter 7).

Manizales' approaches to planning and citizen participation can be presented as the standard example of Latin American technocratic cities with a legacy of Rational Planning in their regulatory frameworks. In this scenario, political rulers proclaim technology, innovation, and citizen participation as crucial elements of city progress while neglecting the plural forms and politicising of planning and participation in practice.

2.2.3 Participation in city-making

This section sets out theoretical and empirical discussions on citizen participation, drawing on literature with an emphasis on the limitations and possibilities of citizen participation in city-making processes. A focus on the Global South is another element shared by some of the literature here.

Citizen participation can have different meanings and ranges of applications, and is commonly defined by the government sectors designing and controlling participatory exercises. Moreover, the idea of citizen participation to contest Rational Planning and traditionally closed structures of power in the city is not new. Since the 60s, authors like Davidoff (1965) and Arnstein (1969) have portrayed participation as means for transformation in planning. Davidoff (1965) believed in working within the system and giving better training to planners to improve their role in understanding multiple concerns and socio-economical conditions, aiming for better integration of participation in urban planning. Meanwhile, Arnstein (1969) had a more critical view of the limitations of participation within the existing practice of planning, and talked about the urgency of opening participation, giving more control to vulnerable communities to impact planning and developmental decisions about their territories.

Starting with Arnstein's work - *A ladder of citizen participation* (1969) - participation has also been critically exposed in the literature as a political flag in the urban project, or as involving superficial forms of inclusion, that only preserve and aggravate existing inequalities in the city (Hamdi, 2004, 2010; Cooke & Kothari,

2001; Miessen, 2010; Ferilli et al., 2016). These statements usually go along with a call for a redistribution of power in urban decision-making, to go beyond the rhetoric of participation, and be able to distinguish between the participatory process that simulates social inclusion and those making a sincere attempt to unpack the complexities of engagement, recognition and co-production of urban forms with different actors (Ferilli et al., 2016; Sassen, 2015; Frediani & Cociña, 2019). In Arnstein's words, "participation without the redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless". (Arnstein, 1969:216)

Participation in the literature for urban planning theories has been mostly divided into two main strands. One, from the West and North tradition, conversations started in the 60s about communicative and collaborative planning (Davidoff, 1965; Arnstein, 1969; Luck, 2003; Hamdi, 2010; Innes & Booher, 2010), where participation in practical terms, and for it to have an impact, should be, as Sanoff describes it, "rooted in trust, intimacy and consensus" (2010:19). And secondly, of a radical-agonistic tradition, following Chantal Mouffe's ideas of radical pluralism (Vigar et al., 2017; Swyngedouw, 2011), is a school of thought that proposes 'respectful dissensus' as a mechanism to emphasise the voice of the marginal groups contesting the status quo of power relations in the city. In that sense, Korn and Voida (2015; but also Watson, 2009) state that urban processes that require people to speak louder about their local problems are usually born from friction and disagreement. Because of that nature, sometimes, participatory scenarios need to strategically recreate those conditions of conflict within the democratic sphere to promote a change, impacting not only the pressing urban matter at the core of the friction, but also the power of decision-making in a broader sense (Miessen, 2010). "A relational understanding of planning that doesn't give space to conflict, one could argue, implies that usually some privileged positions will be dominant, denying the possibility of other voices to emerge." (Frediani & Cociña, 2019:147)

Taking a step further from post-collaborative debates, Frediani & Cociña (2019) propose in their paper' *Participation as Planning: strategies from the South to challenge the limits of planning'* "that the concept of participation, understood as a mode of planning, allow us to reflect and capture lessons learned from ongoing civic-led experiences in city-making" (2019:157). From the experiences presented in their

paper, the authors claim that citizen participation (including collective action and insurgent processes for urban transformation) needs to be approached not as a tool for planning, but as a way of planning; a practice that has been crucial in city-making despite being perceived as informal or non-institutionalised. This view resonates deeply with my research interests since the research questions emerged from a desire to explore the limitations and possibilities of city-making practices, between the institutional and the civic-led, towards constructing a more inclusive and socially just city. Such relationship becomes visible in section 2.6.1,and section 7.4, about the pursuit of legitimacy and the expanding of participation.

2.2.4 Reading The Right to the City in context

This section explores discussions about the Right to the City (RttC) in relation to the global South, the Colombian case and the digital aspects of participation and the city. The RttC, as mentioned before, is a key confluence point for discussions around participation, activism and advocacy coming from both, the literature and fieldwork. The following two sections on Transgressive Citizenship (section 2.2.5) and on Latin American Critical Thinking (section 2.2.6) complement the discussions of the RttC, especially for a better understanding of citizens' stances towards urban injustice and contestation to local authorities, with particular attention to contexts in the Global South.

<u>The Right to the City</u>

Given the geographical and political context and the standpoint of this research, the Right to the City (RttC) becomes a central concept in the literature review and analytical framework for this research project. As Marcuse (2014) suggests, the RttC has become a catchy phrase. There have been numerous interpretations of the concept, often contradictory, depending on the purposes and political stances of those reading and acting in the name of the RttC. That is why it is essential to set the way I read and apply the concept in this research. Therefore, drawing from Lefebvre (1996), Harvey (2008) and Soja (2010), the RttC is understood in this research as a common right, rather than an individual one, to collectively act in the construction and transformation of cities and their imaginaries, towards the socially and spatially just city. It is also understood as the right to access and use the information

generated to and by the urban forms (Lefebvre, 1996). Proponents of the RttC talk about proactive citizenship that reacts; a city that answers back to injustice in decision-making processes in urban development (Sassen, 2015).

Furthermore, the research participants were familiar with the RttC concept and used them in their discourses, often referencing ideas from Lefebvre's work. The fact that research participants specifically referred to Lefebvre's work, made the use of this concept even more significant for the research. In a way, the strategic and particular use of the RttC by vulnerable civic groups can be seen as synergetic to Lefebvre's ideas, which he formulated as a revolutionary call, aiming at a wider transformation of what cities should and could be; "the city as a metaphor for a new way of life" (Marcuse, 2014:5). Here, the local appropriation of the RttC concept by collective action needs to be understood as a step towards that ideal transformation envisioned by Lefebvre, "one with more limited claims but perhaps also more urgent ones" (Marcuse, 2014:6).

Relevant texts were used to complement and ground Lefebvre and Harvey's ideas into this research, both geographically but also in terms of the connections between the urban and new communication technologies. In order to explore the RttC in the geographic context, I reviewed the work of authors like Lopes de Souza (2010), Carrion and Erazo (2016) and Walker, Bau Carvalho and Diaconescu (eds, 2020). Their work presents a critical analysis of possible interpretations of the RttC concept in the Latin American context, taking into account complex political arrangements, social movements dynamics, and the influences of regional epistemologies in local reinterpretations of the RttC. Moreover, some Colombian authors such as Naranjo and Hurtado (2002), Torres-Tovar (2015), Ramirez (2008), Duque (2015) and Acebedo (2014) discuss how informality, internal displacement, corruption, violence and post-conflict in the country are shaping urban processes in Colombian cities. These readings became essential in grounding the discussion in the local circumstances of Manizales. Finally, texts in the book 'Citizen's right to the digital city' (Foth et al., 2015), as well as the work from Shaw and Graham (2017), explore and argue different roles of technology in place-making and activism, around Lefebvre and Harvey's ideas of more socially inclusive and democratic ways to shape the city.

More than fifty years have passed since Lefebvre's publication with the title in French "Le Droit a la Ville" ([1968] 1996). Since then, numerous authors have drawn on his texts, discussing his ideas, complementing them from different perspectives, or grounding them into different geographical contexts. Lefebvre's main concerns about the study and practice or urbanism and planning keep being relevant today. In 1968 he claimed that urbanism erroneously studied the city with a method borrowed from specialised sciences, and very distant from an anthropological understanding of the complexity of social needs. In this method, the city is seen as a virtual element, to be an object of study. Moreover, it is a science where only individual needs seemed to matter, a simplistic reduction of the city as a static object easy enough to be approached and managed from a few professionals. According to authors such as Carrion and Erazo (2016), De Souza (2006, 2009, 2010), Harvey (2012), and Gasca Salas (2017) those two aspects persist at the core of Latin American cities' social critique. Colombian authors like Duque (2015) and Acebedo (2014) share this perception in Colombian cities today, and in the context of Manizales as well.

Additionally, the concept of 'spatial justice', closely related to the RttC from Lefebvre and proposed by Soja (2010) becomes an integral element in how this research approaches citizen participation, and contestation movements concerning urban planning. The geographical, or spatial, aspect of urban struggles is a fundamental part of understanding and analysing structural socio-economic problems in the city. According to Soja (2010), the spatial element is "a vital part of how justice and injustice are socially constructed and evolve over time" (Soja, 2010:1) and it cannot be separated from the studies of exclusion and discrimination in cities. Moreover, Soja (2010) argues that geographical conditions of resources distribution, services and access to urban-life benefits should be equitable and considered as a human right. Thus, spatial justice serves to narrow this research's focus on urban conflicts originated by spatial injustice, resulting in civic movements claiming the RttC. Also drawing from Soja's work example (2010), social processes and relationships among urban actors play a central role in exploring urban spatial conflicts found in the field. These serve as a common ground to link discussion dealing with the various topics studied in this research (i.e. citizen participation, urban planning, digital innovation and local uses of digital media). The sub-cases of study presented in Chapter 4 illustrate this focus.

In terms of political stances and collective-action strategies, Harvey (2013) talks about the "urban revolution" as a crucial element in demanding spatial justice and exercising the RttC. He explains that it occurs, even if momentarily, when alternatives to the formalised city are proposed, giving space for something different to happen in the city. Here, it seems that Harvey is drawing on Lefebvre's concept of heterotopia (Lefebvre, 2014b), as spaces of ambiguity and difference, where the excluded are inevitably interwoven with the rest of the city. "This 'something different' does not necessarily arise out of a conscious plan, but more simply out of what people do, feel, sense, and come to articulate as they seek meaning in their daily lives." (Harvey, 2013:xvii).

Using the RttC as the lenses through which participation in a Colombian city is analysed, allows this research to broaden the boundaries of what can be understood as participation, opening the scope to citizen initiatives and urban activism seeking alternative ways to construct the city.

The interpretation of the Right to the City in Colombia

During the five decades since the initial publication of the RttC by Lefebvre ([1968] 1996), the concept has been adopted, and sometimes misappropriated, by government programs, NGOs and urban planning policies. Two examples of the latter can be found in Brazil (with the 2001 City Statute) and Colombia (with the Land Use Planning Regulation, Law 388 of 1997). In the case of Colombia, the Land Use Regulation was constructed upon principles extracted from the Right to the City, such as inclusion, equity, participation in urban planning, access to decent and safe housing, and favouring of the common good over private interests, enhancing the social functions of property and investment in the city (Sanabria, 2016). However, there are several inconsistencies between this fact and the regulation's implementation (Sanabria, 2016). Urban development of Colombian cities depends mostly on private investment. So the shaping of cities ends up being a result of a commercial transaction between the city, landowners and real estate companies. Other key actors in such transactions are the Urban Development Enterprises, which are public-private partnerships, found in the biggest cities in Colombia, in charge of developing significant infrastructure and macro-projects. These companies usually work independently of local Planning Offices and respond to politic and private

interests at regional and national levels (Acebedo, 2014). In this context, there are hardly any chances for the common good to prevail over private interests, in the practices of urban planning and development, thereby, producing significant inconsistencies between the regulation's conceptual background and its implementation.

My research interest departs from the same point where Harvey (2008) states that the capitalist city model generates a broad discontent with the forms of urban life. The majority of people in Latin American cities, which also means the lowest income communities, face struggles related to the places they inhabit and how they experience their cities daily, in terms of transportation, access and quality of housing and basic services, poor local risk-management strategies, uses of public space and green areas, and security, among other aspects. Their priorities can hardly compete with the priorities identified by profit-driven cities, which seems to be at the core of development models in Latin American cities (Acebedo, 2014; Carrion & Erazo 2016). In this model, mega projects and large impact projects usually take priority over development projects with local and social impacts (Acebedo, 2014), or neighbours initiatives. Harvey (2008) focus his discussion largely in the problems derived from housing speculation at city scales. In line with the above, this research acknowledges that land speculation for private housing development was one of the leading causes of conflict between citizens and planning decisions in Manizales. However, exploring the housing problem in Manizales goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

Harvey (2008) claims that the solution needs to start with a mass movement and strong left-party leadership, in opposition to the neoliberal state by nature. Nevertheless, the political situation in the last decades in Colombia makes these two conditions harder to achieve, particularly for social movements at city scales. Given the conditions of the political context in Colombia, I found more affinity with Lopes de Souza's view (2010) on the RttC in the Brazilian case. He states that social movements need to work without denying the state for tactical reasons. While being cautious and contesting the status quo, social movements sometimes work "together with the state", "despite the state" and essentially "against the state", negotiating, seeking to influence in public policies, putting the government under pressure, and in

cases of radical opposition, even building parallel systems and networks (Lopes de Souza, 2010:326). Lopes de Souza (2010) also critiques Harvey's reasoning behind Marxist-Leninist parties being the ones who can only lead just forms of transformation in society. It is important to highlight that Colombia is redefining its political landscape, after many decades of internal conflict. The left party is still – unfairly – perceived by many as connected, and even responsible, to the violence caused by illegal revolutionary armed forces. Thus, Harvey's 'solution' in Colombia might require a more flexible and localised approach, and the consideration of multiple factors, and actors, in a changing and complex political scene.

<u>Right to the digital city</u>

Integrating communication technology into urban discourses advocating for more just and inclusive cities is not optional (Shaw & Graham, 2017). In words of Sassen: "Powerful actors can remake cities in their image. But cities talk back. They do not take it sitting down. Sometimes, it may take decades, and sometimes, it is immediate" (Sassen, 2015:253). In Latin American contexts, as cities are talking back immediately by different means, including social media, the big question is if that city' speech' is being heard and integrated into urban transformation. If so, we need to ask what is being heard, what is not, and by whom?

Foth et al. (2015) question whether a democracy loaded with content and transferring of information is by itself a healthy media ecosystem. Is that the desired participatory culture promoted by the creation of the Internet, and the "Web 2.0"? Millions of people are increasingly creating, publishing, modifying and sharing content, in the shape of various types of information every second. However, an overload of information does not necessarily translate into a better quality of content. Besides, the information everyone receives is often being tailored - using individual preferences and trends of uses - by the largest groups in the digital media economy, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and Amazon. They use algorithms to allegedly make content searched or shared more relevant to the receiver end. However, that optimisation of content responds to marketing strategies, turning into sellable data and other profitable services for the companies (Foth et al., 2015). Thus, Foth et al. (2015), drawing from Lotan (2014) warns that although we feel connected with more and different points of view, we are mostly receiving more of the same. Furthermore,

problems on veracity and accountability of the information shared cannot be blamed entirely on media companies anymore, but on ourselves, as users of services, and producers and publishers of content (Lotan, 2014).

The digital Right to the City, according to Shaw and Graham (2017), needs to deal not only with local context and uses of technology, but also with information being mediated by global powerful digital monopolies, as in the case of Google. These authors question the interests, accountability and effects of Google's power in digital communication and production of information, at local scales and in everyday life. Stressing how "Lefebvre's calls for a right to information, access or participation are problematised by the nature of ICTs – connective technologies that seem to offer some form of use-value, but ultimately fixate on the commodification and simulation of social relations. It would seem that the technology needs first to be re-appropriated" (Elden 2004:152 in Shaw & Graham, 2017: 918).

Similarly, Foth et al. "collectively call for claiming back the citizen's right to the digital city" (2015:vi). They seek to deviate the attention from "smart cities" and into "smart citizens", as active co-producers of urban forms and not merely as users, residents or building occupants (or how designers and urban planners traditionally refer to citizens), recognising their imperative role in participating in shaping their cities. The authors believe there are opportunities in the interaction of urban interfaces and local uses of media to overcome pre-established filters of information, and to break established power relationships in the city (Foth et al., 2015; Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016).

This thesis is concerned with the citizen's right to the digital city (Foth et al., 2015), alongside spatial justice, an interest shared by authors referenced in this section, and other scholars who focus on 'Digital Civics' (Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016). However, the literature reviewed revealed the lack of consensus around a term for socially just approaches to ICT access and digital services in the relationship between citizens and governments. 'Digital rights' seems too broad a term, while 'data justice' is commonly associated with rights over sellable data produced by users of various digital applications. Moreover, bearing the increasingly blurred nature of online and offline daily practices, this thesis extends the interpretation of 'social justice' to encompass justice around digital data, information and access.

2.2.5 Transgressive citizenship

This section introduces the concept of Transgressive Citizenship from Earle's work (2012, 2017), as it became central in this research analysis and set the basis for identifying forms of Creative Transgressive Citizenship in Manizales (presented in section 5.3.3).

Before presenting the concept, it is important to clarify that 'citizenship' in this research is understood, following Lefebvre's work (1996), as the political right to belonging to a community, and a place, based on living and experiencing the everyday of territory by an individual, independent of formal membership protocols established by the government. In this context, all inhabitants of the city have the right to participate in making decisions about the production of urban forms and urban life. Drawing from Purcell (2003), this right also extends to decisions concerning the funding and planning, as well as the socio-economic and environmental impacts of urban development.

As discussed in the previous sections about the RttC and participation approaches in planning, there is a tradition of work that explores the tensions between planning authorities and citizens claiming social justice and inclusion in urban decision-making. Moreover, some central confluences among authors examining such tensions are the relevance of insurgency in urban political contestation, and the need for recognition of bottom-up experiences in city-making (Lefebvre, 1996; Arnstein, 1969, Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Harvey, 2008; Watson, 2009; Soja, 2010; Miessen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2011; Marcuse, 2014; Ferilli et al., 2016; Sassen, 2015; Korn & Voida, 2015; Frediani & Cociña, 2019). However, in terms of insurgency and lawfulness, the experience of citizen participation does not seem to be a matter of black or white, particularly in political contexts praising participation – at least in principle. Conflicting positions can create different types of relations between citizen movements and governments, beyond pure insurgency, depending on socio-political, cultural and environmental contexts (Hillier, 2000).

In the search to identify such relations, Earle's work (2012, 2017) studies social housing movements and the RttC in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and she proposes an understanding of citizenship that operates in transgressive – rather than in insurgent ways, where social movements ambiguously act inside and outside formal protocols

of city-making. Earle studied the case of building occupations in central Sao Paulo by a social movement claiming the right to housing for those living in precarious conditions (2012). This group wanted to highlight the vast amount of empty residential buildings in central Sao Paulo, in comparison with the growing housing deficit affecting poorer communities and displacing people to the margins of the city. Brazil's Constitution state that people have the right to housing, as well as the right to own property. Moreover, since 2001 Brazil has a land-use regulation called the City Statute, which was designed following the Right to the City, seeking equality in access to land. Among other things, the City Statute demands the social function of property. In this context, for the social movement studied by Earle (2012), the act of occupying buildings was not entirely illegal since they only occupied buildings that were abandoned, therefore, buildings that were not fulfilling the social function required by national regulations. Besides highlighting significant faults by city planning and local governance, occupations were also showing a practical solution to the housing deficit in Sao Paulo. Following Earle, such 'transgression' was already creating a new type of relationship between citizens and city rules, one where urban rights, as stated by regulatory frameworks could serve as common ground. According to Earle:

> *"[…], the term 'transgression' indicates a crossing of the limits of expected or accepted behaviour. In the arts, transgression is associated with experimentation and unconventionality; it is a way of contesting orthodox codes of practice and suggesting new ways of interpreting reality. Building occupations are transgressive in this sense, since they propose a new way of conceptualising social justice in the city. They contest the underlying social codes whereby the space of the peripheries is reserved for and identified with the poor in favelas and irregular settlements, or in poorly serviced low-quality social housing on the very edge of the city's limits." (Earle, 2012:122)*

Earle's proposal originates from and challenges Holston's (2008) historical analysis of Brazilian urban social movements as expressions of 'insurgent citizenship'; acting against or outside formal structures of power. This is a concept that has been often applied, as well, in the literature to the study of various contexts in and out of Latin America (Earle, 2012:100; Miraftab, 2016). Earle recognises the relevance of

Holston's contribution to housing and citizens' rights debates in Brazil, depicting the contradiction of citizenship that is formally accepted but marginalised in practice by issues of race, and socio-economic status (Earle, 2012). In that sense, Earle's work suggests a transition, more than a negation, from insurgent to transgressive citizenship. She recognises the fundamental role that the politics of rights has in urban movements claiming spatial justice (Earle, 2012). Finding support on regulatory frameworks, therefore enriches and advances the position of citizenship, from entirely insurgent towards a transgressive approach.

> *"This concept [transgressive citizenship] is useful for two distinct but overlapping reasons. First, it helps to underscore the importance of text-based rights for social movements of the urban poor in Brazil, in particular the City Statute and the 1988 Constitution. […] It is through reference to law that the housing movements set out their claims on the state and critique incumbent governments for failing to uphold these. And it is the existence of constitutional and federal laws that enshrine the right to the city and the right to housing that permit the movements to justify transgressive building and land occupations. The ambiguous nature of the metaphorical space occupied by the movements, between the illegal and the legal, allows the movements to redefine their relationship with the state. This suggests, following Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the emancipatory potential of text-based law. Second, the transgressive element of the housing movements' practice sets them apart from activists who limit their demands to the fulfilment of human rights in the city. While the guarantee of the right to housing in São Paulo is one part of the movements' strategy, the transgressive nature of occupations is also a way to critique socio-spatial segregation and to present a vision of an alternative future for the city." (Earle, 2017:261)*

Earle presents 'transgressive citizenship' as clearly linked to the RttC, and despite that 'insurgent citizenship' is also linked to the RttC (Holston, 2008), the difference is that in 'transgressive citizenship' the relation is being updated, recognising that the RttC has also affected regulations for urban development and citizen participation (as in the cases of Brazil and Colombia). Therefore, social movements use that fact as an opportunity to strengthen their demands for social justice and inclusion in

planning. In using regulatory frameworks in promoting their causes, social movements acknowledge to some extent the legitimacy of formal structures of governance. However, in practice – particularly for housing and urban social movements – their actions can be seen as informal, and as a challenge to the power of local planning authorities (I.e., appropriation of vacant land and buildings).

In this sense, the work of Earle (2012, 2017) on 'transgressive citizenship' gives this research a more relatable conceptual grounding – in comparison with 'insurgent citizenship' - to explore local interpretations of the RttC, practices of citizen participation and collective action in the case of Manizales (as further explored in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3).

Moreover, from Harvey's reading of the RttC, as explored in section 2.2.4, it seems insurgency would be the ideal political stance for civic movements contesting injustice in the city. However, as stated in section 2.2.4 from the complex political context in Colombia, citizens acting in the name of the RttC might not necessarily come from a position that delegitimises the state, and depending on the scale and social capital, sometimes social movements even find allies in local government. In connection to this, there is literature exploring some informal relations and the social capital of contesting networks to influence decision-making processes in the city by unofficial means (Hillier, 2000; Acebedo, 2013; Ramirez; 2008). By exploring strategies other than pure insurgency, such work contributes to the relevance of understanding Transgressive Citizenship as a richer approach towards the contestation of planning decisions.

2.2.6 Latin American Critical Thinking in urban socio-territorial movements

To complement the set of concepts guiding this research about transgressive citizenship and the RttC, it is important to recognise the epistemological influences and trends of thought present in socio-territorial movements in Latin America, and the Global South. Moreover, reflections from this field served to unpack the complexities, found in the case study, in the history and practices of social movements in the city, as well as their relationships with local government and academia.

Latin American Critical Thinking (LACT) is a trend of thought broadly recognised and used by social sciences taught, or situated, in that continent's region. Locally-applied discussions originated from postcolonialism, Marxism and poststructuralism characterise it (Ocampo Gonzales, 2018), while prioritising the endogenous creation of knowledge. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2018) also refers to this as the Epistemologies from the South. A typical pattern from the LACT is the escape from abstract universalisms while placing the interest in unravelling social struggles that belongs to Latin American territories (Roberto Follari, in Ocampo Gonzales, 2018).

In Colombia, authors like Orlando Fals Borda (1996), and Arturo Escobar (2016), among many other, are representatives of the LACT and have developed concepts and research methodologies based on national scenarios, with a clear interest in local practices and social transformations (Escobar, 2016). Their research integrates rurality, indigenous lifestyles and ontologies, the value of non-human elements in the territory, conflict and post-conflict. Concepts like 'pluriverse' and 'thinking-feeling' lead recent discussions in the field (Escobar, 2015 and 2016) in the pursuit of understanding regional clashes between the difference, and the traditional Eurocentric structures to make sense of it.

Pluriverse is a concept drawn from the political ontology of the Mexican Zapatista movement (Escobar, 2016). "These trend […] stem from the proposition that many contemporary struggles for the defence of territories and difference are best understood as ontological struggles, and as struggles over a world where many worlds fit, as the Zapatista put it; they aim to foster the pluriverse." (Escobar, 2016:13).

Thinking-feeling (*Sentipensar* in Spanish) is a term "reported by Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda in 1984 as the living principle of the riverine and swamp communities of Colombia's Caribbean coast. They imply the art of living based on thinking with both heart and mind. *Sentipensamiento* was later popularised by the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano as the ability found among popular classes to act without separating mind and body, reason and emotion." (Escobar, 2016:14).

LACT as a school of thought, and the concepts described above, are relevant in this research because of their ability to penetrate everyday language of social movements in Latin America, and specifically for this study, the socio-territorial movements studied in Manizales. This is a situation that reveals a strong link between academia (social sciences in particular) and social struggles in and out of the city.

Moreover, in an International Seminar of Contemporary Thinking, Escobar explains the concept of 'communities in resistance' that serves to understand the origins of non-capitalist, non-state, and non-liberal community forms of power and organisation (MAEID, 2015). He highlights how this concept has gained ground in Manizales with collaborative practices and Patricia Botero's work[3], who was an important actor and collaborator during this research's fieldwork.

2.3 Communication and collective action

Following the previous section, which set up a landscape of planning approaches, citizenship and civic contestation relevant to the context studied, this section narrows the focus on collective action for urban transformation. In order to talk about this, first, it is essential to recognise how important issues around communication are in city-making, particularly in the digital era. Understanding communication dynamics and particularities at the city scale assist us in unpacking issues around power unbalance, misrepresentation, exclusion and manipulation, among other situations affecting democratic processes in the city. The second part of this section examines notions on collective action, which are intentionally presented as separate from section 2.2.3 on citizen participation. This division – between citizen participation and collective action – respond to observations found both, in the literature and during fieldwork. However, it is important to clarify that this research stands on the idea that there should not be a separation between these notions, when they are – in principle – claiming inclusion and distribution of power and responsibilities in decision making.

---

[3] Patricia Botero is a recognised academic and representative of the LACT in Manizales (Botero-Gómez, 2015). She was a member of the socio-territorial movement in San Jose, and also a supporter for the other two subcases studied in this research.

Moreover, they are intrinsically connected in the experience of urban life in the everyday.

2.3.1 Communication for participation

Through his prolific work, Manuel Castells (2009; 2016; Castells & Dawsonera, 2007) features the relevance and connection of communication with power struggles in societies. Following this idea, it is necessary to acknowledge communication issues in the theory and practices around citizen participation and collective action. After all, one of the main goals of such processes is to open the discussion of decision-making to include the so far excluded actors, diverse perspectives and alternative ideas in building the city.

Regarding communication systems, participation – in its practised form of state-initiated co-production (Watson, 2014; Frediani & Cociña, 2019) – can be understood as a process coordinated by competent authorities seeking citizen engagement, and it is based on deliberation to reach consensus among different parts. Other forms of participation and collective action present in the city (i.e., activism and independent citizen initiatives), intentionally challenging communicative processes and relations of power in city planning, can employ antagonist mechanisms of communication in which reaching a consensus with authorities is not the final outcome (Miraftab, 2018). However, public deliberation seems to be the prevailing communication process for democracy in cities interested in participation (Ercan et al., 2019). Moreover, the expanding volume of communication nowadays, both online and offline, poses not only new opportunities for democratic processes but also challenges to deliberation and participation (Ercan et al., 2019; Bennett, 2003). According to Ercan et al. (2019), to make the most of the potential for collaboration in this era of 'communicative plenty', citizen participation must provide spaces designated for three necessary functions:

- The sequence needs to start with spaces for expression, as the place for gathering and amplifying multiple voices.
- This is followed by spaces for listening – with an emphasis on the reflective function. This is where the difference between talking and deliberation lays. Deliberation requires people listening to other points of view, reasons and

positions, to then "reconsider their preferences in the light of new information and arguments. [...] and a reflective willingness to change one's mind in response to what one hears" (Goodin, 2003, in Ercan et al., 2019:25).

- Finally, there need to be spaces for the decision-making function, where outcomes of the reflective function can impact urban and social transformation in the city. This call for the function of reflection in participatory processes is also proposed by literature stating the limitations of collaborative planning (Brownhill & Parker, 2010).

Understanding how deliberative systems works helped identify and interpret obstacles found in the field, in terms of the interactions and communication between different actors (i.e., urban collectives, socio-territorial movements, local authorities, academia and third sector) in various scenarios for participation. Moreover, questioning the existence and functionality of the three spaces, before mentioned, for deliberation in participation contributed to the analysis for all the research questions in this study.

2.3.2 From collective action to socio-territorial movements in Latin America

The critical understanding of participation suggested from the previous sections, and the evidence suggesting that several forms of citizen initiatives are generally excluded from formal practices of participation in the city, makes it crucial to talk about collective action as well. Borrowing the idea of thinkable and unthinkable politics from Elwood and Lawson (2018) helps understand the importance of differentiating participation and collective action. In that way, citizen participation processes led by government bodies can be understood as 'thinkable', and collective action – showing alternative realities by citizen-led initiatives – as 'unthinkable' manners of constructing the city. Both processes are always dialectically related and revealing issues in power relations.

This is not to say that this research supports the separation in practice between participation and collective action as an ideal path to constructing the just city. Instead, talking about these efforts in a differentiated manner is a critical intention to reflect on what was found in the case study, and in the Global South literature (Frediani & Cociña, 2019); a profound disconnection between government and

citizen-led initiatives, even when sharing intentions related to democracy, social inclusion and justice in city-making. Literature that highlights such disconnection also calls to recognise what is outside of hegemonic structures of power in society, as in the work of Earle (2012, 2017), Frediani and Cociña (2019), Elwood and Lawson (2018), among others. What happens at the formal society's margins is telling stories about what goes wrong with normative protocols (i.e., urban planning regulations and traditional forms of participation).

Consequently, in this research, the concept of collective action includes a wide range of practices initiated by citizens, usually responding to that disconnection between normative protocols for city-making and pressing issues of social and spatial justice.

Collective action

The concept of collective action in this research comes from two interesting readings; one from complexity theory, and one from socio-political literature grounded in the Latin American case.

Collective action in this research is connected to the notions of self-organisation, which in turn, come from complexity theories and the idea of 'complex adaptive systems' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011:109). This refers to recognising social processes being built from a wide variety of elements and interactions, which respond to three key features – from complexity theory: non-linearity, coevolution and self-organisation (Teisman et al., 2009 in Boonstra & Boelens, 2011:109). "Non-linearity refers to the idea that processes are always subject to dynamics and (unforeseen) change. Coevolution refers to how different systems or subsystems influence each other, either opposing or synchronising each other. Self-organisation refers to the limits imposed on the steering capacity of a single actor by the autonomy of other actors and their ability to behave and organise as they choose" (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011:109). In connection with that, and drawing from political science approaches, collective action "posits rational social actors who regularly assess the actions of other to inform their own decision to cooperate" (DeMarrais & Earle, 2017:183). The decision to join others and cooperate is intrinsically formed by the tension with an individual's self-interest. Thus, cooperation – as an individual decision – relies on trust, local culture, ideology, social context, identity, as well as

past experiences and possible benefits and risks (DeMarrais & Earle, 2017:185). These ideas drawn from the literature, assist this research in forming the concept of collective action, which, given local conditions of the case study, is a concept much more compatible with how civic collectives were perceived, as they preferred not to classify themselves as activists, foundations or neighbourhood associations, but rather as members of collective action.

Collective action in Latin America

Recognised authors in Latin American Political Sciences, such as Garreton M. (2002), Touraine (1997) and Gonzalez Gil (2006), acknowledge that there are particularities in the regional political history that requires a different understanding of collective action, diverting from the most predominant paradigms from the USA and Europe. In that Latin American scenario, collective action is not often directed against a clear antagonist, as it seemed to be the case in classic social struggles (Garreton M., 2002). Instead, collective action in Latin America seems to refer mostly to a variety of forms of resistance and mobilisations more autonomous, less focused on political parties, that recognise and build relationships with institutions, and are more motivated towards sectorial inclusions and partial victories, rather than radical global change (Garreton M., 2002:22). Additionally, authors from the Latin American Critical Thinking current, such as Fals Borda (1984), De Sousa Santos (2014), and Escobar (2016), highlight the need to approach collective action in Latin America through the understanding of endogenous epistemologies, or epistemologies from the South (De Sousa Santos, 2014), which are a consequence of postcolonial thinking, with a focus on indigenous and rural communities, the production of popular knowledge, the natural environment protection and the territorial rights.

From the various readings mentioned in this section, this research understands collective action as the social processes of resistance and change, usually characterised by certain stability in time, some level of organisation – without limits of categorisation, oriented towards conservation or transformation of one or several spheres in society, and pursuing localised and concrete changes before radical global change. Collective action can take many forms, including citizens' demands and mobilisations, and according to Garreton M. (2002), social movements is one type of collective action.

<u>Socio-territorial movements</u>

The concept of socio-territorial movements has been central in the last decades of Latin American literature around socio-political struggles, found in the literature from the decade of 1990, initially about social movements in Brazil (Raffestin, 1993; Fernandes, 2005). This concept initially referred to social resistance concerning the governing and collective rights over indigenous and rural territories. However, socio-territorial movements can also indicate social struggles in urban areas.

Drawing from Fernandes (2005), it is essential to differentiate between the use of 'space' and 'territory', and between 'socio-spatial' or 'socio-territorial' movements in the case of this research. The author argues that territory is a type of space, which has been produced and sustained by a social relationship around power. The territory is then a space of social conflict (Fernandes, 2005:3). Under this understanding, the territory can refer to the geographical boundaries of a neighbourhood, or a city, as in the cases studied in this research.

2.4 Everyday digital media for participation

The integration of active citizenship, self-organisation and civic engagement in urban planning are increasingly getting higher in political agendas around the world, through conceptions known as 'Big Society' and 'localism' (United Kingdom), the 'participation society' (The Netherlands) or 'do-it-yourself urbanism' in the United States, and other countries around the world (Kleinhans et al., 2015: 241). As a consequence, more and more place-based technology developments, and new uses for social media are rising in many cities, both from the planning authorities but also from bottom-up initiatives (Kleinhans et al., 2015). Some of these experiences are being researched and published by different authors, enriching the global discussions about this trending topic. However, many of them agree on the need for more empirical research about the impacts of new ICTs in democratic and participatory dynamics in various contexts. (Foth et al., 2015, 2011; Hemmersam et al., 2015; Bugs, 2014; Horelli et al., 2015; Messeter, 2015). In that regard, Edwin Cruz-Rodriguez (2014) explores the relation among the roles, benefits and limitations of digital media concerning politics and social movements in Colombia. In Cruz-Rodriguez' text, the relationship between digital media and social movements

is framed between two extreme perceptions; the technology determinism, which magnifies the impact of ICT over social movements, and the social determinism, reducing possible impacts to their minimum. (Unas, 2010:261 in Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014:119). His national context analysis served to critically review and complement reflections made in this thesis and presented in chapter 6.

2.4.1 Overview of deployments

In order to give an account of the different roles of digital media in participation, this section introduces technology categories that are of particular interest in this research. At the same time, each category questions the deployments' potential to influence participatory dynamics in their local contexts. For this purpose, I use the categories described by Kleinhans et al. (2015), to group and define the different types of technology presented in this section. Their article aims to offer a critical overview of empirical research in the field, and to explore effects of social media and mobile technologies on citizens' engagement (Kleinhans et al., 2015), which is a particular objective in an overview of this kind, explaining the affinity with the purpose of my research.

In addition to portraying digital media uses, I am interested in identifying their potential to promote change between local power arrangements. This question would be further explored in section 2.5.1. Drawing from Korn & Voida (2015), digital infrastructures of civic engagement represent a challenge for the design and development of ICTs due to the contesting motivations at play (Korn & Voida:145). The authors maintain that such challenge needs to be assumed avoiding complacency and reinforcement of the status quo; on the contrary, it needs to promote engagement through everyday life and frictional design. As explained in section 2.4.3, the importance of acting in everyday life is an act to contest how participation has been traditionally managed; through privileged moments of interaction, or designed instances where people can have their say. Instead, drawing on Lefebvre, the authors state that the rights of citizens who experience civic life occurring every day need to be represented in the same spaces and time. Moreover, frictional design can make people question the granted power relationships in the city while provoking citizens to assume more active roles in their communities (Korn & Voida:146). As presented in section 2.2.3, authors promoting

participation that embrace dissensus, do not see friction as a necessary source of irreconcilable conflict, but as a strategy to promote dialogue, question normalised structures of power and promote engagement.

Based on Korn & Voida (2015) reflection, I use their matrix on "Approaches to designing for civic engagement" (see Figure 1), which can help to situate the type of civic engagement promoted by different technology deployments, going from privileged moments to more ubiquitous interactions (in their Everydayness scale), and from processes framed by consensus or contestation (as Paradigms of political participation).

Paradigms of political participation

	Consensus / convenience	Contestation/critique
Privileged moments	Deliberation	Disruption
Product-residue	Situated Participation	Friction

(Everydayness)
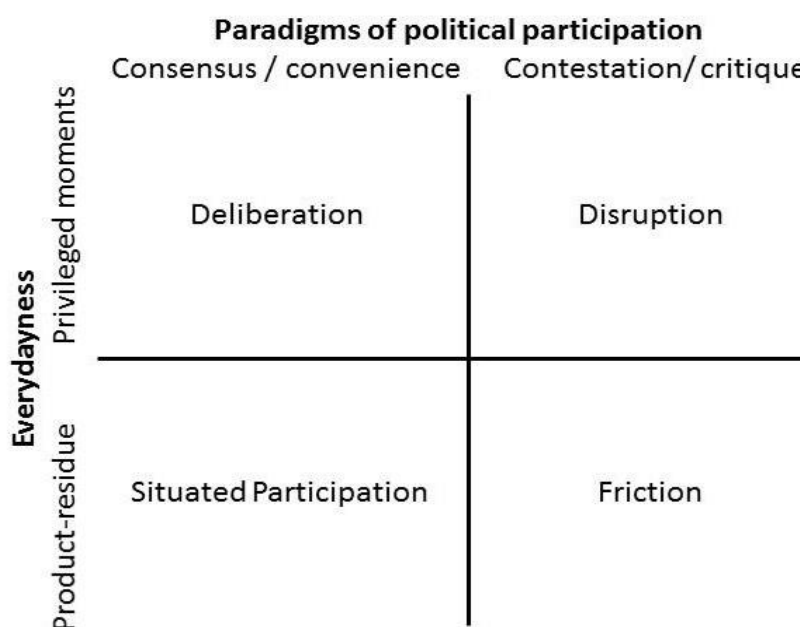
Figure 1 Approaches to designing for civic engagement. (Korn & Voida, 2015)

Beyond GIS

This category includes uses from Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to Geo-visualisation interfaces (Google Maps, Open Street Map), and volunteered geographic information (VGI) (Kleinhans *et al.*, 2015), where people generate and publicise their own maps and geographic information. Elwood and Leszczynski (2013) critically expose the new meanings and potential of technology beyond GIS, when software gets more accessible, less technical oriented and with better visualisations and more possibilities for interaction and creation of content. Mapping

tools can be employed for collaborative projects under consensus, for example, to gather local knowledge. However, it can also be used for contestation, and making the marginal city visible to others, as in the case of MapKibera, and similar projects. (MapKibera, 2009).

Social media

Also referred to in the literature as virtual networks, this covers computer-mediated services for social networking, allowing sharing, creation, edition and visualisation of texts and audio-visual content. (Dourish and Satchell, 2011). Some of the most popular services explored in the literature – during this research – were Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google +, YouTube, Telegram, BlogSpot, among others.

In words of Castells, social media or "mass self-communication" is "Self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many who communicate with many. This is a new communication realm […], whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive." (2009:70). However, this optimistic view from Castells is challenged by literature raising issues of control of flows by algorithms on services like Facebook and Instagram, as presented in section 5.2.1.

Government bodies, at national and local levels, have also turned to social media in the last decade and, according to Mossberger et al. (2013), the primary three purposes behind this are related to representation, citizen engagement and networking with the public (Mossberger et al.: 353).

Social media has been used in self-organisation around politics, community projects, and advocacy at global and local levels (Bennett, 2003; Shirky, 2009; Castells, 2009; Dourish & Satchell, 2011; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2015; Tufekci, 2017), based on the argument that it rapidly reaches larger numbers in more interactive ways, which eventually builds a networked environment appropriated for decision-making. However, the same authors exposing social media's potential in urban processes, also acknowledge the lack of connection between online planning enthusiasm and effective mediums for participation (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014; Tufekci, 2017). As Evans-Cowley and Hollander warn: "this newfound power to democratise planning

processes is not absolute and must be approached with caution." (2015: 405).
Another precaution commonly highlighted in the literature is that the same features
that make social media arguably promising to support collective action (i.e.,
amplification of messages, easy diffusion and distribution with minimum filters,
growth of networks despite – sometimes – weak political ties and commitment at
individual levels), can make it vulnerable to problems of control, decision-making and
collective identity." (Bennett, 2003:143).

A crucial aspect of social media lays around the creation and sharing of content.
Now that the digital exchange of information abounds, it would be too easy to
overlook that most of the things shared on social media have been created by other
user, and perhaps with no other interest than sharing a thought, and idea, or a joke.
Shirky (2010) explores this phenomenon in his book titled Cognitive Surplus (Shirky,
2010). Similarly, other authors such as Denisova (2019) and Zegada Claure &
Guardia Crespo (2018) have recognised the socio-political importance of studying
what is behind people's impulses of selfless producing and sharing content online. A
situation that reflects not only a transformation in the ways of producing information,
but in the construction of new political, and cultural, creative subjects coming from a
global crisis of trust – in institutions, democracy, values and notions of truth (Zegada
Claure & Guardia Crespo, 2018:15).

Digital government (e-government)

ICT tools and social media allegedly have the potential to improve interactions
between citizens and government (Kleinhans et al., 2015), while increasing
transparency, citizen access to customised useful information, and assisting citizens
in taking active roles within the network (Buccoliero & Bellio, 2010). Inspired by e-
business models and online services like online-banking, e-government aims at
overcoming functional insularity in public administration (Marche and McNiven,
2003), using a user-centred approach (Laurans, 2012).

One of the most commonly presented advantages of digital government is the
improvement in operational transparency and responsiveness to citizens' concerns
(Marche and McNiven, 2003). However, common challenges in this field are related
to not achieving the simplification of procedures expected in online services, mainly

due to the pre-existing nature of government functions (i.e., embedded in bureaucratic and dilatory protocols). Likewise, depending on the quality of the commitment and capacity of the staff and systems, it can get reduced to digital media taking the place of printed media. A partial solution with no improvement in articulation of institutions, or in the communication between citizens and authorities. (Dawes, 2008)

Mobile participation (e-participation)

Mobile or digital participation, also called e-participation, refers to the use of digital media, and e-governance platforms to broaden citizens participation in urban planning (Kleinhans et al., 2015; Conroy and Evans-Cowley, 2006). E-participation is the part of e-governance concerned with promoting citizen participation in specific programs. It goes beyond opening information and facilitating of procedures fostered by e-government, seeking for meaningful citizen involvement, under the premise that "With the new technologies, time and distance are no longer participation constraints for an interested citizenry." (Conroy and Evans-Cowley, 2006:372)

In their research about e-planning in USA, Conroy and Evans-Cowley (2006), found three main challenges. First, most municipal online services provided only one-way information. Second, limited budgets and staff with insufficient technical skills impeded the normal running of e-governance services. Finally, the authors recommend further research on local skill-set deficiency and poor access to technology, which can influence the low adoption of e-planning services in different communities (Conroy and Evans-Cowley, 2006:383).

In Colombia there were two famous examples of this category, MiMedellin (n.a.) and BogotaAbierta (n.a.), inviting citizens to participate on different questions, or challenges posed by other member or by the institutions in charge, concerning future ideas to improve the city. In both cases, these platforms are initiatives from the local governments in Medellin and Bogota. The platforms integrated gaming strategies and users accumulated stars when participated and when other members liked their ideas or opinions. These cases had been in use for over two years by the time of this research, and no academic studies showed their impacts in the local democratic landscapes. Moreover, regarding the landscape of participation in the digital arena in

Colombia, Cruz-Ramirez (2014) states that the Internet can increase efficiencies in identifying and using political opportunities in real-time. Additionally, it motivates innovation in collective action's repertoire. However, the Internet impact is limited by control and censorship mechanisms used by powerful actors, similar to how social and political repressions happen in the offline world (Cruz-Ramirez, 2014:139).

2.4.2 Civic media

There are various concepts found in the literature studying the link between media and civic empowerment, and there does not seem to be an agreement among authors for a term that best depict such interdisciplinary relation. In that scenario, this thesis has been informed by readings on Communication for Social Change (Rodriguez et al., 2014), Digital Civics (Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016), Civic Media (Gordon & Mihailidis, 2016), and Citizen Media (Milan, 2013; Rodriguez, 2001), which present debates about communication and self-organisation practices for civic engagement and social movements in the city, and their approaches towards traditional and digital media, and in-between traditional - or expected - media uses and the alternative or innovative. Without undermining the efforts from various authors to unify studies around such topics under a single term, this thesis recognises that such an interdisciplinary field is in current development, and moves beyond justifying the use of one concept over the others. Instead, the multiple readings provided an analytical base for the findings in the case of Manizales.

Authors from the field of Communication for Social Change (CfSC) such as Rodriguez et al. (2014), call for careful and localised examination of the potentials of new media use in relation to advocacy and social movements processes. In their view, there is a growing trend to quickly attribute socially transforming roles to digital media uses, placing the main focus on the technology and moving it away from historical, political, cultural and economic local contexts. Similarly, Gordon and Mihailidis (2016) examine the relation between the collective and the connective aspects of social movements and civic engagement, highlighting the need for case-based interdisciplinary discussions that challenge technological determinism and are critical in assigning implications of media uses to the transformation of collective action (Gordon & Mihailidis, 2016).

Additionally, Milan's (2013) work presents Emancipatory Communication Practices (ECPs) as alternative approaches seeking to reclaim and re-appropriate technology and communication infrastructures to put them at the service of social movements and marginalised communities. Millan explains how ECPs challenge power structures controlling mass media and communication platforms, at the macrolevel, while "creating separate spaces of communication where freedom of expression, participation, and self-organisation are practices independently of social norms and laws" (2013:3), at the microlevel. Due to the scale, and the research questions and findings from the field, this thesis is mostly interested in the possibilities of challenging and transformation at the microlevel. However, it is important to recognise the relevance in discussing macrolevel aspects that could enhance, create obstacles or even put at risk freedom and empowerment of collective action. Ultimately, the just, open and equitable qualities of communication practices at the macrolevel are intrinsic to the potential impacts on collective action enhancement at the microlevel (Milan, 2013).

Bearing in mind the literature referenced in this section, this research is interested in exploring the creative aspects and possibilities of civic media, including both traditional and digital means, in transforming processes and relations of collective action and city-making dynamics in everyday life.

Commodification of data

Since collective action in this research is largely (but not exclusively) mediated by digital and social media, it is important to talk about the commodification of data affecting and resulting from collective action and digital participation.

Before the Internet the process of commodification in the everyday life referred to land, work and money (Polani, 1944 in Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018:998). Now, digital technologies have become the means to new forms of commodification in social and political interactions, particularly, the commodification of social and creative expression (Han, 2017), and the commodification of political expression and act. In other words, the commodification of collective action, according to Robles and Cordoba-Hernandez (2018). For these authors, four factors "enable and affect the commodification of collective action: the socio-political context, technological

development, the role of the government, and the role of business." (Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018:999).

From the literature, it can be concluded that civic media has the potential to challenge or counteract the commodification of data, claiming the Internet as a common good (Juris, 2012; Han, 2017; Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018). However, empirical research about such potential – which is still limited (Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018) shows that the main obstacles are found in the long-term sustainability of civic media initiatives. For Robles and Cordoba-Hernandez (2018), the key sources of the problem are the lack of governmental support to encourage and sustain alternative enterprises, and the State inefficiency in restricting business influence in data commodification. Moreover, another obstacle, as explored further in Chapter 6, is the general lack of interest from urban activist to promote internet autonomy and digital freedom as priorities in their mobilisations. In my view, the pressure of the essential in social and spatial justice at city and neighbourhood levels, can make activists disengage with problems associated with data commodification, even when they recognise the dangers it could carry for social mobilisation in general. Robles and Cordoba-Hernandez (2018) refer to this phenomenon understanding social movements as reflexive agents, which sometimes produce an alternative challenging data commodification to strengthen their political agenda (as in the case they studied with 15-M activists in Spain), but who sometimes accept the limitations of their capacities in fighting the giants of internet control, and play within the available and accessible digital means to serve their communication and organisational needs (as in the cases of socio-territorial movements studied in this thesis).

2.4.3 Relational engagement through everyday life

Korn & Voida (2015), drawing on Lefebvre and de Certeau, accentuate the importance of studying the everyday as a context that is both relevant and discoverable. Physical and digital infrastructures in the everyday can enable, improve or disrupt our relationship with the city (Foth et al., 2015; Gurstein, 2003). At the same time, those infrastructures are shaped by our daily experiences. Thus, as the authors suggest, digital media for civic engagement needs to respond to this relational interplay, engaging with aspects of everyday life and the physical

environment (Korn & Voida, 2015:147). It is also important to highlight the understanding of the uses and meaning of digital infrastructures at a local level, for an appropriated impact. As the sub-cases studied in this research, presented in chapters 4 and 6, digital tools' uses and roles can vary from each situation even belonging to the same city.

Digital infrastructures of citizens' engagement must provoke civic participation through everyday life, and at the same time, defeat problems associated with complacency and stasis (Korn & Voida, 2015:145). Participation in everyday life is also a way to contest those privileged moments of participation defined by local authorities; understanding' privileged moments' as those when professionals decide to extend the privilege to participate to citizens, usually with predefined questions and expected results (Korn & Voida, 2015).

There is a constant need to remind city-making practices and studies to bring technology closer to people's necessities into daily practices; to connect it with what we value the most in the built world we experience daily (McCullough, 2005), and to make it available to more and more people. Only then, technology can become a protagonist in the much-needed social transformation of our cities. (Weiser, 1991; Shirky, 2009; Pinzon Cardona, 2013).

2.5 City-making transformation

Having the RttC and Transgressive Citizenship (Earle, 2012, 2017) as key concepts to explore the findings in this research, implies a need for analysing the structures of power that either promote or hinder spatially just transformation in the city (Marcuse, 2014). Issues on recognition and legitimacy, as in who are and are not generally allowed to contribute in city-making (Lefebvre, 1991; Korn & Voida, 2015; Frediani & Cociña, 2019; Ramirez, 2008) draw on relational notions of power. Such topics guided discussions in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The following sections explore issues on transformation. First, looking at the obstacles and potential of digital media in transforming citizen participation. The second section presents outlines from recent literature regarding the expanding of

urban planning, as a field and practice that recognise new approaches and means for participation.

2.5.1 The transformative potential of digital media in participation

After setting the scene for the different technological deployments of digital media in citizen participation, in which this research centres, the next step is to explore the possible effects that these can have in transforming those scenarios. To do so, the following points identify common obstacles and promising features found in the literature, grouped around issues on accessibility, self-organisation, control and autonomy, and materialisation of digital participation.

Digital Divide and Accessibility issues

As seen so far, some authors believe that the Internet and social media can promote social change, since it can be a space for marginalised voices to be heard (Bugs, 2014; Foth et al., 2015; Messeter, 2015; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2015), however many issues are raised in the literature about limitations of new technology concerning influencing political landscapes, and socio-cultural conditions from place to place. One of those obstacles is the lack of accessibility for the poorest or somehow secluded groups in society (Horelli et al., 2015; Foth, 2015; Elwood and Leszczynski, 2012; Evans-Cowley and Hollander, 2015), which became another factor dividing the privileged and marginalised in society. In this regard, the 'Digital divide' is a concept largely used in the literature. It refers to unequal opportunities between those who can access and integrate digitally-mediated social and economic networks into their everyday life and those who are not. (Gordo, 2002; Leigh, 2011). The problems related to this divide originate primarily in situations of poverty and marginalisation – many times associated with ethnicity and class, but also due to lack of the needed skills, referred as 'digital illiteracy', inadequate infrastructure and policies that prevent people from benefiting equally from the opportunities of the digital era (Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012 eds.). The new direction in recent literature calls for a need to secure equal accessibility and focus the conversation in the quality of connection and issues around open data uses and coding (Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012 eds.).

Self-organisation for action

Although self-organisation is not new, social media platforms allow initiatives at local levels to be more visible, reach each other easily, and beyond geographic locations. Groups of people come together in the city around many different interests, some related to a shared space such as a street, or a park, and some share a broader interest, for example, cycling or ecological practices, among many others. According to Horelli *et al.* (2015), self-organisation supported by digital media can intersect with urban planning through semi-formal mixed spheres that can allow co-creation of urban space. This comes from her research, based on the Finnish context with a long tradition on Collaborative Planning. Despite the differences in contexts and planning approaches from Finland to Colombia, the potential of semi-formal spheres for co-creation is worth being studied in the context of this research. Although self-organisation can enrich urban planning, innovative and inclusive solutions remain frustrated in practice, due to scarcity of real links to decision-making processes. (Horelli *et al.*, 2015: 286).

The study of digitally-mediated self-organisation also highlights the downside of unrestricted open communication of the Internet, which gives space for each and every kind of messages, including problematic ones promoting hate and discrimination (Penney, 2017; Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015). Therefore, studies about digital media and society need to be aware of the amplification of harmful citizen practices, to avoid idealising the potential benefits that online participation can bring to citizen empowerment (Penney, 2017; Tufekci, 2017).

Control and autonomy

Digital media and the Internet are claimed in some literature as proven tools for autonomy-building (Castells, 2009:129, and Shirky, 2009), given their potential for more and more people to control their communicative practices. However, the origins and commercial nature of the most popular social media platforms make us wonder how much of it can be factual (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015; Horelli *et al.,* 2015; Korn and Voida, 2015). Additionally, commercial interests govern the ways in which we navigate digital spheres, disguised as open and transparent means but censored and tracked daily by internet supply companies, digital markets, platforms, and the government (Han, 2017; Robles & Cordoba-Hernandez, 2018). Questions on

ownership, control, and digital media accountability need to be included in local discussions on civic participation. Nevertheless, as mentioned in section 2.2.2 about Civic Media and the commodification of data, Internet freedom and digital rights can be goals out of the range of interest or capacity for social movements at city scale. Moreover, if control over digital autonomy is not possible, it is essential at least some understanding from the people using it, about conditions and limitations of the deployments in question (Messeter, 2015; McCullough, 2005).

In Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) literature, and particularly around Civic Media and Digital Civics (Vlachokyriakos, 2016), there is also a permanent concern on making technology design as a result of a collaborative process, especially when it is due to support civic movements (McCullough, 2005; Björgvinsson, 2010; DiSalvo, 2007, 2011; Vlachokyriakos, 2016). In practice, making people more involved, and ideally in control of their own technology, carries conceptual, ethical and pragmatic challenges (Vines et al., 2013). Questions on representation, intentions behind forms of participation and how control can be shared between users and technical experts are commonly discussed in HCI literature (Vines et al., 2013), in a similar way as participation is discussed in urban design and planning.

For digital media to be a genuinely autonomy-building tool as suggested by Castells (2009) or Shirky (2009), platforms used for citizens participation should not be designed, nor completely maintained, by those in power; otherwise, it will continue reflecting their biases and interests (Korn & Voida, 2015:147). Hence the importance of critically review urban collaborative processes led by ICT infrastructures designed or implemented by planning authorities, and to explore the views – on autonomy and control - of collective action members about their preferred digital tools (Weise et al., 2012).

Kleinhans et al. (2015:240) claim that, despite many bottom-up exercises with new technology, there is not enough knowledge of how useful digital media is in defeating citizens' main challenges in local democracy and urban planning. Most of the developments still researched are technology-driven, instead of user-driven, particularly concerning 'smart cities' (Kleinhans et al., 2015).

The materialisation of digital participation

As described in this section, digital media can act as a catalyst for self-organisation around urban struggles (Horelli *et al.*, 2015; Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2015), but there are still many challenges related to the materialisation of participation through digital means, both from consensual and contestation situations (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015).

Authors like Castells (2009) and Kleinhans et al. (2005) claim that the virtual commitment, with social or political causes in the city, needs to be materialised in the physical space for it to have a real impact and to promote wider engagement. Moreover, that can only be achieved if tools for participation, both online and offline, are used "in order to include both technologically-savvy citizens and the 'slow adaptors." (Kleinhans et al., 2015:244). The materialisation of digital participation does not only refer to a visible change in physical infrastructures, but also on the capacity of civic collectives to harness power outside their communities (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015:164), and to have influence in city politics. Often, collective action members at the neighbourhood scale, particularly on young leaders in marginal areas, do not consider what they are doing as 'political' or 'cultivating leadership'. Thus, it becomes a first obstacle in recognising and transferring their skills into broader contexts (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2015).

Kleinhans et al. (2015) also stress that local authorities need to adapt quickly, to be able to deal with - and effectively use - people's participation through social media. In that regard, they highlight that increasing social media use for citizen participation usually translates into increasing the workload for planning officers and public officers.

2.5.2 The expanding of urban planning

Urban planning is in need to adapt quickly to the emerging demands of the city. It needs to respond to the multiple kinds and scales of interactions and networks occurring on the city, online and offline, in everyday life. (Staffans & Horelli, 2014; Horelli et al., 2015; Hemmersam et al., 2015).

Civic movements seeking more democratic urban development, and the different uses of digital media in local struggles, are making an impact on new urban planning theories. This is the case proposed as 'Expanded Urban Planning' by the Finnish authors Staffans & Horelli (2014), among similar perspectives presented by different authors from diverse fields and contexts. For instance, there is 'participation as planning' by Frediani & Cociña (2019), highlighting community and bottom-up initiatives in city-making from the Global South. Another example, coming from a different approach can be found in the field of 'Urban Informatics', as presented by Foth et al. (2011, 2015), which refers to research, programs and spatial interventions that result from the interrelation of people, space and everyday digital media in the city. Urban informatics is also a term used broadly by other authors to all that relates to big data uses for smart city projects. However, here I particularly refer to projects where the attention is centred in improving the integration of citizens' needs and interests into urban decision-making, mediated by accessible digital media. (Foth et al. 2011, 2015; Niederer & Priester, 2016; Sassen, 2015; DiSalvo & Vertesi, 2007; DiSalvo, 2011; Gurstein, 2003).

Expanded Urban Planning is the name that the Finnish authors Staffans & Horelli (2014) have given to their approach. They are interested in better ways to embed the planning process in everyday life's socio-cultural and material complexities. Expanded urban planning methodology comes from communicative and post structural theories, with bases on the theory of complex co-evolving systems as well (Horelli, 2013). This approach moves from traditional technocratic planning processes towards understanding planning as a co-creation of urban space (Staffans & Horelli, 2014). It also acknowledges that ICT has enabled new actors and new forms of participation in the city at different scales.

Staffans & Horelli (2014) claim, as well as Harvey (2008), that self-organising power have to be the basis for an alternative structure in decision making in the city. However, Staffans & Horelli (2014) present a different discourse to Harvey's in that matter. Instead of supporting change in the idea of citizen revolution, 'expanded urban planning' is closely related to local co-governance and community development under New Public Governance forms. A philosophy developed in the 2000s in the north of Europe, aimed at modernising the public sector. Reintegration

of sectors and institutions, citizens' participation and the maximisation of ICT use, are among its main strategies. It is also referred to as 'digital-era governance' (Staffans & Horelli, 2014; Pestoff, 2012). It is crucial to keep in mind that the materialisation of this governance theory is yet to be seen, and that the context from where it is coming is certainly different from Latin American contexts. Nevertheless, the articulation between social organisations, local politics and new technologies is a pervasive need to tackle in many countries nowadays.

Moreover, critical views on the literature are telling us there must be a restructuring of urban planning, as a field and practice that understands the city, not as an entity but as a complex environment of groups, networks and interests that were never independent units; a city that is not necessarily fragmented but diverse and conflicting (Marcuse, 2014; Mason, 2020; Castells, 2009b; Staffans & Horelli, 2014; Pestoff, 2012). In that sense, participatory efforts in planning need to change too, reproaching participation as manipulation or box-ticking, and moving beyond the convenience of processes seeking consensus towards working with the conflicting and diverse.

As mentioned earlier in section 2.2.3, the proposal of understanding' participation as planning' (Frediani & Cociña, 2019), coming from several experiences in the Global South, brings participation at the core of city-making. I read this also as a call for the expanding and evolution of urban planning, which differs noticeably - to the Nordic context's socio-political and cultural landscapes - from the one proposed by Staffans & Horelli (2014). Nevertheless, both approaches present evidence of the installed and growing capacity of collective action in promoting change, at various scales in society. Furthermore, in both scenarios, authors highlight the need for urban planning to engage with civic practices – however recognised or marginal these are perceived, but that are shaping the everyday of urban life – beyond the professional realm and traditional limitations of planning practices.

2.6 Conclusions and the analytical framework

Drawing from various fields of study and geographies, this chapter presented a body of reflections needed to approach the research questions with a theoretical background, which guided the structure of fieldwork and the research methodology.

Thus, the sections in this chapter formed a first approximation to understanding critical views on civic contestation, participation, and collective action for spatial justice, as well as the potential and limitations of digital media practices in empowering such processes. The notion of transgressive citizenship and the RttC in connection to social and spatial justice – including data justice, are crucial concepts that accompany this research analysis transversally.

Looking into the planning traditions in Colombia, Latin America and beyond, brought to light a link between current practices of citizen participation with the legacy of Rational Planning, and particularly with Comprehensive Planning. Despite that Colombian regulations and guidelines praise participatory practices for urban development, planning practices in this context – with historical roots on Rational Planning and technocratic governments – tend to approach participation as a procedural matter; a government-led controlled exercise lacking compromise with the diverse reality of city-making.

Despite finding divided views on the literature about the transformative potential of digital media for citizen participation and collective action, a common reflection that can be concluded is that technology – by itself – cannot be the final resolution of social and democratic conflicts in the city. Moreover, there is a risk of boosting ICT development as the redeeming hero in a politically ill society. Issues of trust, manipulation, exclusion, poverty and marginality remain, hindering the transformative potential somewhere else associated with the incremental in the integration of digital media in the everyday. Another common finding in the texts reviewed was the difficulty in interpreting efforts done in digital areas into participatory planning processes. As found on discussions around e-governance, e-participation and e-planning, some of the problems are related to a common lack of technical capacity and skills from the planning officers and the citizens, as users of such services. The nature and accountability of digital infrastructures and media need to be questioned and understood locally – at city scale, in order to interpret issues around autonomy, power and control over the media and its contents, as highlighted by Shaw and Graham (2017). Furthermore, when thinking about local appropriations of digital media for citizen empowerment, it is important to explore possible connections

between regional epistemological influences and how citizens approach different media – online and offline – for collective action.

Two elements that critical readings highlight often are the importance of the local and the everyday, as the scales in which the possibilities for citizen participation and digital media uses should be approached, especially when discussing their potential in social transformation. This particularly applies to societies in the Global South, with various levels of digital accessibility and literacy, but also with multiple contextual and cultural factors influencing political stances and practices of citizenship.

Literature coming from a radical-agonistic tradition underline the value of using digital media for mindful provocation to encourage civic engagement with urban development. Moreover, the integration of technological infrastructures for participation needs to be done into the ordinary spaces of the everyday, instead of privileged and predesign moments. Researchers on this field need to remain questioning whether technology is allowing positive transformation or turning into another obstacle frustrating participation in the city, while reinforcing the status quo of power unbalances in the city, or perhaps strengthening global monopolies of digital infrastructures for participation.

Finally, the literature showed a gap in empirical approximations to the relation between citizen participation (including collective action) at city level and the most accessible uses of digital media, in everyday life, and the Global South context. Consequently, this research aims to contribute and diversify the knowledge in this field, using a case study that, however particular, can relate to contexts elsewhere with similar socio-economic, political and cultural conditions.

2.6.1 Analytical framework

After covering key concepts and discussion in the fields relevant to this study, the final point in this chapter presents three main areas of interest that guided the analysis in this research, as a conclusion of the focus developed in the literature review concerning the research questions. Therefore, the following points served as the lenses through which the data collected was analysed.

A. Power and interests around participation and digital innovation for citizen engagement in city-making processes.

B. Practices of citizen contestation for spatial justice in everyday life.

C. Recognition and integration of collective action in the expanding of citizen participation.

These three points helped to define the structure and methods presented in the following chapter (about Methodology). Moreover, the areas covered by points A, B and C shaped the construction of descriptive, empirical and analytical sections in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Additionally, chapter 7 pick-up these points, using them as the structure to present concluding discussions related to broader debates about social and spatial justice.

Chapter 3. Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to approach crucial actors and organisations, the ways in which the data was obtained and classified, as well as the principal challenges encountered during such processes.

Given the focus of the research questions to explore the relations, processes, and dynamics of the everyday in the city, I employed a qualitative approach, supported with ethnographic methods, interviews and perception exercises, which are explained in the following six sections.

This chapter starts by presenting Manizales as a case study, and three socio-territorial movements in the city, as sub-cases that enabled the exploration of multiple scenarios of collective action. The third section looks at the considerations behind the research design. I explore ideas from the literature on ethnography for urban studies, with a special interest in place-based and internet-related exercises of participant observation. I also reflect on my positionality as a researcher studying phenomena in a context that seems both familiar and unexplored. The fourth section presents the methods used in the research, in a descriptive and reflective way, including participant observation, netnographic exercises, interviews, perception exercises and the classification and analysis of data.

3.2 Manizales as a case study

As highlighted by Flyvbjerg (2006:223), research framed within Social Science and Urban Development studies should offer nothing else, other than a contribution made on concrete, context-dependent knowledge. This thesis uses the case of Manizales for such purposes. Manizales becomes then a case study that however particular and embedded in the Colombian context, potentially resembles current situations of medium and small cities in Latin America and the Global South. Particularly, in situations where popular resourcefulness and improvisation become crucial to face challenges associated with improving participation, and utilising the co-productive potential of digital media for urban collaborative processes.

Furthermore, it is a case study of the tensions between the day-to-day experience and the desired; a study of the everyday life of collective action and citizen participation in a city that brands itself as inclusive and innovative.

Image 1 Manizales. View to the city centre. (Source: RCN Radio website. https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/eje-cafetero/este-martes-radican-pot-concejo-manizales)

As mentioned earlier, fieldwork in Manizales was carried through two field visits. The first trip was of particular importance to the initial research hypothesis, the consideration of the city as a case study, and the identification of sub-cases of study. Thus, on the first trip, the hypothesis can be initially tested, and it could even reshape as a different hypothesis (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The idea of this section is to introduce relevant conditions of Manizales in the context of participation, urban development and digital innovation, in order to explain the reasons why Manizales was defined as the case study of this research. Similarly, this section presents the reasons behind the selection of the sub-cases inside Manizales. Chapter 4 presents the context in a more detailed way, moving from the national socio-political context to the very particular conditions of the sub-cases and their socio-territorial struggles. However, talking about the relevance of the case and sub-cases of study is an important step at this point of the thesis, in order to get a better understanding of the research methodology.

<u>Why Manizales?</u>

In Colombia, Manizales was not often associated with protests or political opposition. On the contrary, Manizales was usually perceived as a conservative city, both in terms of political affiliations and in a religious context. However, I noticed this trend was changing slightly in recent years. Arguably, it could be a reflection of the growing political polarisation the country was experiencing since the peace agreement was established, in 2012. Change in the socio-political culture of Manizales is a fascinating subject but beyond the focus or scope of this research. However, a crucial factor that inspired me to research the case of Manizales was seeing more people interested in issues about city planning and administration, whether it indicated a general change in attitude towards participation, or a change in how visible and amplified social struggles can be nowadays in comparison with media before the ubiquity of the Internet.

Furthermore, Manizales was promoting itself as a national centre of ICT innovation, as well as a 'city of knowledge' (*Ciudad del conocimiento*) (Acebedo Restrepo, 2015; ElTiempo, 2016), and it had been in the top of the list of cities' social progress index (ElTiempo, 2016; RCCV, 2016). These conditions implied Manizales had good conditions to understand how the uses of digital media in the city were having an impact, if any, on local, democratic and alternative ways for urban development and city-making.

The size of the city (400,154 habitants by 2018), a medium size city for Colombian standards, and the fact that I had pre-existing contacts in various local organisations, were conditions that helped define Manizales as the case study for this research. I acknowledge that an exercise with similar research questions can be done in bigger cities in Colombia, like Bogota or Medellin, which are also increasingly known internationally due to good practices around social urbanism and public transportation. These cities also have interesting environments around citizen participation and uses of digital media. In such cases, a researcher would probably arrive to different and complementary reflections, given the complexities in structures of power, participation and contestation proper from larger cities. Moreover, municipalities from cities like Medellin and Bogota have considerably larger administrative resources, which presumably entails better institutional capacity to

deal with recently new challenges in relation to widening participation and increasing the use of social media as official channels of communication. Instead, cities like Manizales designate small teams inside their Municipalities to deal with press matters, traditionally for printed, TV and Radio, but increasingly so, for digital communications. In Manizales, this was a team that handled any extra roles related with social media management, independently of the hours extra implied, and how well prepared the staff could be for such tasks. This is a situation representative of most of the cities in Colombia and other Latin American countries, and so it is worth analysing.

Furthermore, this research required time to talk to various people from local authorities, including urban planning, and offices dealing with digital channels of participation, online government and digital innovation. Additionally, it required in-depth understanding of social movements that were dealing with planning related problems, to be able to observe and participate in their everyday life, even if temporarily. Such conditions demanding focus and time to respond to the research questions, suggested it was more feasible to use a smaller city. Therefore, when compared to other possibilities of larger cities such as Bogota or Medellin, Manizales seemed the best scenario to accomplish my research objectives, bearing the restrictions of time and resources typical of doctoral research.

Sub-cases of study: San Jose, Rio Blanco and Right to the City Workshop

In order to understand the situation in Manizales, I used three socio-territorial movements in the city as sub-cases of study, which I will refer to as (a) *San Jose*, (b) *Rio Blanco* and (c) *Derecho a la Ciudad - Manizales* (RttC Workshop). These sub-cases are explained in detail in chapter 4, however, it is relevant to highlight at this point the methodological implications and importance of using sub-cases in this research.

The purpose was to study ongoing problems and citizen initiatives contesting planning decisions in the city. As a way to gain insights and understandings I was involved in daily activities from various civic groups, informing my research into the heterogeneity of perceptions around citizen participation, the relationships with other

groups and local authorities, as well as the uses and limitations of digital (and non-digital) media in promoting participation and collective action.

The sub-cases of San Jose and Rio Blanco were easy to identify, even before my first field visit, since they were popular discussions in the local news and Facebook posts about Manizales. Both movements originated from citizens discomfort about planning decisions that allegedly neglected people's rights and their choice to participate in decision making. Also, both cases where attached to particular relations between an area in the city and the social and environmental conditions attached to the place. Therefore, I decided to refer to these as socio-territorial movements (see definition of socio-territorial movement in Chapter 2).

San Jose was the first case I identified in the city. I had heard about the issues in this part of the city many years before starting my PhD. More than eleven years ago the problems started with the design and implementation of a macro-project in San Jose, a traditional and impoverished central area in Manizales. The project, managed from national authorities, displaced and affected more than 5,000 families and registered several citizen's complaints about corruption and public funds malfeasance. Moreover, the lack of planning in the sporadic demolition of houses worsened insecurity and crime rates, impairing quality of life for many. Collectives from and out of San Jose had been working for years in changing San Jose's reputation despite the chaos left by the macro project. I initially found several of these initiatives and their outcomes online, mainly through Facebook, Instagram, local news and blogs.

During my initial search online, I also noticed that the discussion about Rio Blanco was the talk of the town, both in local news and in social media, mainly in Facebook and Twitter with supporting content on YouTube too. Soon, it became my second sub-case study. Various collectives, academic groups and organisations had formed a convergence called "*Todos somos Rio Blanco*" to protest against a housing project soon to be built in the borders of the natural reserve Rio Blanco, and the river with the same name. Besides being a valuable and nationally recognised area because of its biodiversity, Rio Blanco provided 30% of the drinkable water to Manizales. By the time of my fieldwork the movement was at a peak of activity and showing a different pace and stage in the process in comparison to San Jose, which in turn provided me with a good opportunity for first-hand exposure, enriching the analysis

in my research (i.e., attending a public hearing with the national Attorney General). Another difference to highlight when compared to San Jose's movement, was that Rio Blanco managed to mobilise many more people in the city, despite only a few families living within the reserve's vicinity.

Most of the individuals and collectives that participated in this research were involved in these two socio-territorial movements, either as members or as supporters of their activities. This fact made it easier for me to establish initial contacts and build rapport with key participants from the first week of my first field visit. It also made the decision of choosing these movements as sub-cases of study simple and organic; it was easy to notice these two situations were the most common causes of collective dissatisfaction regarding planning decisions and socio-spatial justice. Moreover, social media played an important part in the everyday activities of the movements, and I anticipated there could be a variety of digital media uses in different and complementary ways in each case.

The third sub-case was defined during my second field visit, around the design and development of a public workshop about the Right to the City in Manizales. The regular design meetings and conversations with several collectives turned naturally into something that went beyond the creation of an event. It became a common ground between collectives, individuals and academics with various interpretations, worries and motivations to advocate for the Right to the City locally. This is why I am also considering this sub-case as a socio-territorial movement, where the territory in question is not a bounded area in the city but the city itself and its surroundings, and anything in it as well. A year after my second field visit, collectives kept meeting and planning the next event to further local discussions about the Right to City, and the roles needed from authorities, academia, organisations and communities.

3.3 Considerations for research design

This section introduces notions and reflections that shaped the design of methods for this research. For the first part, I draw ideas from the literature to highlight the relevance of ethnographic approaches – in between the online and offline spaces – to explore urban studies. The second and third part of this section deals with my

relationship to the field and my positionality as a researcher, in order to help contextualise the methodological decisions.

Given my interest on the 'how' and the implications of processes, practices and uses of participation, collective action and accessible digital media in city-making, the research required a qualitative methodology (see research question in section 1.3). Additionally, the importance of analysing local scales of action and organisation in everyday life implied an ethnographic approach to exploring people, places, movements and institutions in the field.

3.3.1 Ethnographic approaches: place-based and internet-related

Ethnography draws on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions […]. It results in richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience […], acknowledges the role of theory […], as well as the researcher's own role (reflexivity), and views humans as part object/part subject. (O'Reilly, 2009:10-11).

Ethnographic methods have been an essential part of social science research for more than a century (Atkinson et al., 2001), studying interactions of individuals and groups of people over time, with varied purposes such as those related to studies on behaviour, culture, language and socio-political structures, among others. However, more and more disciplines are now employing ethnographic methods in a variety of fields, enriching the debate about meanings, ethical boundaries and opportunities for ethnography across different areas of study (Atkinson et al., 2001; O'Reilly, 2009). When studying the urban, the use of ethnographic methods is key to understand meanings and reasoning behind the relationships between the people, the spaces we inhabit, and the structures – physical, social and political – that define our daily lives in the city. Drawing from Kellett (2011), the disciplinary complementarity and interaction between architecture and anthropology can be highly valuable in gaining a deeper understanding of urban life practices.

Interpreting and reflecting upon these interactions is not a straightforward exercise. No matter how familiar or unfamiliar the context might seem, studying people's relationship with others and their urban built environments, will bring - unconsciously - our own judgments of what neighbourhood, community, collaboration and urban life mean to us. Inevitably, our own experiences and memories help us make sense of new cultural experiences in the field (Rose, 1990; Alsop, 2002). The reflective exercise between interpretation and representation of the studied field remains central in academic debates around dwellers and their built environment when following an ethnographic approach (Kellett, 2011). Therefore, for social research exploring ethnographic methods, it is crucial to "conduct ethnography reflexively with constant awareness of our role in the research enterprise. However, this does not mean abandoning any sense that there is a real world we wish to learn about, and which our research participants live in, experience, feel constrained by, and help create." (O'Reilly, 2009:9).

I employed – and found it very useful – the main method of ethnography, according to O'Reilly (2009:127), referred to as participant observation. This method involves learning through first-hand experience, while "taking part as a member of a community while making mental and then written, theoretically informed observations" (O'Reilly, 2009:127). The purpose of 'participation' in this method is to gain an approximation to the point of view of the participants, blending into their daily activities, ideally without disturbing the natural flow of these (O'Reilly, 2009). Moreover, in my case, being part of the everyday settings allowed me to give a better account of what worked in practice, and how interactions took place in relation to others, the spaces and the media-related practices around this research's topics.

Given that ethnography can be complex, potentially intimate and emotional, there are many challenges associated with the use of ethnographic methods in research, and the quality of the representations. The practice of it is itself interweaved with the (re)construction of the self, thus, many authors advise that reflexivity and even autoethnography can complement the ethnographic exercise (Atkinson et al., 2001: 321). In following sections, I present some of the challenges I encountered and the ways in which I face these.

Digital ethnography

The Internet, and particularly social media, has become another site for ethnographic exercise, where interactions, routines, movements of content, sociality and the display of individual and group identities can be studied (Postill & Pink, 2012:123). This field has received various names and used different perspective according to the discipline and purpose of study. Nevertheless, this research draws from the concept of 'digital ethnography' as presented by Sara Pink (Postill & Pink, 2012; Pink et al., 2016), and complementary ideas from Kozinets (2015) about 'netnography'.

The overwhelming amount of content – and data – that can be reached, through social media and the Internet, allows for qualitative but also for quantitative analysis producing statistical overviews and trends. However, as stated previously, the approach of this research is entirely of a qualitative nature. Moreover, this research follows the way in which Postill & Pink (2012) understand "social media as a fieldwork environment that is social, experiential and mobile" (Postill & Pink, 2012:125), in which conventional ethnographic exercises can be adapted. Therefore, my approach is informed by internet-related ethnography and by – what is referred in the literature as – social media ethnography, which studies the media not only as a tool in the research, but as a subject of study (Miller, 2011; Postill & Pink, 2012). Additionally, practices and conversation in social media are unbounded by the digital form; these disperse across other media, physical spaces and face-to-face encounters. Similarly, the exercise of participant observation in Manizales was continuously traversing spaces and media in both, the physical and the digital spheres.

The way in which Kozinets (2015) refers to 'netnography' was also useful to inform my approach. He argues that community and culture can be explored through the Internet and social media platforms, and how "Netnography becomes a dance of possibilities for human understanding of social technological interaction. Netnography requires interpretation of human communications under realistic contexts, in situ, in native conditions of interaction, when those human communications are shaped by new technologies" (Kozinets, 2015:5). Moreover, the author stresses that netnographic studies deal with more than words, and also with

images, drawings, photography, and all audio-visual content, as well as the creation of websites, digital devices and applications (Kozinets, 2015). That is an observation shared by Daniel Miller too (2017; 2020), when he points out that the visual has become part of everyday conversation with the increasing use of digital media, which in turns explains the need to consider online methods in today's ethnography.

Despite the fact that audio-visual content was an important part of my methods and of the data collected as well, my approach gives priority to the relations with local authorities and with the physical spaces – of the neighbourhood, the city, and the ones related to meetings and activities. Undoubtedly, there could be much richness in analysing from multiple angles the audio-visual material I encounter during my netnographic exercise. However, and similarly to the response to visual material found offline, I focussed on what this data could mean, i.e. what messages were they carrying, in relation to my research questions. Moreover, despite acknowledging that elements of culture and community identities can be found and explored through social media, I considered these as a complement of what I could observe in the face-to-face interactions, and through the experience of the physical spaces of study. In that sense, and following on Postill and Pink "this approach [internet-related ethnography] neither replaces long-term immersion in a society or culture, nor aims to produce 'classic' ethnographic knowledge; rather, it creates deep, contextual and contingent understandings produced through intensive and collaborative sensory, embodied engagements, often involving digital technologies in co-producing knowledge." (Postill & Pink, 2012:125).

Inductive Immersive ethnography

As mentioned earlier, the research questions in this thesis required a qualitative approach in which ethnography played a fundamental role. This meant, for me as the researcher, a commitment to deeply engage with the everyday aspects of collective action through ethnographic practices. Therefore, the primary means to generate knowledge from the fieldwork was through an inductive, immersive and time-intensive approach to ethnography between the online and offline. In finding answers to the research questions, this methodology aimed to find elements from the field to create knowledge that could discuss or even expand theories around citizen participation and advocacy concerning spatial justice in the city.

According to Pink and Morgan (2013), "ethnographic research evolves in dialogue with theory rather than being led or structured by theory"(2013:357). This distinction helped me to clarify the roles of theory and ethnographic findings for this research, which in my experience, were intertwined elements in the processes of defining the hypotheses and analysing findings. For example, I found that the inductive approach in this research had bases on my previous knowledge of theory and pre-existing perceptions of urban phenomena in Colombian cities. Afterwards, the dialogue between research findings and theory evolved alongside the fieldwork experience, as seen in section 3.4.1 about fieldnotes and reports, and took shape after fieldwork in the analysis stage.

Following the literature on ethnography, my exercise can be considered as short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013), which "involves intensive excursions into their lives, which use more interventional as well as observational methods to create contexts through which to delve into questions that will reveal what matters to those people in the context of what the researcher is seeking to find out." (Pink & Morgan, 2013:352). In other words, the time-intensive and immersive aspect of the ethnographic exercise in this research, led me to take an active role in some activities that were either designed by me (i.e., Perception exercises, see section 3.4.4), or collectively produced as a possible result of my interactions with individuals and collectives in Manizales. In this case, I am referring to my role in the RttC Manizales Workshop in Manizales (see section 4.4.3). I did not plan or intend this event. However, it took shape from a conversation I started with some participants about the Right to the City and the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Lefebvre's publication. Consequently, I was invited to become a member of the workshop's organising committee, in which I developed a key role in the design and production of some of the activities for the workshop, as well as being one of the two admins for the event's Facebook page (see section 4.4.3). In hindsight, I understood this situation as a reflection, and even a consequence, of immersive and time-intensive ethnography, which became a critical part of my research; as the third sub-case of study and as an opportunity to experience and appropriate elements of Action Research into this exercise (see section 3.3.3).

3.3.2 An ambiguously familiar context

Despite Manizales being my hometown, I had not lived in the city for the last 11 years previous to my fieldwork, apart from some short periods for holidays. Therefore, the initial contacts in the city that could be helpful for my research were few and far between at the beginning. Furthermore, some of the civic organisations I wanted to work with were based in neighbourhoods that I did not know well.

These factors made me wonder how 'familiar' this context was to me after all those years, and how much I would feel a stranger to some of the participants. This led me to evaluate the way I wanted to approach new contacts, avoiding making assumptions of familiarity that in turn could hinder the research process, or even worse, that could cross ethical boundaries.

It is important to highlight that there were benefits and challenges between feeling like an insider or an outsider, both in assuming the role of a researcher but also in the relationship I wanted to build with the people involved (Alsop, 2002; Gallinat & Collins, 2010). In my case, I moved between those two states; between the convenience of speaking the same language, having the same accent, and knowing about the same city, but also between explaining my purpose for being there, for being a stranger in a certain neighbourhood, and for being interested in their particular struggles. This last situation, of being an outsider, was also convenient, in order to play a naiver role, and to have an excuse to create small discomforts (i.e., questioning the obvious), when needed, but always being respectful to avoid judgement of the practices observed. According to Alsop (2002), that ambiguity of identities and roles can make us vulnerable as researchers, but it is there where the chances to a deeper understanding lay.

3.3.3 My positionality as a researcher

Following the previous section, and in addition to moving in and out of feeling as an insider and outsider in my hometown, it is necessary to recognise my positionality in the research process. By doing so, I acknowledge that representations coming from an ethnographical approach, as the one I employed, cannot be understood as subjective and impartial. Moreover, there is always a risk of recreating power imbalances in the way the researcher represents the 'other' (Wilkinson & Kitzinger,

1996), independently of how close or familiar I – as the researcher – felt to certain groups and situations in the field. Therefore, I acknowledge that my narrative here is indeed a reading of the 'other', since the situations presented in this document are not my own struggle. However, by employing a feminist approach (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996), I took a critical approach to the ways in which I represented the people I met and the stories I experienced (O'Reilly, 2009). Placing most of the attention in the silenced voices and hidden acts that transform our cities in everyday life, is my attempt in challenging and deconstructing the status quo of citizen participation, while recognizing crucial alternatives in city-making.

As it can be presumed in ethnographic exercises, my presence and interaction within the spaces and groups I observed – including those in the digital spheres – could have had an impact in the way certain situations developed, people acted or reacted, as well as in the ways I perceived and read experiences in the field. As soon as I started contacting possible gate keepers through social media, in preparation for my first field trip, I realised my position carried several connotations that could become beneficial, but also problematic, depending on the group I wanted to contact. For example, coming from an international university could make people wrongly assume I had funds or ways to financially help with some of the pressing matters civic groups were experiencing. Also, the fact that I expressed interest in understanding how local authorities were dealing with citizen participation, but also to explore civic independent practices of contestation, could make some doubt about my research intentions, which in turn could affect the versions of how people were presenting themselves, and how much information and insights they were willing to share. In order to counteract possible misleading associations, I planned the ways in which I was going to introduce myself and, once I reached contacts, I spent the necessary time explaining my interests and the reasons why I was exploring a variety of topics, which could seem contradictory for some, but from my point of view they were complementary. Gratifyingly enough, that strategy opened many doors for me in the field, while placing the discussion between the formal and 'informal' ways of participating in city-making as a starting point of conversation, in several occasions.

To utilise the richness gained by the experiences of participant observation, I placed myself at some points in the narrative of this thesis, particularly when describing moments, stories or key characters. My intention with this is to transfer some of the experienced from the field to the reader in a vivid way, giving extra information about contexts or moments that helped me in the construction of my analysis and reflections.

Appropriating Action Research elements

As explained in section 3.3.1, the immersive ethnographic approach used in this research led me to assume active roles in some fieldwork activities. For those moments, particularly around the RttC Manizales Workshop, Action Research (AR) literature helped me inform decisions in the field and interpret the data afterwards. However, I should point out that I am not claiming this thesis is the result of an AR approach. Instead, AR principles guided how I participated in the RttC Workshop, setting limits to what I could offer and showing me the value of such experience to my research process.

When the opportunity of being part of the RttC Manizales Workshop's organisation presented, without me having planned it, I initially envisioned it as a research opportunity that could be done with an AR framework. The Workshop organisation team approved my double role in the event; as part of the organising committee and as a researcher. However, the preparation for the workshop ran in parallel with other multiple research activities that equally required my time and attention during fieldwork. This, in turn, left me with limited resources and time to properly plan, communicate, create partnerships and organise an AR strategy with the individuals and collectives involved in the workshop, which should have been one of the first steps in conducting AR (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stringer & Ortiz Aragon, 2020). Moreover, AR approaches seem to focus on solutions-oriented inquiries, where the research's goal is to design solutions or strategies for complex social problems (Stringer & Ortiz Aragon, 2020), with a clear emphasis on 'how to take action' for transformation, also known as actionability (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Given the scale and the speed with which the workshop was thought and developed, it would have been impractical to modify the proposal and fulfil the requirements to conduct AR appropriately within the limitation of the resources of doctorate research.

Nevertheless, as a later reflection on the collective process of organising and delivering the RttC Workshop, there are three elements worth mentioning that place the experience close to an AR exercise, drawing from Bradbury-Huang (2010), Reason and Bradbury (2001), and Stringer and Ortiz Aragon (2020):

- A commitment to complex social issues to find obstacles and opportunities for transformation. Rather than coming up with solutions or strategies for action, the workshop's goal was to engage with the complexity of the diverse understandings of the RttC in Manizales as a starting point in identifying obstacles and opportunities for civic participation in improving the city.

- A need for localised exploration of the discussed topics. Recognising that generalised solutions would not fit every city and community, the workshop proposed an alternative creation of a manifest where many voices – representing multiple concerns and identities – could express what the RttC meant to them and how the city needed to improve. Moreover, the activities throughout the day were designed to discuss the RttC in Manizales concerning different local matters and scales.

- Social values need to be explicit in the way AR enacts, besides being part of the research interest. People involved in the planning and production of the RttC Workshop, including myself, intended for these processes to be as democratic, equitable, liberating and enhancing as possible.

Taking an active role in the workshop production was an outstanding and precious experience for the findings of this research. Moreover, this exercise was personally important as an approximation to the possibilities, risks and responsibilities of undertaking Action Research projects.

My online presence

I initially started following people from my personal accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Soon I noticed that it was going to be easier to contact people from socio-territorial movements through Facebook, and some people in local authorities and third sector via Twitter. That situation made me aware of how I could be – and wanted to be – seen through my personal accounts. Despite not being a very active user of Twitter, my activity there could give a hint of my political opinions,

which I thought could become an obstacle when contacting local authorities in a society as polarized as the Colombian one, and given that the current mayor, and his staff, came from right-wing political parties. I was particularly conscious of criticisms I made (or retweeted) of ultra-right populist politicians in recent years.

Bearing this in mind, I opened a new Twitter account before conducting my first fieldwork, to avoid people making assumptions about my political preferences. The account was created on August 2017, under the name of *Mzls Participa* (Mzls is an abbreviation used to refer to Manizales), and I started by following 63 accounts related to my research topic, including local and national government institutions, third and private sector, and a small number of very active local individuals concerned about citizen participation, social and political issues in Manizales, and digital innovation in the region (Image 2). I did, however, include an explanation under the account that translates:

> *I am Laura Pinzon, and this is part of my doctorate research project about*
> *citizen participation and the uses of digital media in Manizales.*

Image 2 Screenshot of the Twitter account I created for this research. (6 July 2020)

Thus, anyone wanting to know more about my background could search my personal accounts on social media. This attempt of separating my personal history of opinions in Twitter to benefit the research process was not as effective as I initially

thought. I managed to make important contacts through there, and in two cases these led to scheduling interviews, also, I did use the account to follow the online activity of local authorities (more than I do so via Facebook). However, to improve the visibility of some of the posts I made, I had to retweet such content from my personal account, moreover, I realized at the end of the fieldwork that the main use I gave to the new account was to follow and observe other people and institutions' activity, instead of creating new content (although I did that too on six occasions). In that sense, I could have used my personal account after all.

Facebook, on the other hand, proved easy and effective to make key contacts before and during fieldwork, as well as to establish groups for sustaining conversations during and after fieldwork (i.e., regarding the organization of the RttC Workshop, or the weekly *conversas* coordinated by participants from San Jose). Since my main purpose using Facebook was to contact participants from socio-territorial movements, and not necessarily representatives from local authorities, I was not interested in having a new and neutral profile because that would seem suspicious. I had the feeling people would find it hard to trust someone approaching them from a new profile with zero or few contacts, and no background information. Moreover, I felt confident that participants could find some shared contacts (or 'friends') in our accounts, as well as interests and points of view, and I believe that was the case for most of the new contacts I initiated using this platform. However, on one occasion a new participant from San Jose initially associated me with a bad experience they had with a shared contact we had. This common 'friend' ran a foundation to support social architecture and self-construction projects and was someone with whom I had worked with a few years ago, and by coincidence I also had some concerns about the way they worked with local communities. Thankfully, on our first face to face encounter the participant from San Jose asked me about my affiliation with that shared contact, and the situation was positively clarified.

Another issue I found in using my Facebook account for this research is that the use I gave to my account changed considerably. With no clear intention, I ended up using my profile less and less for sharing personal content such as photographs from travels or gatherings with friends and family, casual jokes and memes. Reflecting on this, I believe I became self-conscious of how my participants could see me. For that

reason, and in an attempt to be respectful, I limited the amount of casual personal posts, particularly when I knew participants were going through difficult situations in their movements, or in their communities. Moreover, when thinking about my Facebook account in the near future after the PhD, I am still debating between using it as I did during the research, that is, using it less frequently and with less personal posts, or closing it and perhaps keeping Messenger to save contacts.

Some participants and collectives also became contacts on Instagram during and after fieldwork. Therefore, the situation described previously regarding my use of Facebook also affected the way I used Instagram. However, the number of participants following my Instagram account was less than the ones on Facebook, so the change was not as drastic, and I still use Instagram to share casual, ordinary and personal content.

To my surprise, WhatsApp took a central role in the online communication with my participants. Prior to my first fieldwork, Facebook and Twitter were the main platforms to identify and establish new contacts, but once in the field, WhatsApp became the application I used the most on a daily basis to maintain and make new contacts. It became particularly important when I started to participate in WhatsApp groups, so much so that I had to keep my Colombian phone charged, with the Colombian SIM card on my return to the UK, to keep up to date and reply timely to the activity on the WhatsApp chats.

3.4 Methods

The next sections give an account of the methods I used during fieldwork and analysis. Fieldwork involved activities in Manizales but also remotely; when I was in Newcastle but doing participant observation online. For a better understanding of the various activities developed for this research, I present a timeline from June 2017 to November 2018 (see Figure 2). I made two visits to Manizales in that period. The first was a one-month field visit between September and October 2017. The aim of that first trip was to meet face-to-face with some people I previously contacted via social media, and to establish key contacts, as well as to test initial hypotheses (as explained in the section 3.2), and to conduct a first stage of interviews and perception exercises. That first trip helped to establish two of the three sub-cases of

study, or socio-territorial movements, in the city. The second field visit lasted about five months between February to July 2018. During that time, I conducted the second stage of interviews and perception exercises and spent most of my days engaging with activities of the collectives associated with the movements studied.

In the timeline (Figure 2), the green line shows the Internet-related ethnographic exercise, which started four months before the first field visit and continued interruptedly until four months after the second and last field visit. The intensity of the netnographic exercise, however, was not constantly the same during such period. In other words, there were moments where I was doing more observation than participating, and some where I was participating more intensively (i.e., being part of various chats in Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, and suggesting content for a collaborative Facebook page) and not only observing. The moments of most intensive participation took place during the field visits and the weeks following my return to Newcastle.
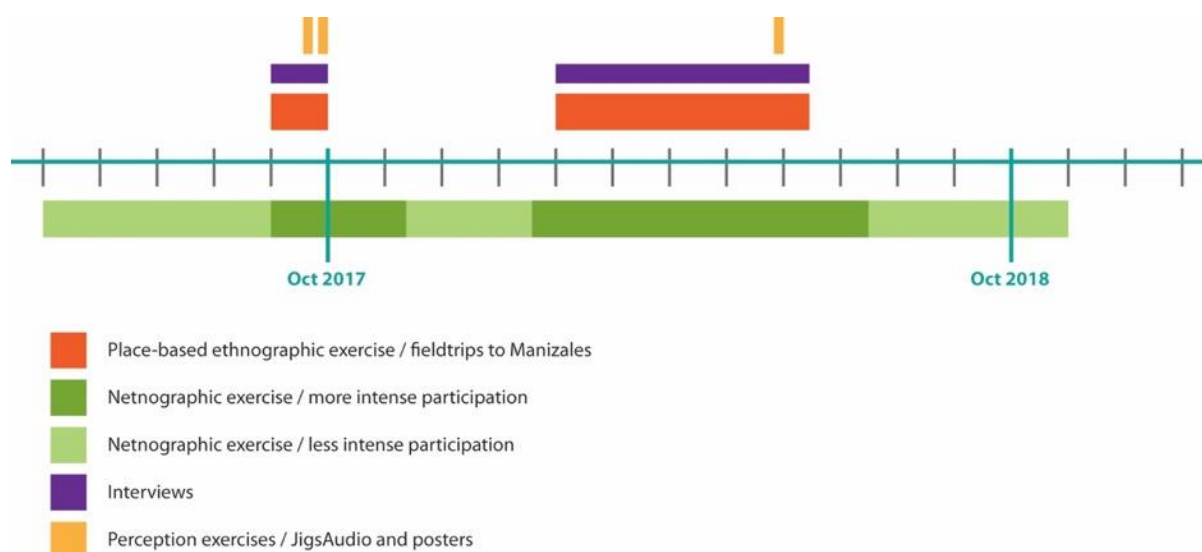
Figure 2 Fieldwork timeline (Source: Author)

3.4.1 Participant observation

As presented earlier in section 3.2.1, participant observation allowed me to learn through first-hand experience while I took part in several activities and daily routines from a number of urban collectives that belonged to the three socio-territorial movements in Manizales. As soon as I started contacting key actors in Manizales, and introducing my research interests, I was invited to several activities to meet

other members and collectives, and to learn more about their organisations. I was lucky to be well received and manage to become a temporary member of some of the collectives' activities. I cannot state an overall number of events in which I was doing participant observation, since I made use of every opportunity of encounter and conversation to learn and gather data, independent of the type of encounter or how structured or improvised it was. I can say however, that there was not a week with less than three significant activities promoted by the collectives, which included invitations to participate in demonstrations, recreational activities for children and teenagers (in San Jose), weekly and monthly meetings from some of the collectives, community planting exercises (in Rio Blanco), conferences, artistic presentations, seminars about Latin American politics of collective action and grass roots, meetings with other organisations or public institutions, workshops about many topics (i.e., traditional cooking, urban gardening, and digital community radio), and many informal but illustrative conversations about the history, organisation, vision and limitations of the collectives. All of these activities were related to the interests of one or several collectives, however not all such activities were directly related to my research interests. Nevertheless, I approached my participation as a volunteer in some of these as a necessary step to building rapport with the people and collectives, who later became participants in this research. Moreover, I met some key actors during some of the activities that initially did not seem that relevant for the research. For example, I had made two futile attempts to contact Gustavo (pseudonym) (see section 4.6.1) before I met him unexpectedly during a recreational activity on a Sunday in San Jose. I ended up helping him plant some trees with local kids. Since then, the contact was established and after that he invited me to more activities from the several collectives of which he was a member.

My approach to some of the collectives and members of the socio-territorial movements was also a result of genuinely sharing the same interests; for example, about the importance of collective action, but also about some less obvious passions like locally produced fruits and vegetables, urban gardening, local popular knowledge and cooking. As a result, I was often invited to activities not related to my research, but in which significant conversations took place. Therefore, I consider that the exercise of participant observation was a continuous one during the entire time of my stay in Manizales.

Fieldnotes and reports

In order to keep track of my observations, I kept a journal of field notes in which I made daily entries; except for a few weekends or days of no activity. With my supervisors we agreed that I would send a weekly report about my activities and key observations, as a tool to keep in touch and discuss relevant issues as they were developing. Those reports became crucial for my data collection since they served as a first filter of my observations, questions and concerns. Thus, writing a weekly report helped me to prepare for the following week; for example, to prioritise certain aspects over others, from which I might had enough information. Besides being useful during fieldwork, the reports helped later on in the stage of analysis to identify preliminary themes and categories of observations. Moreover, my daily notes included some in English (Image 3) and some in Spanish (Image 4), depending on what I found easier to do at the moment of recording them. However, at the end of each week I had to collect my observations in English to share with my supervisors. This was a task that ended up saving me time in further stages of my research, while grouping key ideas and findings into an organised and readable manner.

projects, organizations and initiatives.
but I have the impression he likes to
iniciate and give ideas but soon after
he looses interest and excpect people
keep developing them without him.
— He does not have a cellphone, and
his facebook interactrosis are intermi_
tent.

○ la Matria – Nota R+C. butthen
change it, tagging me, but erased
the likes (previous likes)

○ lent me a report about San Jose and
he's supposed to send me some
documents about participation and
"plusvalía" in Manizales. Seems like a
very relevant discussion atm in Mzls.

• He transcribed lefebre's text to a
notebook when at uni. For fun!

○ His PC is old and took about 10 min
to start.

• I met his son, ▪▪▪▪, and they showumed
me their kitchen and garden where they
"experiment" with new vegg. recipes.

○ I went with G to a meeting in
plaza de mercado. It was to plan
activities and budget for ▪▪▪▪

Image 3 Original fieldnotes sample, in English
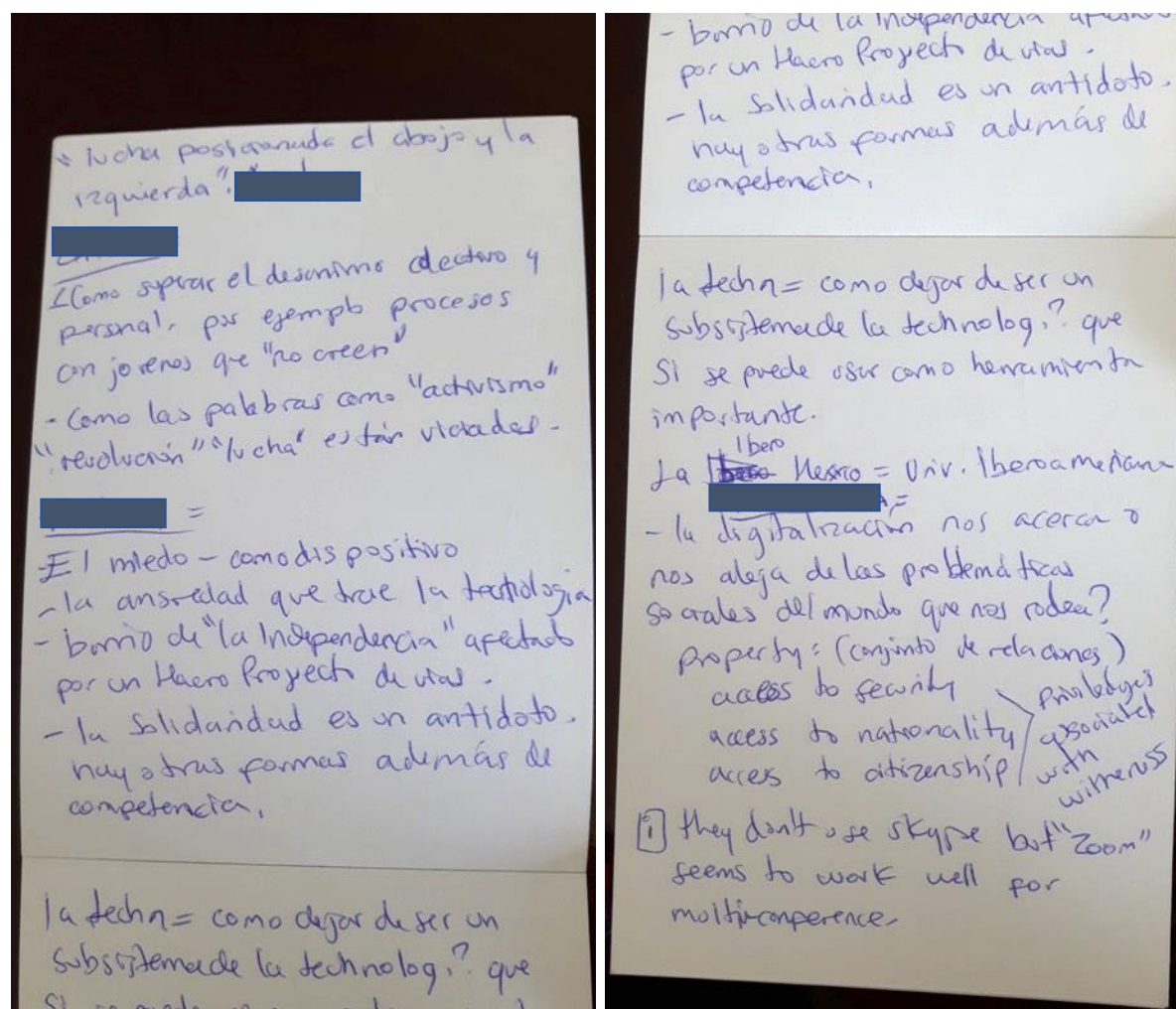
Image 4 Original fieldnotes sample, in Spanish and English

3.4.2 Netnographic exercises

Place-based participant observation during my field trips was complemented
by netnographic exercises before, during, after and in-between trips. This was not
only due to the constraints of studying a city remotely from a university in a different
continent, but also to access a variety of narratives and to contrast assumptions and
get to richer interpretations. First impressions formed via online observation can be
tested against the experiences from the fieldwork in the city. The testing is not
merely to confirm or reject assumptions, but also to see how different the local
activist scene, as well as the municipality's initiatives, are perceived in social media,
and in the face-to-face or offline interactions in the city.

I approached sources on the Internet and social media with various purposes
depending on the stage of my research. Before the first field visit, it helped me to
build an initial picture of the field with key actors, organisations, possible contacts

and to identify gate keepers. In order to structure the research and identify the most relevant sub-cases of study, I intuitively started following people, groups and organisations on Twitter and Facebook, while being forwarded to different websites such as newspapers, blogs and local journals that were shared in people's communications. I started making notes, mapping, and archiving important posts for future analysis. I used common spreadsheets and word processor software to systematise such information from the preliminary stage. Thus, without realising, I was already making my first steps into netnography. A practice that gained more sense and systematization during the development of the research, following pertinent literature on the matter, such as Postill and Pink (2012), Pink (2016) and Kozinets (2015).

During fieldworks, as mentioned before, the communications and organisational activities took place in-between face-to-face encounters and digital media. This period was the most intense in terms of keeping track of what was happening online, as part of my netnographic exercise, but also offline as place-based participant observation. Keeping organised notes that exclusively showed internet-based observations proved to be difficult. Therefore, my field notes included observations I gathered from – and in between – both, online and offline conversations. Initially I thought of this as a constraint for the systematisation of the information gathered. However, what that situation helped me to confirm was that it was impractical and futile to separate online and offline elements of the information exchange that happened on an everyday basis. In general, key ideas and projects were discussed in continuous – and often disorganised – manner, no matter where they were taking place. Thus, I also accepted the fact that during on-site fieldwork my observations were also a reflection of such shuffled but constant way of communication.

> *"The everyday life of the social media ethnographer involves living part of one's life on the internet, keeping up to date with and participating and collaborating in social media discussions." (Postill & Pink, 2012:128)*

Between field visits and once back in the UK, the use of social media was key to keep conversations going and get updated about evolving situations that were relevant for the research. As a matter of fact, maintaining that daily connection with the field, once I left Manizales, proved to be difficult in terms of defining an end to the

fieldwork. Because many activities from the socio-territorial movements studied were taking place when I finished my field trip, it seemed there was always something important to add into my notes. However, by mid-November 2018 I put an end to the netnographic exercise, considering I had plenty of data to be analysed in relation to my research questions.

Data collected online:

Postill and Pink (2012:128) state that there are "five overlapping sub-practices or routines [in the digital ethnographic exercise]: catching up, sharing, exploring, interacting and archiving". In my experience, I had to add two more practices: building rapport and contributing. Some of the most interesting observations I made were possible because I was part of five WhatsApp groups and one collaborative Facebook page. Therefore, it meant I first had to contact and gain access to such spaces by being invited from the organisers. It also meant that, as a member of such groups, I was expected to contribute and not only observe what had being said (except for one WhasApp group from the Rio Blanco movement, which purpose was more informative and eventually had more than 200 participants).

I kept notes of significant steps and findings during the practices above mentioned. For example, noting when and how I became member of those discussion groups, or when I found new links, blogs, websites or posts. Also, I kept screenshots of important pieces of conversations or relevant posts found on Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp. I used such screenshots with discretion, anonymising individual names and phone numbers if an image had to be shared with others, which only happened during academic presentations in Newcastle and Manizales. Aside from using screenshots as a complement to my fieldnotes, I did not use them for a more systematic analysis. However, relevant content in them was added as notes to my records.

In general, I treated some of the information found online, through websites but also on social media as naturally occurring data. According to Silverman (2013:133), some qualitative researchers argue that interviews and discussion groups might create artificial research environments. In order to avoid that, some researchers prefer the research of naturally occurring data, this means data that occurs without

the intervention of the researcher. In doing so, data can show things that the researcher could have not imagined but that are still connected to the research interest. However, in my case, not all the online content I gathered could be considered naturally occurring, here I refer to the group chats and the collaborative Facebook page. In such scenarios, my participation had an impact in the content, therefore in the information gathered and observations made from those.

In my case, however, there was a need for research-provoked data expected to gather from interviews, and interactions with people in the field.

3.4.3 Interviews as conversations

Following on Skinner (2012; and Kvale, 1996), conducting an interview as a conversation helps the researcher in gaining insights into the interviewee's "deliberations, perspectives, viewpoints, understandings, points of view, reactions, plans, imaginings, jealousies, strategies, hostilities, madnesses, reasonings, hurts, ambitions, loves, losses - verily, his or her life stories past, present and future" (Skinner, 2012:10). By having a personal understanding of the Colombian culture, I foresaw that it would feel more natural to gain insights about a variety of topics, some more delicate than others, if enquiries were integrated into a conversation, instead of a formal interview. Therefore, this method informed the way in which I conducted interviews in the field.

This informal or semi-structured type of interview has a clear purpose, a beginning, an end, and a structure based on themes, but has more open-ended questions in comparison with a formal structured interview. It also seeks for a coproduction of knowledge from the give-and-take at the heart of a fluid conversation. Hence its value as a more natural mechanism to create a temporary egalitarian relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (O'Reilly, 2009; Skinner, 2012). The knowledge gained by this type of interview is narrative, language-based, and therefore, it faces problems on the translation and interpretation of the content. However, the coherence of the interview can be traced in the narrative, compared and triangulated with other methods if needed. Interviews can be replicated, are comparable and open to falsification, thus it can be called science, as well as art or skill, depending on the purposes and definitions used. (Skinner, 2012)

During fieldwork, I tailored each interview depending on the participant, and the context of the relationship I had with them at that point, depending on perceived familiarity and levels of trust (O'Reilly, 2009). However, all interviews were semi-structured and conducted as relaxed conversations, as much as possible. Also, drawing recommendations from the literature, I tried to make participants feel comfortable, giving them a chance to propose a preferred place and time to meet, usually alongside a coffee in a nice place – following the Colombian tradition, but also being flexible to adapt to some of their busy schedules. Thus, some of the interviews were done in the workplaces of the participants, which was the common case for interviews with public officers. Naturally, some interviews took more time and covered more topics than others, which is something expected during informal conversations. I foresaw this and was not concerned about how different the outcomes could be. Nevertheless, I made an effort to cover all key questions and topics in every interview.[4] Most of the time I had some premade notes in a small notebook to remind myself of the crucial points to include in the conversation. Therefore, longer interviews were usually an organic result of the conversation, for example, participants did often elaborate on a particular topic with a personal experience, a current project or a recent situation to exemplify their point. Also frequently, conversations temporarily forsook the initial question or proposed topic, and I had to steer it back without making the interviewee feel rushed or uncomfortable. Sometimes, during those apparent topic deviations something new but relevant emerged. For example, it was during one of those moments when a finding started to take form; it happened when an interviewee shared her point of view, almost complaining about the way in which digital innovation in the city was aimed at the elites (i.e., private industry and recognised research centres). Before that conversation, I had not included this particular topic in the interviews' design, but I did afterwards.

I conducted sixteen interviews in total between the 31st of August 2017 and the 24th of May 2018. Many more – and equally relevant – conversations informed this research. However, I only count as interviews those that were done and recorded as

---

[4] See an example list of topics and questions I used on interviews in Appendix 3

such; all with the agreement and consent of the participants. The group of interviewees was formed by:

- Three academics (One from the school of planning and architecture, and two from computer sciences. All with projects related to participation, democracy, digital innovation, or a mix of these).
- Four public officers working in the Municipality. (One from the Digital Government Office, one from the Press Office, one from the ICT and Competitiveness Secretary, and one from the Planning Office).
- Two from the private sector. (Business owners involved with digital development and applications for education, democratic and social purposes).
- Four social leaders of various levels of experience and commitment, who participated in one or various of the sub-cases studied. Some also consider themselves as academics, or activists, and one was also a public officer in the regional government.
- Two people from the local third sector, who had supported some of the initiatives from the sub-cases studied but replied to more conservative agendas. (The organisations they represented were chaired by recognised members of the local and national commercial sector).
- Two representatives from the MinTIC (Ministry of ICT), interviewed simultaneously in Bogota.

The people I interviewed represented a variety of roles and relationships with the different topics studied in this research. This in turn, allowed me to gather pertinent insights, proposing a diversity of viewpoints and situations needed to avoid simplification in the analysis.

These interviews worked in parallel with the other methods employed in this research, helping me to build a more heterogenous account of local dynamics, struggles, possibilities and limitations, around participation, collective actions, perceptions around digital innovation and uses of digital media. Often, I would play a naïve – but respectful – role in certain interviews, asking the participant to expand on a determinate point having them assume I had little information about it. For example, there was a common situation that several interviewees brought to the conversation without me specifically asking about it, thus I used these opportunities

to encourage them to tell me their version of what and why it happened. It was regarding the Rio Blanco movement (presented in Chapter 4) and the situation, about which various participants wanted to talk, referred to when the socio-territorial movement demanded the planning office to reconsider, and cancel, the permits given to the housing development bordering the natural reserve Rio Blanco. Depending on the personal position, or the organisation they represented, interviewees had different accounts of what happened, as well as how important and effective it was, and the problems, or benefits, they saw within that particular situation of civic contestation.

The main challenge I found while conducting interviews was a practical one. In order to make interviews as enjoyable and informal as possible, to promote a good conversation, many took place in cafes and terraces. Most of such places had levels of noise I had not considered beforehand. It did not affect the conversation in itself, but the quality of the recording, which meant I had to listen to the audios more than once when processing the data. On the other hand, I noticed that the interviews that took place in offices did not feel as relaxed as the ones in cafes. The sound was clear in the recordings, but I believe some conversations felt restricted by the formal character of the spaces, particularly when there were interviewee's colleagues nearby who could have listened in on the conversation.

3.4.4 Perception exercises

On three occasions during fieldwork, I employed an exercise designed for small groups of participants, between 6 and 12 people, to promote discussions and gather different perceptions about participation, collective action and the uses and limitations of digital media in the local context. Similar to focus groups, the interactive aspect of these perception exercises promotes the exploring of different perspectives and encourage people to reply or reconsider their own understanding of the subject, based on their experiences (Hay, 2010:154). These scenarios are ideal to gain important insight into the many meanings that a single concept, such as citizen participation, can have locally. Thus, this method complemented the data collected by interviews, since individual perceptions are confronted with others in a short exercise of knowledge production (Hay, 2010).

The exercises were based on scenarios that were common to most of the participants but fictional, in other words, something that could have easily happened or had happened but in a fictional neighbourhood. That way there were no existing political, symbolic or emotional attachments to the place, that could condition or limit people's opinions, or derail the focus of the exercise. However, the fictional situation was taking place in Manizales, which was a common ground for the participants.

The first two sessions of the perception exercise took place during my first field visit, with a total of 6 groups and 24 participants. In groups of three, participants were asked to pretend they lived in a fictional neighbourhood called Verona and were asked to create a strategy to raise a local problem with the relevant authorities, to find prompt and long-term solutions. In this first version, the problem given was about the poor condition and lack of maintenance of pavements, as well as the informal uses people and service providers were given to these. Some examples included, people using pavements as parking, long-lasting public works that created holes and disruption, lack of regulation and control about the levelling, heights and finishing materials which had caused many accidents among neighbours. Each group was given a brief, a set of question to feed the debate, a black board, 7 pieces of a geometrical puzzle made of cork, and materials such as markers sticky notes, toothpicks, adhesive tape, pins, thread and white paper, to present their strategies in a graphic manner, as they preferred. In that sense, some groups used the cork pieces to indicate key spaces (i.e., the park, church, school of the neighbourhood) or institutions (i.e., the Planning Office, the Police, the Public Works Secretary, etc.), and some used the pieces and materials in other abstract ways.

For the third session, which took place during my second field visit as part of the RttC Workshop, the fictional scenario presented a different problem. We knew there might be younger participants attending the workshop, since a group of teachers and students from a high school were involved in the design of the workshop. Therefore, I wanted to use a topic that could be closer to everyone's affection, including teenagers. Then, the focus of the problem was no longer on the poor state of pavements but on the risk of losing the only park of the fictional neighbourhood, over the construction of a private parking building.

The outcomes of all three sessions were recorded in collaboration with a university fellow PhD student at that time, now Dr. Alexander Wilson, and his digital application called JigsAudio (Wilson & Tewdwr-Jones, 2019). Also, the results from the first two sessions were integrated into the JigsAudio website (Image 5).

jigsaudio.com

Estrategias de organización y participación ciudadana en torno al desarrollo urbano, en Manizales, Colombia.

El ejercicio

Como parte de un proyecto de investigacion doctoral en estrategias de participación ciudadana y usos de medios digitales, se propone un ejercicio basado en un escenario y un problema ficticio, pero no muy alejado de la realidad de la ciudad de Manizales. Los participantes son miembros de varias organizaciones ciudadanas locales, o con intereses personales o académicos en democracia local y participativa para una mejor ciudad.

El escenario

Ustedes pertenecen al mismo barrio de Manizales, digamos que se llama Verona (ya que hay tanto gusto por barrios con nombres Italianos en la ciudad) y es un barrio relativamente central. Tiene una población muy variada en cuanto a edades, oficios e ingresos económicos. Hay personas en el barrio que ganan el mínimo y hay otras pocas que ganan hasta 6 salarios mínimos. Hay una junta de acción comunal, pero menos del 20% de las personas del barrio saben quienes la conforman y donde queda su oficina. También hay unos líderes en el barrio que promueven distintos intereses, como liderazgos juveniles, artes y recreación, salud y deporte, y han conformado grupos pequeños de vecinos.

El problema!

Como muchos barrios de la ciudad, Verona está sobre una ladera con unas zonas muy pendientes, y sus andenes (como la mayoría en la ciudad) están en malas condiciones. No son continuos, ni en nivel ni en el ancho de los mismos, algunos se han convertido en bahias de parqueo, otros son interrumpidos por escalones, postes o basureros. Además algunos tramos son de acabados lisos que se tornan peligrosos cuando llueve. Ya han habido varios accidentes en el barrio, especialmente entre personas de la tercera edad, niños y población con problemas de movilidad. Ustedes mismos tienen personas cercanas que han sufrido accidentes por estos andenes. De hecho, esta es la segunda vez que se reúnen, en la primera se dieron a la tarea de recorrer el barrio para darse cuenta que no hay una sola manzana que tenga sus andenes continuos a la redonda. Están cansados de los accidentes en el barrio y quieren hacer algo al respecto. Necesitan que mas gente se interese y para que el problema sea reconocido y apropiado por todos, necesitan también que las autoridades competentes hagan algo pronto. Pero ... cómo hacerlo?

Haga click en el botón de play en las imágenes de abajo para escuchar los audios.

Para mayor información escríbanos al correo electrónico: l.pinzon-cardona2@newcastle.ac.uk

Síganos en Twitter

Desplaza la barra para oír más

Image 5 Screenshot from JigsAudio website. (source: https://jigsaudio.com/colombia.html)

"The JigsAudio device reads a radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag (similar to those used in contactless bank cards) on the jigsaw piece. The participant then records an audio clip (by pressing the record button) that is associated with their jigsaw piece and the piece is then placed within the jigsaw." (Wilson & Tewdwr-Jones, 2019:6) In these exercises, the piece with the RFID tag was the only square and coloured piece of the seven-pieces cork puzzle each group was given. At the

end of the sessions, each group scanned their strategies (built on top of the black board) with the JigsAudio device and recorded an explanation of their work for about 3 to 5 minutes.
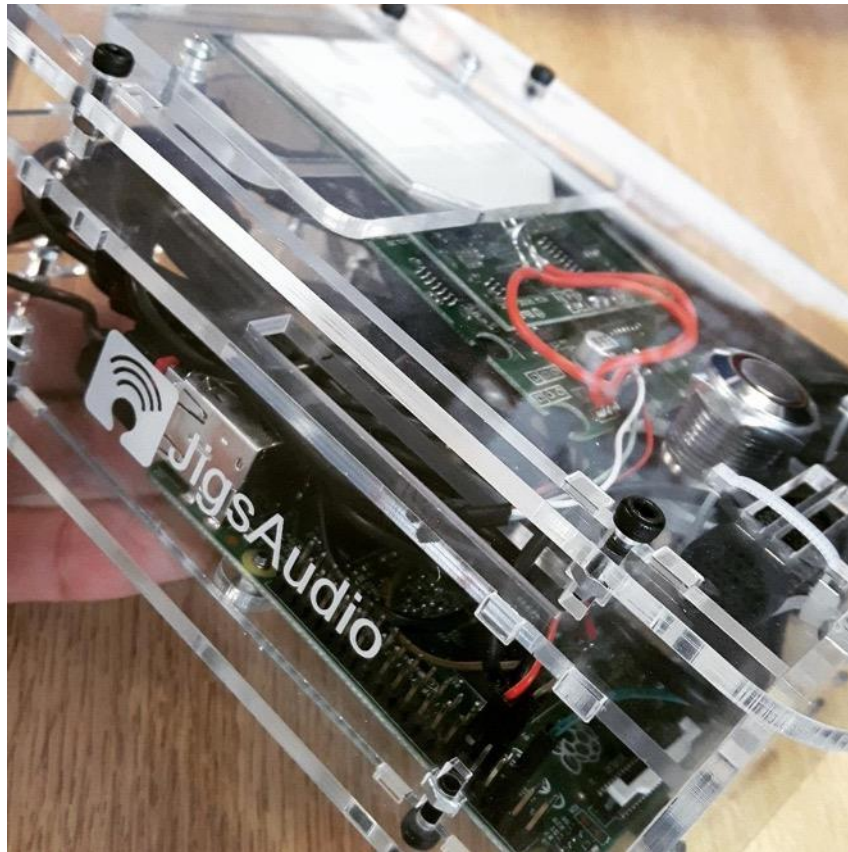
Image 6 JigsAudio device

The use of such a device was not indispensable to complete the exercises, however, it did prove to be a playful way to engage with participants and to integrate the 'digital' aspect – including its potential and limitations – into the discussion. The device Alexander built for these sessions had transparent covers, revealing the internal elements (Image 6). This resulted from a practical necessity, to avoid possible problems at airports security controls. However, that aspect of its design also promoted conversations about DIY technology and made participants interested in the last step of the exercise, the wrapping up. Once the JigsAudio website section

about Manizales was ready, I shared it with participants so they could see the photos and play the audios from each outcome.
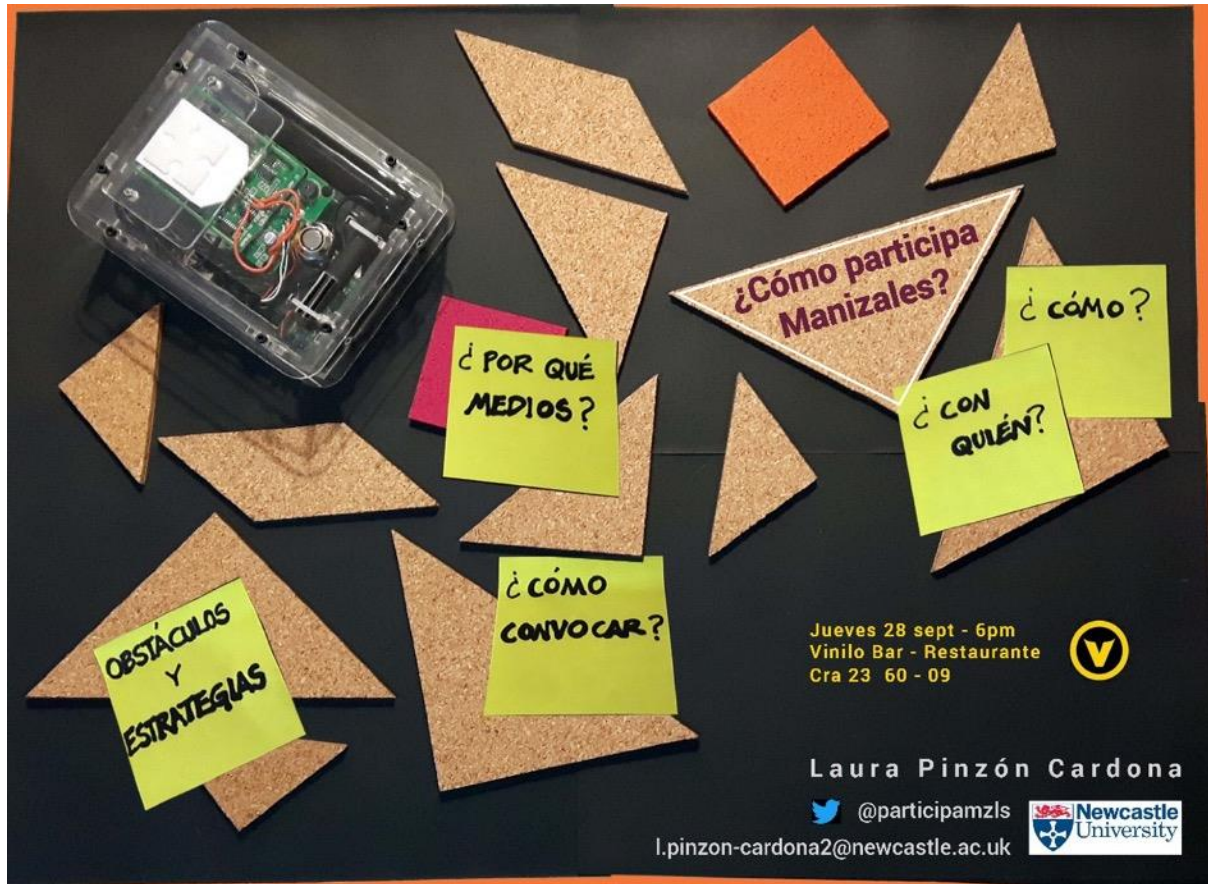
Image 7 Invitation used for the second session of the perception exercise

Image 8 Outcome of one group in session two of the exercise
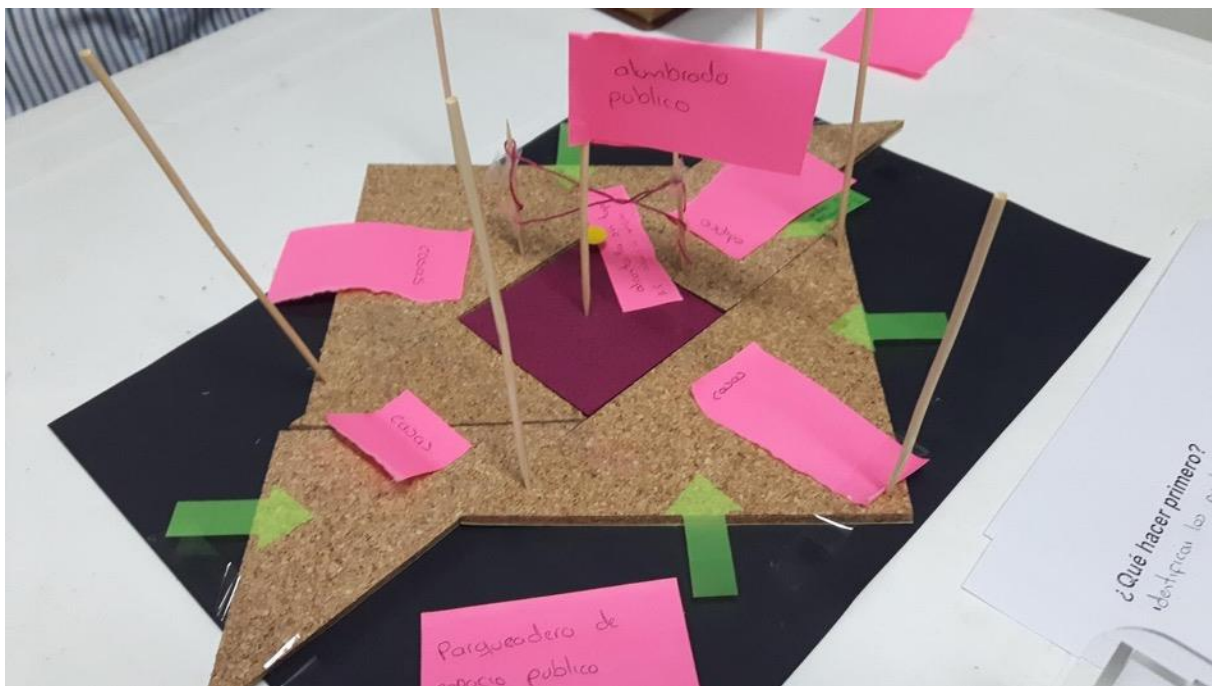
Image 9 Outcome of a group in session one of the exercise

In addition to the group exercises, I used two interactive posters to record people's preferences around their individual uses of social media, and opinions on the digital environment in Manizales (see Appendix 1 for detailed reports on each poster). These posters were included into the activities designed for the RttC Workshop (Image 10). From the amount of entries (stickers and notes) in the posters, it can be estimated that about 60 people interacted with the boards (Images 11 and 12). Poster 1 title translates 'I use my social media…', and the subtitles: 'for personal matters', on the top, 'to produce content' on the right, 'as working tools (or for education, civic organisations)' on the bottom, and ' to replicate information' towards the left. The colour of the sticker indicates the social media platform; blue for Facebook, purple for Twitter, green for WhatsApp and red for other applications.
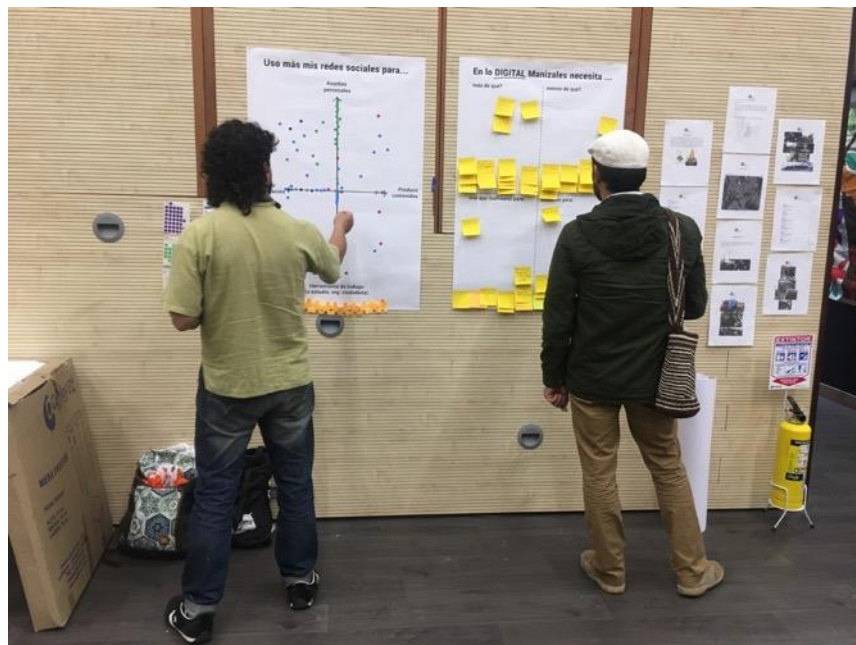
Image 10 Perception posters in the RttC Workshop
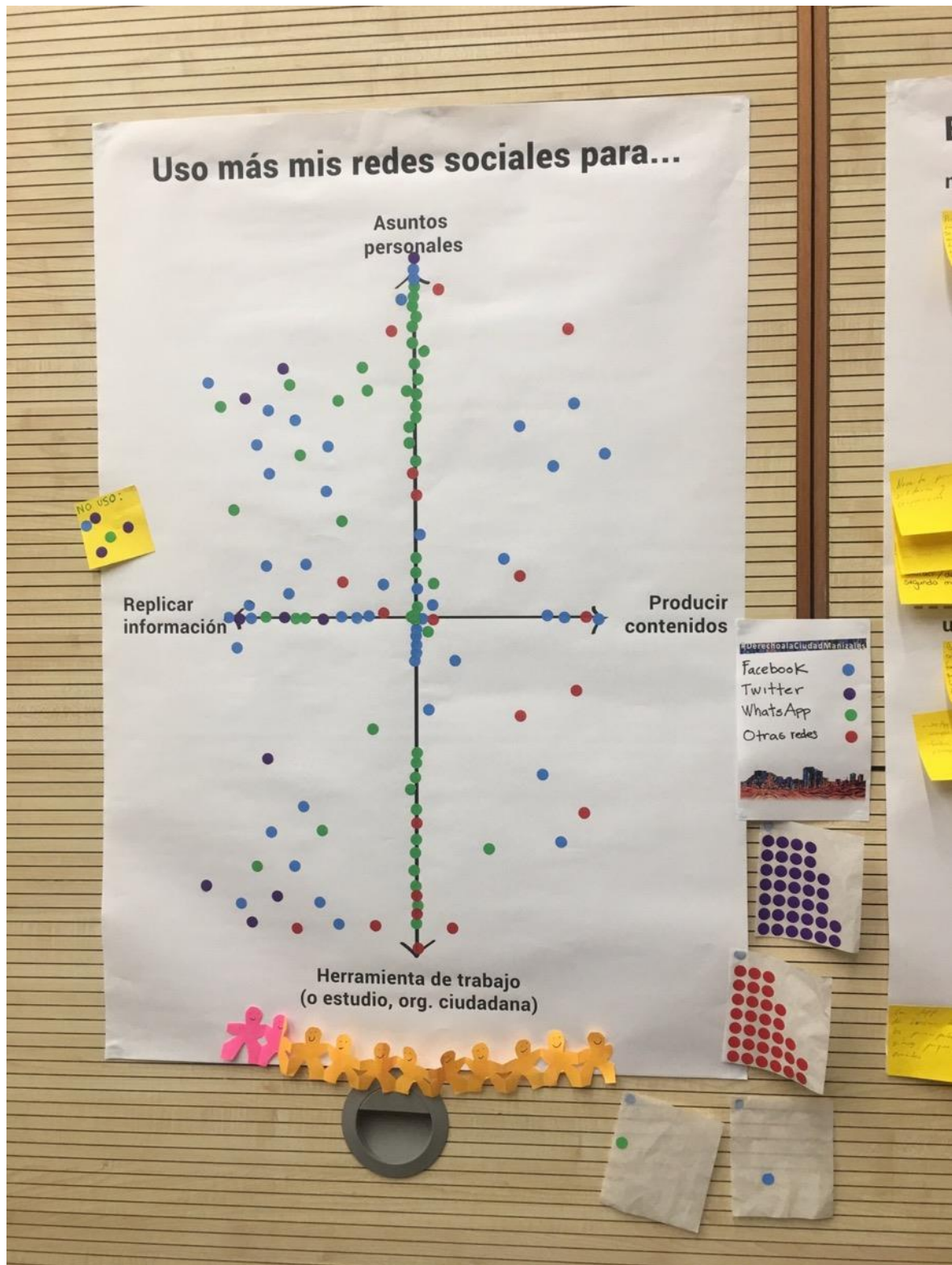
Image 11 Poster 1: I use my social media to...
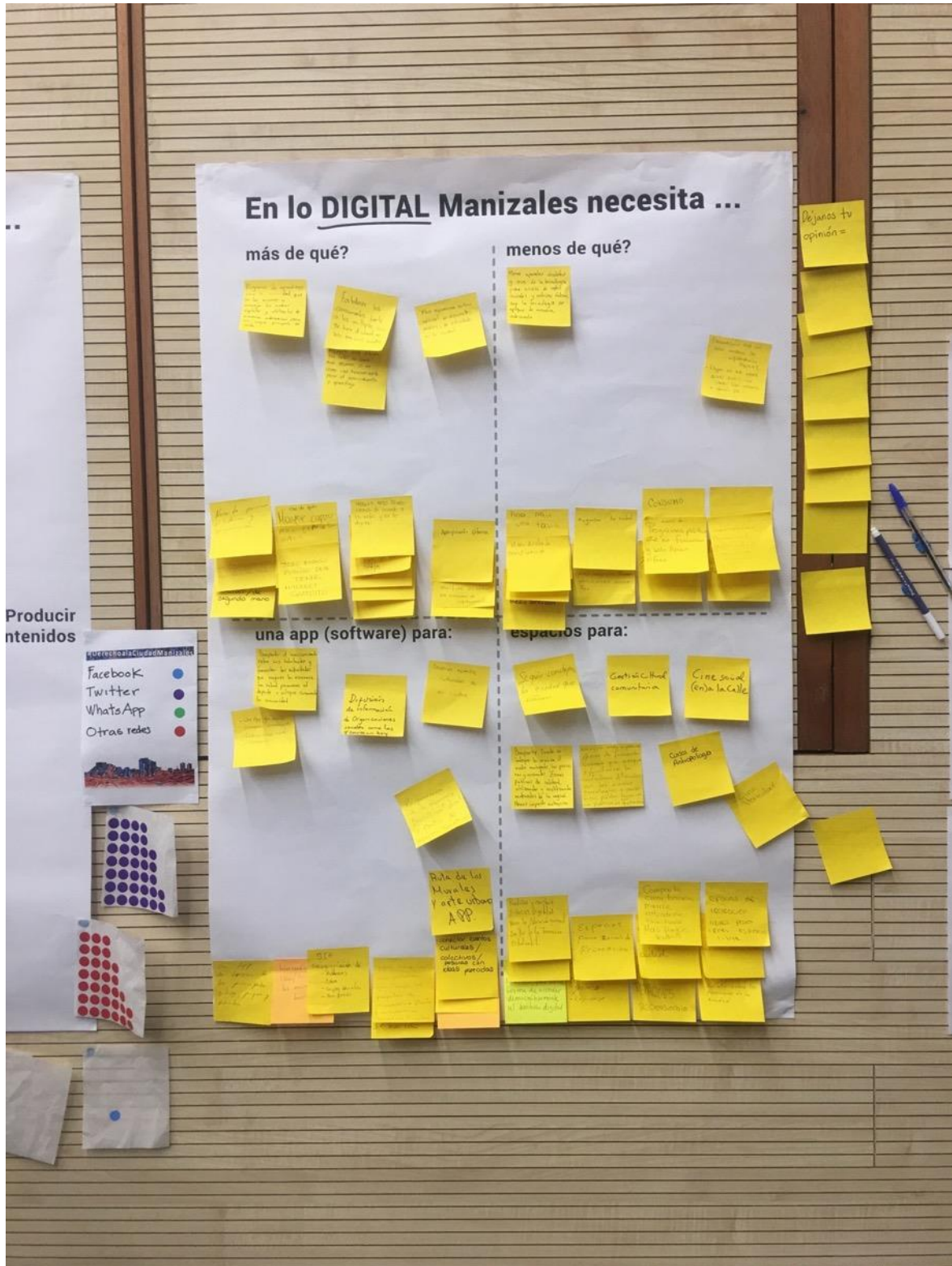
Image 12 Poster 2: In the 'Digital', Manizales needs...

Poster 2 translates 'In the 'Digital', Manizales needs...' and the four divisions complete the phrase with: 'more of what?' on the top left, 'less of what?' in the top

right, 'an app or software to:' on the bottom left, and 'spaces to:' on the bottom right. At the end of the day, this poster had 68 notes, excluding a few that were either illegible or added as a joke, with unrelated content to the exercise's intention.

The information obtained from these posters complemented the research data in which I based my findings and analysis. Content and observations were translated into English, recorded in a document, and used along with other documents to classify data into categories and themes.

3.4.5 Data analysis methodology

The data analysed in this research is formed by the transcriptions of the interviews, posters, field notes and weekly reports sent to my supervisors during fieldwork, audios and relevant transcriptions of the JigsAudio exercises, notes taken regularly from the netnographic exercise, including screenshots and notes from WhatsApp chat groups, Facebook pages, Facebook Messenger conversations, Twitter accounts and emails.

Soon after fieldwork, I created a list of the type of data collected and some initial observations from the interviews (see Appendix 2). This effort allowed me to do transcriptions, take notes and begin categorising my data in an organised way, while giving priority to certain interviews and notes that seemed richer in content.

I transcribed the interviews in Spanish, in order to preserve the original comments and original voices from participants as long as possible during the analysis. However, I did not transcribe them word by word. Instead, I used denaturalised transcribing, focusing on the meanings and perceptions shared during the conversations – which inevitably gets affected by my position as a researcher and my own voice (Ross, 2010). Thus, I transcribed the most relevant parts of the conversations without writing down pauses, interruptions, or uncompleted phrases. I paid particular attention to interviewees' answers, anecdotes, comments, opinions and perceptions, transcribing these as close as how they express them, only when relevant, whilst summarising information that was complementary or that has been already expressed with detail previously in the conversation.

The first step in analysing the data was a process of categorisation. I first brought the data together using Word documents. Then, I started classifying my field notes, and weekly reports during fieldwork, since I had included in those not only daily observations and descriptions of the fieldwork activities, but also some initial reflections, which gave this group of data a richness that allowed me to find and structure a strong initial set of categories.

An initial categorisation was done by hand over a printed set of files, by reading them and highlighting key topics with various colours. Afterwards, I used Nvivo to complete the categorisation while making comprehensive links among several documents from my database, including key interviews, and all of the weekly reports from the fieldwork. This allowed me to group notes under the same category and study them in relation with one another. It is important to clarify here that while using Nvivo proved helpful during this initial stage of categorisation, I decided not to use it systematically and in a strict way in all my documents of data. Instead, I continued the categorisation and analysis using Word and printed documents, but keeping a record of new categories and themes based on the structure obtained from Nvivo. Thus, interviews' transcriptions and notes on netnography, as well as the perception exercises were then classified using the initial set of categories and adding new ones when needed. Halfway through the categorisation exercise, I group them into broad themes, which allowed me to evaluate how the data collected was dealing with the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This reflective step proved satisfactory and encouraged me to restructure some of the research questions slightly, for a clearer connection with the data analysed.

The analysis of the data I collected started in an intuitive way during the fieldwork itself. While taking field notes and preparing reports for my supervisors, I started to find important themes and useful anecdotes, some of them were somehow expected and some surprised me and enrich my reflections about the field. Consequently, the exercise of taking daily notes and writing weekly reports served to reflect and revaluate the type of conversations I wanted to have during the rest of the time in Manizales. I thus adjusted some of the questions in later interviews, and conversations, to confirm or confront impressions I got from earlier observations.

3.5 Concluding reflections

"All researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of their research. And, depending on the extent and nature of these connections, questions arise as to whether the results of research are artefacts of the researcher's presence and inevitable influence on the research process. For these reasons considerations of reflexivity are important for all forms of research." (Davies, 1999:3)

Learning from the history of anthropology and training methods in psychotherapy, Alsop (2002) explains the importance of self-reflexivity in ethnography. Being critically aware of our preconceived ideas, and meanings of the studied topic, is the first step into widening our horizons to account for the new. It is a regular exercise of identifying and fighting, when needed, that inner compass that will try to take us to the comfort of the familiar, the already known.

Self-reflexivity can only happen once we acknowledge that the experiences of the researcher are as relevant to the academic exercise as the texts read. Based on this reflection, Dan Rose (1990:17) claims that ethnography needs to go beyond a role assumed while conducting inquiry into culture. Rose (1990) calls for bringing our lives and experiences into the ethnographic exercise, in order to break the narrowed academic conventions, and to be able to interpret what is different to what we know, to what we have read in books.

Therefore, putting myself into the field, while constantly reflecting on what it entailed, needed to be integrated into my research exercise before, during and after my fieldwork. Doing this allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and interactions, to examine the cultural experience I was studying (Jones et al., 2013). After all, the cases, the data, and the methods for doing the research and analysing it, came from decisions taken by me, as the researcher. Thus, acknowledging this and reflecting upon these decisions was an important exercise to face biases and evaluate the direction of the study in the different stages of the research process.

In this chapter I presented the reasoning behind the methods used in the research, with a clear focus on participant observation exercises in between the online and offline spaces of fieldwork. In order to give the necessary tools to the reader to

understand the background of the research design, I also explained my positionality as a researcher in an ambiguously familiar context, as well as the possibilities and limitations that came with it. The methods employed were described to account for the means in which I arrive to the findings and analysis, highlighting some particularities that naturally made my reading of the experience unique, but none the less relatable to other researchers in similar contexts.

Chapter 4. Citizen participation and collective action for spatial justice in Manizales

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the case of Manizales and three socio-territorial movements in the city, which are the sub-cases of the study. To do so, it is necessary to present my views on the national context of participation and collective action first, as tools to a better reading of this research's findings and reflections. The content in this chapter comes from an interpretation of secondary data, regional and national literature, as well as primary data from my experience in the field. Sections are presented as a mix of descriptive elements that serve as context, and personal observations as outcomes of my fieldwork in Manizales. Additionally, the narrative changes throughout the sections, going from the national to the city and neighbourhood scales, and from the formal structures of participation to everyday stories of collective action.

The first part of the chapter explores the national context of Colombia with a focus on the culture of citizen participation, and the recent historical events in which regulations have been framed in the country. This is followed by a focus on the national government's engagement with digital participation.

The second part presents the case study of Manizales, analysed from different perspectives, which are each explored in sections. The first section presents the ways in which the city is represented by the local government. The second examines Manizales Land Use and Regulation Plans (POT- *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*) and its participatory elements. The third section presents local views of the city rooted in disagreement with planning decisions, which relates directly with the sub-cases of the study, and the fourth section presents observations about academia and private sector, and their participation as collaborators for socio-territorial movements.

The third part of the chapter presents the sub-cases of study, which are three socio-territorial movements that emerged in contestation of urban planning decisions in Manizales. These socio-territorial movements served to understand everyday

approaches towards participation, configurations and strategies for collective action and to depict and analyse the most common online and offline media used for collective action in the city.

The fourth and final part of the chapter takes the reader close to my fieldwork experience and into everyday situations of collective action and citizen participation. To do so, I present four pen portraits of participants with different roles and opinions about participation, digital media and collective action. Lastly, three vignettes expose crucial situations from my fieldwork that will serve as reference for analysis in the next chapters.

4.2 Colombian context on participation and collective action

This section draws on literature to provide an initial context on participation and collective action in Colombia, which serves as the lenses through which foreign literature can be studied, while promoting discussions grounded on the Colombian case that can also be relevant in other contexts.

There are three crucial elements that have influenced recent dynamics of democracy, participation and collective action in Colombia. One of these elements is the violent conflict between illegal armed groups – from guerrilla and paramilitaries, and the army, which has lasted more than fifty years and began to deescalate since the Peace Agreement of August 2016. The second element, that coexists with the armed conflict – as cause and consequence, is the political system, commonly associated with corruption and nepotism. And the third element, is the regulatory framework encouraging citizen participation in all levels of governance in a variety of spheres in society. Here, I am referring particularly to the National Constitution of 1991 and the Land Use Planning Regulation of 1997 (*Ley de Ordenamiento Territorial 388 de 1997*).

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the political system in Colombia has been marked by two characteristics: patronage (*clientelismo* in Spanish) and authoritarianism. Both culturally perceived as legitimate in the political dynamics between rulers and ruled (Gonzalez & Velasquez, 2003). Patronage and corruption, plus the growing mistrust from citizens to politics and politicians, opened an abyss

between citizens and public management, which primarily constitutes a powerful obstacle to participation (Gonzalez & Velasquez, 2003; Uprimny & Villegas, 2004). Consequently, the term of 'participation' suffers stigmatisation since people tend to associate participation with manipulation and other contentious political practices. Beyond apathy, there is a certain disillusionment with the participatory institutional framework, and mistrust in its capacity to look after citizens' demands and aspirations (Gonzalez & Velasquez, 2003:32).

The 1991 reform to the Colombian National Constitution was a key moment for the history of political participation in the country. The reform's objective was to create a change from the closed democracy of the *Frente Nacional*[5], towards a new structure able to allocate many postponed civic demands from Colombian citizens, mostly intending better representation outside the traditional political parties. The reform was done under the premise of creating a participatory democracy (Gonzalez & Velasquez, 2003:13), producing a regulatory framework for participation where citizens could advocate for their needs, demand more responsibility over public power and debate directly with government representatives. However, other authors understand this reform as a government response to the global market pressure of the moment. For instance, to redefine the ways in which the state regulates society, as a guarantee to keep better levels of legitimacy in order to participate more actively in international markets (Vargas, 1994:15; Bolivar, 2001:213, Acebedo, 2013).

In the practice, participation found several obstacles, despite efforts integrated in the new Constitution. The first obstacle was the legislative rigidity in itself. Despite seeking to create spaces for citizen participation, its strict legislative frameworks ended up reducing participation to a one-way consultation, information and auditing, with little access to important decisions on budgeting and development planning (Gonzalez and Velasquez, 2003; Vargas, 1994). Additionally, calls to participate were by law divided in relation to the various identity's of citizens (whether

---

[5] The Frente Nacional, was a period in Colombian history between 1958 and 1974 marked by a political agreement between the two ruling parties – Conservadores and Liberales. Such agreement put an end to the conflict between these parties, which had lasted for over a century. However, the Frente Nacional is referred as a close democracy because during that time, Colombia was governed in turns between Conservadores and Liberales; it did not allow for political representation from people outside those two traditional parties. The non-conformity due to the political misrepresentation, and the revolutionary ideologies of the time encouraged the creation of new guerrilla groups in the country. (Paredes & Diaz, 2007)

indigenous, women or black communities, for example, but without assuming individuals could carry multiple identities), and the many territorial and governmental scales, but this was never articulated towards a common project of society (Bolivar, 2001). Thus, consensus reached on one scale finds obstacles in many different ones, ironically supported by the same regulatory framework.

A second obstacle was, and still is, the national landscape of terror and violence spread along the entire country. From city mayors to community leaders, everyday actors of citizen participation and collective action have been affected either by guerrilla or paramilitaries' presence in their cities. According to Gonzalez & Velasquez (2003:19) between 1997 and 2002, 54 mayors were murdered, 17 were kidnaped and 554 were threatened by armed groups. Moreover, to understand the implications on citizens' initiatives, Ramirez (2008) presents an image of Medellin, in which paramilitaries kept killing and threatening community leaders after a supposed demobilisation process that promised the end of paramilitarism in 2003. Violence in Colombia has hampered the emergence and growth of collective action, both in rural and urban areas (Gonzales Gil, 2006). Security and political dynamics differ from city to city, and internally too, in each neighbourhood or *comuna*, and not all suffer at the same level as the Medellin example presented by Ramirez (2008). Nevertheless, in the Colombian context, it is important to understand violent censorship and fear as common factors shaping collective action and community representation (Gonzales Gil, 2006)

A final point to make, is according to Varela (2015) the map of local governance and territorial development in Colombia is changing due to globalisation, and more specifically, the pressure of global competitivity and desired standards for cities to become members of international network of cities (Watson, 2006). Consequently, such political reconfiguration has impacts in the public policies, social processes and practices around citizen engagement and participation. However, the two principal outcomes in terms of the local transformation in the eyes of global competitivity are around urban renewal and the digitalization of cities (i.e., integrating geographical information systems and data analysis into areas such as transport, tourism, marketing, heritage, etc.) (Varela, 2015).

Land Use and Regulation Planning

In Colombia, there is a national regulation in place since 1997 for Land Use Planning (*Ley de Ordenamiento Territorial 388 de 1997*). According to this law, all towns and cities need to design and implement a Land Use and Regulation Plan (or POT for their name in Spanish: *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*) specific to each municipality. POTs are projected to last for 15 to 20 years and serve as local guides for urban development, as well as the framework for local urban regulations, following the particular conditions of the territories in relation to socio-cultural and environmental conditions, as well as real estate dynamics. The objectives of POTs, according to the national law, is to respond to principles of sustainability, equity, and competitiveness. Moreover, there is an evident integration of some elements from literature about the Right to the City, from Lefebvre ([1968] 1996) and Harvey (2008), into the guidelines for POTs (Sanabria, 2016) (see section 2.2.2). Such key elements present in the Territorial Planning Law are related to the full enjoyment of citizenship, the democratic governance of the city and the social function of private estate in the city (Ley 388 de 1997). POTs are required to integrate citizen participation in the design process; however, each municipality is left to set the circumstances and extent of participation in their territories. Consequently, lacking regulatory framework to establish ideal standards, participatory efforts among local governments are often discussed in terms of good practices.

As presented in section 2.2.2, the legacy of Comprehensive Planning is still visible in planning and participatory practices in the Colombian city, limiting the inclusive and pluralistic potential of participation. Instead, it is approached as a municipality-controlled exercise where key decisions are made by experts, in the name of cities' multi-sectoral sustainability.

4.2.1 National stances on digital media for citizen participation

As mentioned in Chapter 1, since 2009 the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry (Min TIC) of the Colombian government have promoted and coordinated digital governance strategies at all scales in the country, among other tasks also related to digital innovation for education and socio-economic development. All government bodies, from the municipal to national scale, should

follow the Policy Manual for Digital Government (MinTIC, 2018). This Policy Manual was created to promote more proactive and innovative public institutions, meeting the needs of the increasingly digitalised society, through the use of ICT (MinTIC, 2018:6). According to the Policy Manual, the ultimate goal of the State by using digital technologies is to improve the relationship between citizens and government in an environment that fosters trust. Moreover, such a digital environment should be simple, co-responsible, foreseeable, agile, secure, easy to appropriate and must allow permanent dialogue among different actors (MinTIC, 2018:15). The Policy Manual is structured around two components or strains of action; (a) ICT for the State, and (b) ICT for the society. These components merge towards five goals to achieve (a) reliable and quality digital services, (b) safe and efficient internal processes, (c) decision making based on data, (d) citizen empowerment through open data, and (e) smart cities and territories (MinTIC, 2018:17).

Regarding digital citizen participation, there is an organisation called *Urna de Cristal,* which works in connection to the MinTIC promoting governmental transparency and citizen participation with a transmedia approach and a focus on digital media (*Urna de Cristal*, 2020). *Urna de Cristal* advises municipalities and public institutions in how to optimise citizen participation programs and it has worked closely with institutions in Manizales on several occasions (see section 4.3.1). According to an interview with a representative from *Urna de Cristal*, and drawing from their website (*Urna de Cristal*, 2020), this organisation - along with people from the MinTIC and the Ministry of the Interior, also promoted citizen initiatives regarding political control and social mobilisation in 2017 (Redacción Política, 2017). However, aside from public recognition, the support from *Urna de Cristal* to civic initiatives had minor impacts, and awarded initiatives could not make progress due to lack of political will from relevant authorities. Therefore, after evaluating such limitations, *Urna de Cristal* changed their approach in 2018 to work exclusively with government bodies. As reported by my interviewee, *Urna de Cristal*'s new strategy is to improve citizen participation from within government bodies, so they are better prepared and open to citizens' proposals.

4.3 Manizales

Table 1 Information about Manizales

Department (political division)	Caldas
Population	400.154 by 2018 (Projection by DANE, 2019)
Year of foundation	1849
Economy	Coffee, Higher Education, Agriculture, Technology Services, Tourism, Cultural Industry
Unemployment rate	13.6% by February 2019 (CIE, 2019)
Poverty rate	13.8% by February 2017 (CIE, 2019)
Informality rate	40.0% by February 2019 (CIE, 2019)

Image 13 Manizales, Colombia

Manizales is the capital city of Caldas, which is one of the 32 departments – political subdivisions of the territory – of Colombia. Manizales is a medium size and hilly city

in a tempered zone in the Cordillera Central (Central mountain range) of Colombia. Its population was of around 400.154 in 2018 (Projection by DANE, 2019). By 2019, Manizales was the city with the lowest percentage of monetary poverty in Colombia (DANE, 2019).

Manizales was founded in 1849, 170 years ago, and 39 years after Colombia won its independence from Spain. The first colonisers in the territory were explorers from Antioquia, a Colombian region north-west from Manizales. Soon after the foundation, Manizales became the second most important city of Antioquia, after Medellin. Due to Manizales' origin, its popular culture, traditions and accent of *Manizalitas* (people from Manizales), are still similar to those from Medellin and Antioquia. Nowadays, the city has communities with diverse backgrounds and identities, including indigenous groups, afro-Colombian communities, *campesinos* (peasant) and various ethnic minorities form Manizales population. For a great part of the last century, the city was a major centre for the coffee business in the country, as well as other agricultural production from the region.

In comparison with other Colombian cities, Manizales is recognised as one of the most desirable cities where to live according to El Tiempo (2015), and the online ranking website Rankia (2019). Living in Manizales is allegedly less expensive than in bigger cities like Bogota or Medellin, where housing, education, transport and service prices tend to be higher. Moreover, Manizales is known nationally for being a university city, with fifteen higher education institutions, including three important public universities. It receives thousands of students from cities far and near. By 2017 there were 46.931 university students in the city. (Manizales Como Vamos, 2018).

Manizales' governance model for the last 30 years can only be understood as a technocratic model, which deals with the city based on a business approach. Such a model of governance is linked with ideas and practices from Comprehensive Planning (see section 2.2.2), which can still be perceived in some offices and municipal staff in Manizales, particularly those with more conservative views on the narrow roles of citizens in urban decision-making.

Technocratic model of governance has been studied by numerous Colombian and Latin American authors (e.g. Carrion, 2007; Acebedo, 2014), and it was also mentioned in various conversations with participants in the field. The privatization of services that were previously public, as well as the shaping of urban regulations and political structures to attract and benefit private investment, are two of the key features of this governance model that is found globally (Watson, 2006). In countries like Colombia, where corruption has tainted for many decades the systems of governance, having technocrats in power seemed at some point in history as an appealing solution to break the cycles of corruption. Old school politicians, who belonged to the same ruling families, were commonly associated with corruption and tended to have professional degrees in law or politics. However, they were not perceived as the ones building more infrastructure, which seems, in a nutshell, what many Colombians associate with urban progress. Ultimately, this change in governance (i.e., having engineers, managers or economists running the city) did not solve the corruption problem that still affects Colombian governments. (Carrion, 2007; Acebedo, 2014)

Local pride and perceptions on participation

From my own experience, and also from several conversations with participants, it is common for people to describe Manizales as a conservative city in various senses, including the religious, political and cultural, with an historical tendency to support right wing parties. Furthermore, residents of Manizales tend to be proud of their city given the good image it has at national level. In relation to that, some participants argued that this civic pride can be harmful for groups claiming social or spatial justice (see section 4.4.2).

That sense of common pride in Manizales does not seem merely cultural or based on traditions. Efforts from the government to improve conditions in different sectors of society have been recognised and have put Manizales in the top positions in rankings for social progress, quality of life, safety, education, among others (RCCV, 2016). Recently, most of these statistics that give *Manizalitas* more reasons to feel proud, come from reports of "*Manizales Como Vamos*" (a close translation is "Manizales, as we go so far"). *Manizales Como Vamos* is an initiative from a national network called "*Red de Ciudades Como Vamos*", which claims to generate trustable

and comparable information around issues such as quality of urban life and citizen participation in order to foster the exchange of good practices among participant local governments (RCCV, n.a.). The network is formed by 35 municipalities, including 13 capital cities. It is important to mention that the network was founded and still partially funded by the Cámaras de Comercio (Commerce Council) (RCCV, n.a.).[6]

During my fieldwork I noticed a great heterogeneity of views and opinions around participation, collective action and the possible roles of digital media in the city. Such multiple versions of how these local matters are perceived in Manizales call for a representation that allows variety. Therefore, the next sections build up a depiction of the city through different scenarios, or views of Manizales: from the local government, from civic collectives in disagreement with the status quo of the city, and from advocacy collaborators from academia and the private sector. It is also common to find contradictory opinions among actors with a shared vision of the city, however, and without falling into generalisation, the following scenarios gather some of the common positions in terms of possibilities and obstacles for citizen engagement in Manizales.

4.3.1 The city's profile from the local government

The set of photographs below are taken from the municipality's website. These are, to some extent, a reflection of how the municipality portrays the city. The cathedral, Manizales municipality's buildings, monuments to colonisers and national heroes, the mountains surrounding the city, a parade during the annual bullfighting festival, fireworks shows and public music concerts, make up the group of images the municipality chose to share with their online visitors. Along these images, a preliminary vision can be formed of what the local government highlights as the principal institutions and events in the city.

---

[6] All department (geopolitical divisions) in Colombia has a Commerce Council, which are regional developmental agencies, operating with public functions but independent from the government. Commerce Councils represent private interests of associated companies from the productive and economic sector in each department.
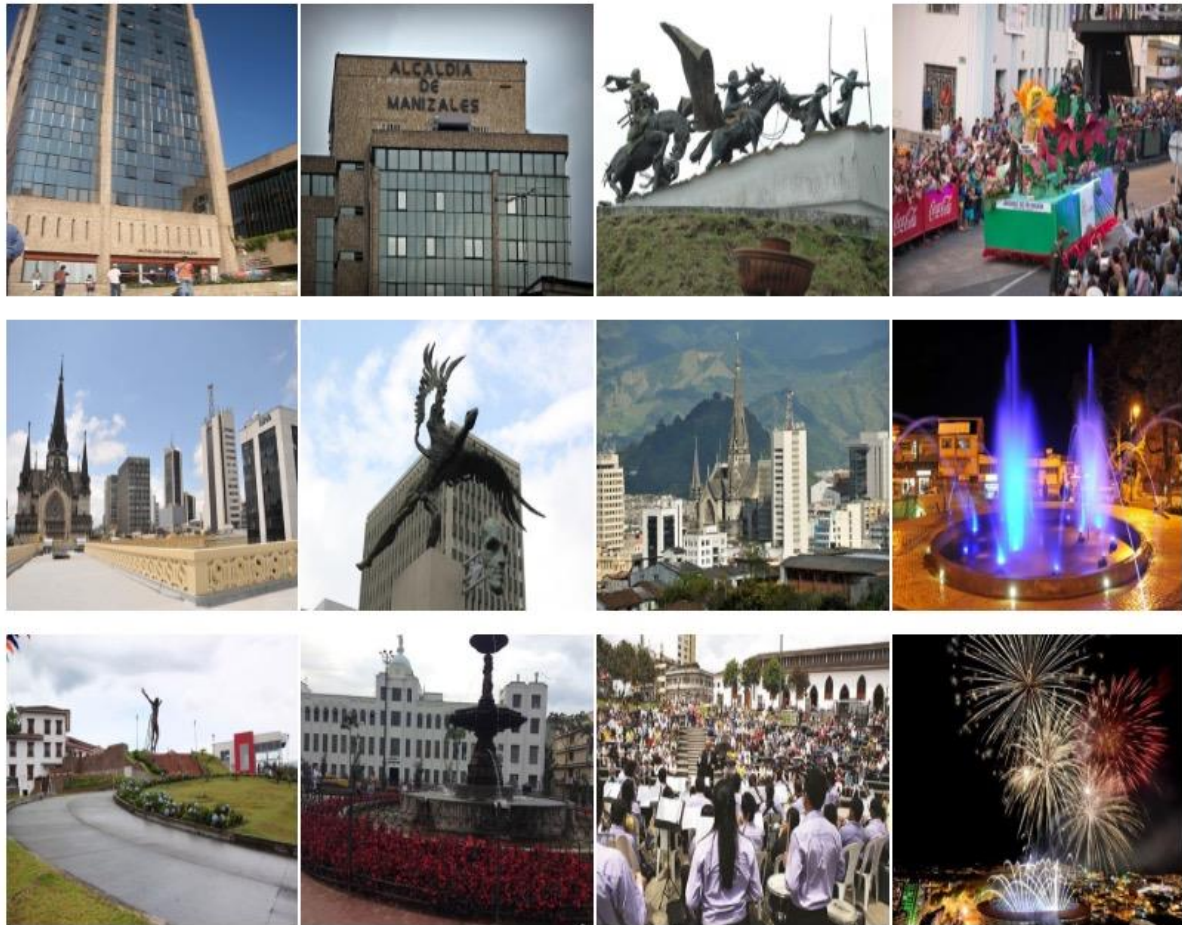
Image 14 Group of images of the city shown in Manizales Municipality's website. http://www.manizales.gov.co/Album_Fotografico/Listado

Manizales as a national example

From the interviews I did with participants working in local government, people's opinions concur that Manizales is showing some of the best practices in citizen participation in the country. They supported this statement with some recognitions awarded to Manizales' public administration in previous years. One of such was related to the creation of the Secretary for Women and Gender Equality. People in Manizales were asked to contribute with general ideas and priorities for this Secretary, using different social media, official forums and SMSs (short message services using mobile phones) (#DiferentesPeroIguales, 2020). Such participatory initiative was coordinated in association with Urna de Cristal and the MinTIC (Urna de Cristal, 2020). Apart from this achievement, Manizales administration has also been acknowledged at national level for their good practices in e-government

services and social media platforms (Urna de Cristal, 2018), as highlighted in three interviews conducted with civil servants in Manizales and one with representatives of the MinTIC and *Urna de Cristal* in Bogota.

Since 2000, Manizales has incorporated the city model of "Manizales, as centre for knowledge" in urban policies and development plans. Each government changed slightly the name of the model, but in principle it remained the same. Manizales, a city with many universities and students, wanted to use the potential to become a centre for innovation as its competitive asset at the national level. However, the city model has produced few tangible results in improving the quality of life of its citizens. Two of the most visible, and also criticised projects, surfaced in several occasions during my interviews and conversations in Manizales. One is a high-level research centre called BIOS – Colombian Centre of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, funded by Colciencias and MinTic (Ministry of ICT). In its website, it can be read that BIOS chose Manizales for its rich biodiversity, but also because the city is a centre of universities with several programs related with information technology and natural sciences (BIOS, 2018). They also explain that, since 2013, BIOS has one of the fastest super computers in Latin America, and since 2015, the most advanced visualization screen for scientific research in South America (BIOS, 2018). The second project, a less impressive one, is a complex of call centres, mostly owned by international companies, employing around eight thousand people, with strict contracts, low benefits and low pay (Arenas Villegas, 2015). The project's initial idea promised much more than call centres, while promoting endogenous innovation to make Manizales more competitive (Arenas Villegas, 2015). Yet, the only policies that were modified in pro of the project directly benefited the conditions for the establishment of international companies in the city, offering tax exemptions, customs-free zones, capital resources to support infrastructure building, and cheap labour.

These kinds of projects made participants in Manizales, and myself, wonder what is the type of city that governors in Manizales want? Is the city only interested in the kind of knowledge and innovation that attracts large investment? Is there a municipal interest to positively tap the potential of digital innovation for the benefit of the

majority of citizens, over the benefit of a few private companies and elites? (These questions are explored in Chapters 5 and 7).

Manizales' planning and the POT (Land Use and Regulation Plan)

Manizales current POT (POT, 2017) is the second since the creation of the law - 388 of 1997 - that regulates POTs in Colombia. The first one was completed and came into force in 2001, and the current POT was under development for more than 6 years, Involving several cycles of design, public scrutiny, evaluation and redesign.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter (section 4.2), the national regulation does not specify the ways in which citizen participation needs to be integrated into the final POTs, leaving it to the political will and institutional capacity of municipal Planning Offices. In Manizales, there were several spaces for citizen participation in the design of the POT, according to three interviewees. However, such spaces need to be considered as privileged moments of invited and controlled participation, following Korn and Voida's categories (2015). Initial roundtables by teams were set, and key representatives were invited. People from the municipality secretaries, the decentralised service companies, academia and private sector formed these tables. Consequently, the outcome from these roundtables became crucial in designing the first draft of the POT. Later, a second moment of participation was implemented. Regularly, every other month, the Planning Office had an open session of half a day with different teams, for example, public transport, public space, or green infrastructure. These sessions were open to all citizens and everybody could prepare presentations about their concerns or proposals in connection to the topic of the day.

 According to conversations and interviews during fieldwork, the Planning Office in Manizales seemed greatly proud of the participatory exercise as part of the POT design (POT, 2017). However, some of this research's participants claimed that such scenarios were merely informative, and what seemed to be a consultation was mainly a procedural exercise to tick a box. (Somewhere along steps 2 to 4 in Arnstein ladder of Participation (1969), among participation as therapy, or with informative purposes, and perhaps being open for consultation).

4.3.2 Alternatives deep-rooted in dissensus

Despite the mentioned local culture of pride and conservatism, citizen contestation is also present in urban life. At different scales, civic groups in the city are claiming, challenging or acting against governmental decisions or projects in the city, as will be discussed later. The range of topics cover issues such as housing rights, LGBT rights, uses and quality of public space, protection of natural environment, food security, respect of ethnic diversity, social integration of ex-guerrilla militants, anti-fracking, anti-bullfighting movement and animal rights, protection of bicycle infrastructure, and many other related to particular areas in the city. Manizales, however, is not known at national level for its culture of civic contestation, which seems to be a recent trend in the history of the city, and perhaps not overly representative of the majority of the population.

Although the nature of most of the participatory exercises for the POT was informative, and not open to questioning the basis of the regional planning, such scenarios served to make particular debates more visible, at least among the attendees. In doing so, individuals and groups dissenting from the POT proposals got together, and some kept their conversations going outside the formal scenario of participation. The collective *Subámonos al Bus del Pot* - SABPOT (Let's get on the POT bus) was created precisely as a parallel exercise of citizens discussing urban planning ideas that were not represented in the Planning Office's proposals. As explained further on in the sub-cases sections, SABPOT was a collective present in the three socio-territorial movements studied and therefore, it was crucial for this research.

The sense of pride in Manizales, earlier mentioned, was seen as detrimental to social movements in the city. According to some participants, the allegedly coined image of Manizales promoted by *Manizales Como Vamos* (MCV) contradicted citizens' complaints, which posed an obstacle in making urban struggles visible for others in the city, and particularly for accountable authorities. Moreover, those who spoke against the veracity of the RCCV' statistics claimed that the network is biased by commercial interests, being funded partly by the Commerce Council. Some participants claimed that MCV's reports are showing a better version of Manizales,

so it could be attractive to new investment while strengthening possibilities for local businesses.

4.3.3 Academia and private sector as collaborators for socio-territorial conflicts

According to one participant, who supported several socio-territorial movements from his role as academic, and also as activist and political influencer in the city, the debates about territorial planning organized by the universities in recent years, had generated an improvement in the local culture of citizen participation. There, he meant improving participation as the exercise of local communities building possibilities to partake in decision-making processes, rather than an improvement in the willingness from public administration to guarantee an effective participation.

Other participants coming from academia shared this appreciation, and some stated that the links between academia and social movements in the city were numerous. For example, various members and supporters of the socio-territorial movements presented in the following section, were also university students, researchers or lecturers. Some had a personal interest in supporting local social struggles, some were also studying these for academic projects, but in a few cases, people decided on an academic path because of their personal experiences (i.e., being personally affected by social or spatial injustice in the city), as it was the case of two participants from San Jose.

My findings suggested that the support from academic groups were crucial in structuring proposals, preparing documents for legal actions, backing up movements demands with technical information and statistics, especially for presentations with authorities. Some of the academic groups that had supported socio-territorial movements in Manizales came mostly from local universities, from schools such as architecture, law, sociology, antropology, communication and journalism, audio-visual design, arts, biology, geology, agronomy and computer sciences. For example, a law lab, an audio-visual lab from the Communications School, and the city labs from two Schools of Architecture, were usually mentioned by participants as groups that supported key projects in their movements.

During fieldwork, I came across three private companies that were interested in citizen participation, and two of them had run or participated in activities promoted by the socio-territorial movements. All the three companies were local and created by young professionals, who graduated from local universities. Since their interest in advocacy and social struggles came from their time as university students, and the type of support to the movements was similar to the one from academic groups, I grouped the support from private companies with the one from academia for this study.

As presented in section 2.2.2, this interest and support from academia and the private sector to participatory initiatives in the city can be seen as a reflection of a reactive discourse to the procedural understandings, and primarily technical role, of planning practices with Rational Planning roots. The common ground here is, in general, a critique to the poor understanding of urban realities sometimes reflected by planning decisions from local authorities (Ramirez Rios, 2011), and a critique to the praising of innovation and participation from local government without a deep commitment with crucial spatial injustice in the city.

4.4 The subcases. Three socio-territorial movements in the city

In the previous sections, I presented the most relevant characteristics from the context of Manizales, in terms of the culture of participation and how the city is being perceived, or being portrayed, in the national context. In order to explore other sides of participation and collective action in Manizales, this section presents three socio-territorial movements in the city that became sub-cases of study for this research.

The criteria behind defining these as sub-cases of study was that all of them were born locally in contestation to one of several urban planning decisions in Manizales. As mentioned in the section above, the collectives forming these movements were deep-rooted in dissensus. Moreover, despite having different timelines and journeys, the three sub-cases had key processes ongoing during the time of my fieldwork. Thus, these were cases of collective action framed spatially by a concern of urban planning and processes of decision making, in and about Manizales, and framed by time in the sense that were occurring at the moment of my fieldwork, 2017 - 2018. Another key criterion was that all three sub-cases showed various uses of digital and

more traditional media as part of their strategies or actions. These conditions made a rich opportunity to explore the landscape of participation and collective action, as well as the roles of digital media in the daily life of collectives involved in socio-territorial movements in the city. Moreover, these movements also presented a variety of approaches to formal structures of governance in the city; sometimes working whit them, against them or in parallel.

Findings from all sub-cases were studied in a complementary manner, instead of a comparative way, since the nature and particular moment of each case made some elements more visible than others did. Furthermore, all of the collectives who participated in the research were involved in more than one of the socio-territorial movements studied. In several interviews, I heard participants referring to these movements as examples of citizen resistance for the *re-significación* (building new meaning) of their territory. Participants from Rio Blanco and San Jose (explained in the next sections) had a common struggle against the loss of memory of their territories, and the need for the *re-significación* of the space affected by planning decisions.

The sharing of knowledge, procedures and experiences among movements in the city, seemed to happen naturally in Manizales, and it was possible through the collaboration and shared interest between activists and collectives. Therefore, a study looking at the sub-cases in a complementary manner seemed more representative to the context studied.

Besides presenting a general description of key characteristics and conditions of the socio-territorial movements studied in Manizales, there is one fact sheet per movement to summarize key points as an introduction. Then, the forms of collective actions, as well as the types and purposes of media used, digital and non-digital, are explored for each case. Further in the document, some sections refer back to issues described here. Therefore, the fact sheets and visual explorations are good references to ease the connection of the analysis with the context of these three socio-territorial movements in Manizales.

4.4.1 San Jose
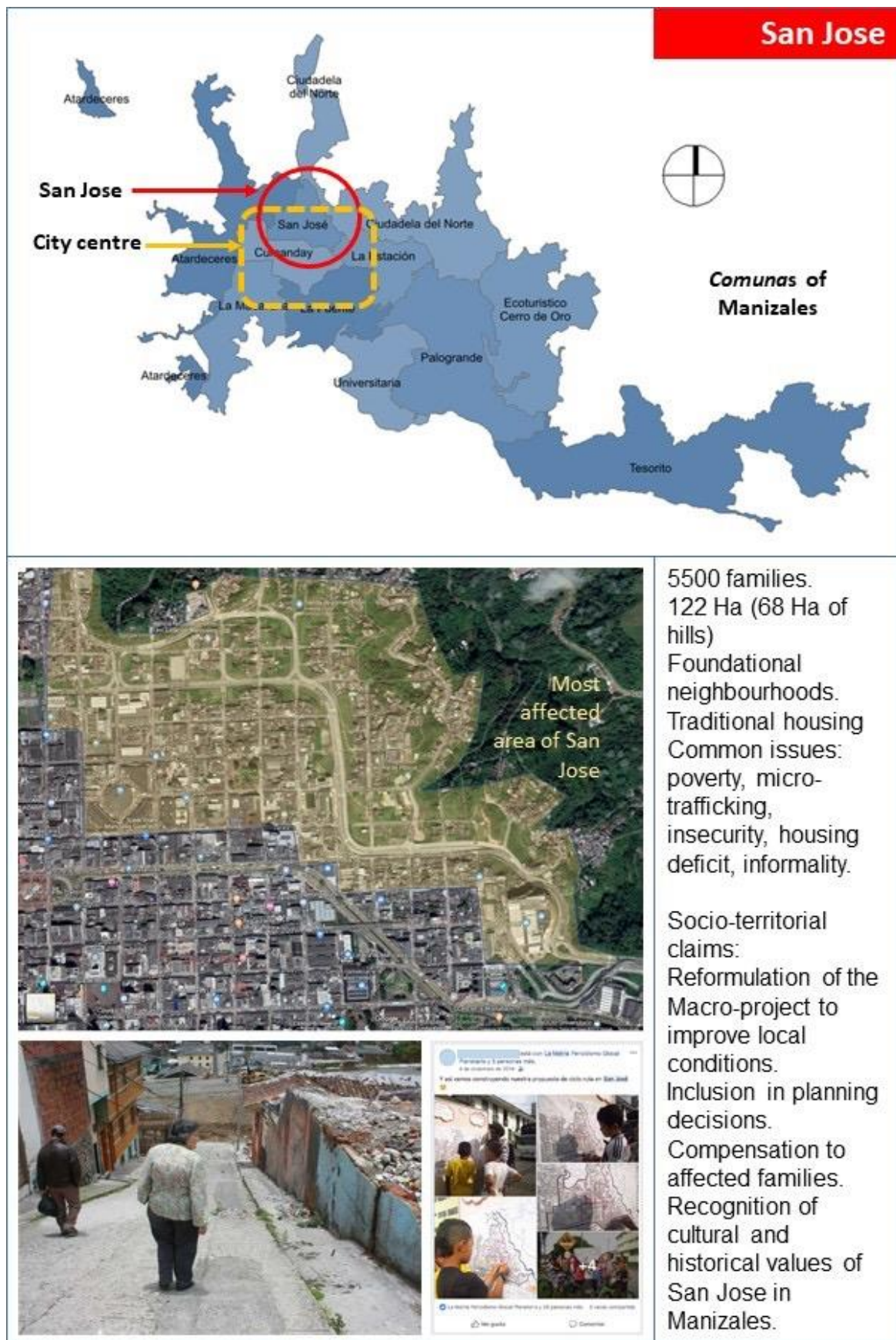
Figure 3 Fact sheet of Sub-Case San Jose (author)

The socio-territorial movement in San Jose started in 2008 contesting San Jose's Macro-Project. Alternatively referred to as Macro-Disaster by social leaders in the city (Caleidoscopios Urbanos, 2016), it was an urban renovation project near Manizales' city centre, designed and managed from the National Presidency and delivered by a local semi-private company called ERUM – *Empresa de Renovacion Urbana de Manizales* (Manizales Urban Renovation Company). Up to the first semester of 2019, the project was still ongoing at a dramatically slow pace, particularly around works related to new houses and infrastructure. Most of the investment was used in new roads (81% according to Caleidoscopios Urbanos[7], 2016) and housing demolitions. The project seemed far from being even halfway in its development. Some activists and local journalists claimed that the macro-project's failure is linked to corruption and the exclusion of local communities in the decisions taken over their territory. Other common complaint is that the macro-project was not designed for the benefit of the approximately 5500 local families, as it was initially publicised. Instead, it was driven by private interest over the land value. (Calidoscopios Urbanos, 2016; LaPatria, 2014)

Image 15 Road works by the San Jose Macro-project. (Source: Caleidoscopios Urbanos (2016b))

San Jose is one of the eleven *Comunas* in Manizales (grouping of neighbourhoods), but it is also the name of one of its neighbourhoods, which is part of the city centre

---

[7] Caleidoscopios Urbanos is a blog-style website created and managed by Dr. Luis Fernando Acebedo since June 2009. Luis Fernando is a recognised lecturer from the school of Architecture at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, chapter Manizales, and is perceived as a collaborator/activist in several socio-territorial conflicts in Manizales and its region. He writes periodically in his blog, mainly about urban and planning matters. Many of his texts are published as well by the local newspaper in a weekly opinion column. Dr. Acebedo is also a participant and interviewee for this research, and its blog pertinently served to construct timelines with critical moments for the subcases of San Jose and Rio Blanco.

(Manizales.gov, 2014). That area, the most central one, contains some of the oldest houses and urban structures in Manizales, and it was once one of the most popular neighbourhoods in the city, with big houses with patios and gardens, a park with a church, schools, medical centres and other services for a good-standard neighbourhood. The proximity to the city centre, the Town Market (*Plaza de Mercado de Manizales*), as well as the former national bus station, and inter-municipal station for public transport, had an impact in the development of San Jose fifty years ago. However, for the last thirty years San Jose faced a decline in terms of socio-economic problems related to poverty, drug micro-trafficking and consumption, plus and unattended decline of traditional houses and common infrastructures. (ACUC San Jose, 2015)

In 2008, when the macro-project initiated the first phase of execution, ERUM bought numerous houses from local families in an unplanned manner over the territory. Houses were demolished soon after being bought by the macro-project, independently of how soon the project would make use of the particular lot. This situation resulted in a deterioration of the physical infrastructure of the *comuna*, and consequently negatively affected everyday life of people in San Jose. A local leader referred to this by saying that San Jose looks now like a place where a bomb has gone off (LaPatria, 2014b). The most common style of housing in San Jose, and in Manizales, is a form of terrace housing in blocks, usually with large gardens at the back. With this in mind, the idea of random demolitions spread over a large territory carries with it issues of structural insecurity, and an increase of burglaries for neighbouring houses. Inevitably, those consequences decreased real estate values for the affected houses that had not being bought yet. In addition, local leaders claimed that many families were not paid in time or were still waiting for their new flats[8].

---

[8] ERUM offered house owners either money or a new flat on the outskirts of the city. According to participants from San Jose, the money offered was not enough, therefore, many people opted for new flats. However, new flats were much smaller than the traditional houses in San Jose.

Image 16 Structures at risk in San Jose. (source: participants' archive)

Local resistance towards the proposals from the macro-project started before the evictions and demolitions. However, these events served to make the project's negative impact more visible in the city, and other voices joined the protests. The structures of political representation in the *comuna* were as well affected by the macro-project. According to participants from San Jose, various local leaders were corrupted or co-opted by the building company. Apparently, some leaders were paid more money than the established when selling their houses to the macro-project, and others were hired by ERUM in exchange for stopping their protests against the project. Regardless of the reasons , many leaders eventually dropped their roles and consequently, San Jose dwellers lost trust in the remaining representatives.

Collective action in San Jose

Apart from formalising their claims, collectives in San Jose made parallel proposals to the macro-project, and developed alternative programs for local communities, especially for children and teenagers. Most of the community projects were done with the support from academia and numerous collaborators from inside and out of San Jose and Manizales. One critical outcome of such multisector alliance was the design and production of the Manifesto for the Reformulation of the Macro-project for

the Comuna San Jose in Manizales (*Manifiesto por la Reformulación del Macroproyecto comuna San Jose en la ciudad de Manizales[9] -* ACUC San Jose, 2015).

Figure 4 Collective action in San Jose

In Figure 4, dotted line circles represent different sectors of collaboration for the socio-territorial movement in San Jose, following my findings. There were several grass-root collectives in San Jose working independently on initiatives to improve the quality of life in different sectors of the population. However, some of these collectives were also part of a larger project demanding answers and solutions to the responsible organisations behind the chaos created by the macro-project. Comunativa- Huertas Urbanas, the Comite de Voceros, Escuela contra la Pobreza,

---

[9] The Manifesto was developed by the 'Citizen and University Alliance for the Comuna San Jose' (ACUC), which was a social organisation created in 2012 after years of debates and investigations against the proposals from the macro-project. The Alliance evaluated each component of the macro-project proposal and defined the need for a counter proposal, given that, according to their analysis, the macro-project was based in socioeconomic surveys that were not reflecting the reality of the *Comuna*'s dwellers. Moreover, there were two ongoing legal processes, in national and inter-American courts, where the community sued the macro-project. According to my participants, the Manifesto for the Reformulation of the Macro-Project has been key in filing the suits, and reaching for support beyond Manizales' scenarios.

and CadeJose are some of the key local collectives leading the movement. In the table below, there is a list of key actors in relation with the sector of collaboration.

Table 2 Conformation of collective action in San Jose

Sector of collaboration	Key actors
Local collectives	*Comunativa – Huertas urbanas* (Urban Gardens – Comunativa), *Comité de Voceros de la Comuna San José* (San Jose local leaders committee), *Escuela contra la Pobreza* (School Agains Poverty), *CadeJose - Causa Nacional por la Defensa de la Comuna San José* (National Cause for the Defense of San Jose).
International collaboration	*Unitierra – La universidad de la tierra.* (The Land University, a panamerican network of grass-root organisations)
Public institutions	*Concejales de Manizales* (some Municipal Councillors), *Personería de Manizales* (People's defender municipal office).
Academia	*Universidad de Caldas* (Schools of Law, Anthropology, Visual Design, Sociology and Social Development), *Universidad de Manizales* (School of Communication and Journalism), *Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Sede Manizales* (School or Architecture), *Universidad Catholica* (School of Architecture), and SENA.
Collaborators in Manizales	Other urban collectives: Malahierba, *Fuego en el Aire*, SABPOT, *Corporación Cívica de Caldas – CCC* (Civic Corporation of Caldas).

From the private sector: *Estratósfera*, Welkom, *Plaza de mercado de Manizales*.

Independent organisations: *Manizales Como Vamos*, *Centro Cultural del Banco de la Republica* (National Bank Cultural Centre). |

The size of the circles in Figure 4 is a representation of the involvement of actors in different tasks, according to my fieldwork experience in Manizales. The background circle is divided in three, representing three critical endeavours for socio-territorial movements in Manizales. Thus, the location of each dotted line circle is showing the participation of the sectors of collaboration in activities related with collective

organisation, the planning and delivering of actions, and the construction of proposals. For example, collaboration from academia in San Jose was generally associated with the construction of proposals, or the structuring of claims into formal documents with which local leaders demonstrated their points to local and national authorities. Some academics had been involved in planning and delivery of actions in San Jose (i.e. demonstrations, parades, and community festivals); however, in doing so they were not necessarily representing academic institutions but following a personal interest or stance. Sometimes, even acting in the role of activists rather than academic collaborators. On the other hand, support from academic institutions in Manizales, in general, was seemingly cautious with backing activities that could be seen as politically charged.

The groups that were assuming roles or having an impact in the collective organisation of the socio-territorial movement, in Figure 4, are the local collectives, and the international collaboration. In this case, the international collaboration refers to Unitierra (a pan-American network of grass-root organisations sharing Zapatista's principles).[10] From my experience with San Jose's collectives, matters around self-organisation were a common concern but in practice, they were approached as circumstantial. In other words, so much was done about organisation as the particular situation required, but it was hardly ever taken as a priority. Perhaps this was due to the critical conditions of the communities in San Jose, and to the daily need for delivering actions to improve their quality of life.

This situation, where an urgent response was required and was considered more important than self-organising and planning, was observed in all the sub-cases in Manizales. Whether circumstantial or cultural, the feeling of improvisation accompanied most, if not all, the demonstrations, meetings, workshops or exercises of collective action, in which I participated during my fieldwork.

Moreover, leaders in San Jose frequently used the format of Forums, usually initiated by local collectives or academic groups. Often, the purpose was informative and to plan actions, but in several occasions, forums were integrated into Municipal

---

[10] Zapatistas is an anticolonial movement originated in Mexico, as well as anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist, mainly concerned with recovering the lost knowledge of indigenous ancestors and the connection to nature, to improve people's life as well as the democratic structures in the communities, whether rural or urban.

spaces for participation. For example, two forums in the Municipal Council, one as *Cabildo Abierto* (Open Council meeting), and one in the *Asamblea de Caldas* (Departamental Assembly of Caldas).

Types and local uses of media for collective action in San Jose
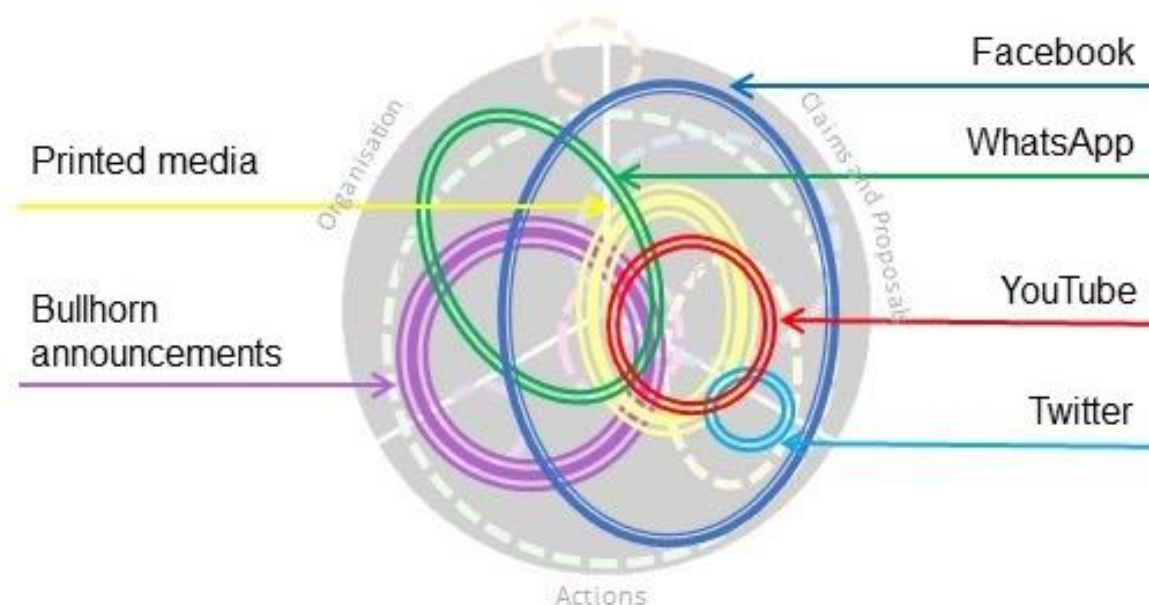
Figure 5 Media for collective action in San Jose

Figure 5 represents the most common uses of media in San Jose, and their relation to the purposes in the movement. As in the previous graphic, the location shows the range of roles for each type of media, among organisation, construction of proposals and actions of the collectives. For example, a particularly interesting finding is that loudspeaker or bullhorn announcements delivered by people walking or slowly driving on the streets of San Jose, were the preferred type of media to guaranty most of the local residents were informed about important events or news in relation to the macro-project resistance (Image 17). When local leaders needed to inform and invite people to a demonstration, bullhorn announcement and printed media were first choices. However, printing flyers tended to be more time-consuming and expensive than spending a few hours walking around in San Jose. Besides, repeating the information from voices that most of the people would recognise improved the chances of grabbing people's attention, according to participants from San Jose. Printed media, however, was highly used for newsletters and proposals that allowed more time for preparation.

Image 17 Local leaders in San Jose doing a bullhorn announcement. (Source: https://manizalesdenuncia.wordpress.com)

Facebook was highly used for inviting people to be part of events and projects in San Jose, however it seems to have a larger effect on people outside of San Jose. A local participant explained that the local leaders did not consider using Facebook as the main tool to communicate with the affected families, because large part of San Jose dwellers did not have daily access to the internet at home. Furthermore, it seemed to them that even if most people had a mobile phone, only a few afforded paying internet data. However, other participants from San Jose agreed on the pertinence of using Facebook to make the local struggle visible to other people, and thus, connecting to similar causes and possible allies in and out of Manizales.

My findings showed that most of the media used, online and offline, was mostly related to building of proposals and claims, to invite people to activities and to broadcast about projects and interests from local collectives. Apart from invitations, and communications via WhatsApp and Messenger chats, there was a lack of media used for self-organising of collectives. Local participants agreed with this appreciation. They thought that lack of organisation was a central problem for collective action in San Jose.

4.4.2 Rio Blanco
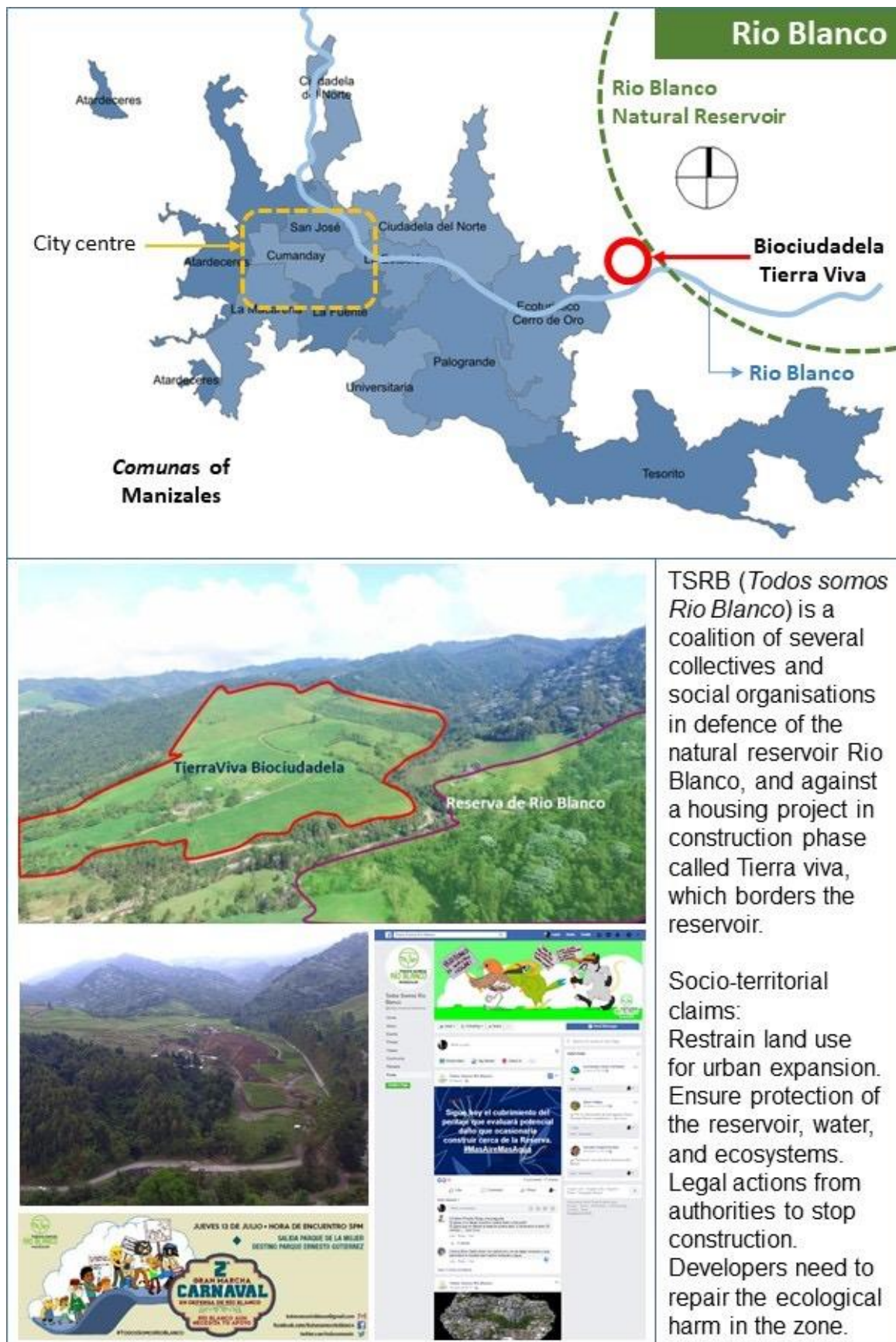
Figure 6 Fact sheet sub-case Rio Blanco

Table 3 Conformation of collective action in Rio Blanco

Sector of collaboration	Key actors
Group of collectives	*Convergencia Todos Somos Rio Blanco*[11] (We all are Rio Blanco Convergence) Formed by representatives of thirteen collectives in the city.
Local communities	People from the neighbours Sultana and Minitas, which are next to the developing site. Families of *"areneros"* (sand dealers), whose livelihoods would be affected by the housing project.
Public institutions	*Concejales de Manizales* (some Municipal Councillors), *Personería de Manizales* (People's defender municipal office). Environmental Regional Attorney, and National Attorney Offices.
Academia	*Universidad de Caldas* (Schools of Law, Anthropology, Geology, Biology, and the University Botanical Garden), *Universidad de Manizales* (School of Communication and Journalism), *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* (School of Architecture)
Supporters in Manizales	Other urban collectives: Comunativa, *Malahierba*, *Fuego en el Aire.* Individuals with interests in environmental conversation, environmental and community rights over private interests, local democracy and urban planning Independent organisations: *Centro Cultural del Banco de la Republica* (Cultural Centre).

Here, I refer to Rio Blanco as a socio-territorial movement coordinated by a coalition of collectives in Manizales called "*Todos somos Rio Blanco*" ("We all are Rio Blanco" or TSRB for its name in Spanish). TSRB was formed in February 2017 to protest against a change in La Aurora's land use, an area adjacent to the natural reservoir

---

[11] TSRB is formed by the following collectives and organisations: Amigos del Jardín Botánico, Colectivo Kumanday, Manizales en Común, Centro de Estudios y Gestión de Derechos para la Justicia Ambiental, Veeduría Interdisciplinaria de Caldas, Subámonos al Bus del Pot – SABPOT, Unitierra, Natural Seeds Alliance, Centro de Estudios para el Trabajo – CEDETRABAJO, Planeta Paz, Comité de Unidad y Solidaridad – CUT-CTC, Semillero Pensando lo Público, Comité de Unidad y Solidaridad

Rio Blanco, at the northeast of the city. Manizales POT commission suggested the change in land use, from agricultural use to urban extension, in support of a housing project proposed in that area by a private company. TSRB managed in a few months to spread the concern widely among citizens and other organisations in the city.

Image 18 "Let's march! For the conservation of water, wildlife and flora in our city. It is not on sale, it is defended" Image produced by TSRB for social media and printed media

Three protests and several demonstrations took place in the city, alongside various presentations to the local council, in support of the coalition's concerns. In July 2017, the Municipal Council listened to 24 presentations from TSRB's members. As a result, the majority of Council members voted to support TSRB claim and asked the POT commission to retain the previous land use of La Aurora (the affected zone), which does not allow urban development on it. However, the housing project claimed to have all building permits in order, and started construction works in the site by the beginning of 2018. In June 2018 the Municipal Council ordered to stop construction works in the site, due to a petition that came from a national authority, the Regional Attorney's Office. That petition happened in response to various communications, meetings and presentations from TSRB with the Regional Attorney.

By May 2019, TSRB coalition remained active in demanding local authorities to revoke current building permits in La Aurora, since they feared the building company could find ways to resume works in the construction site. However, there was no official response from planning authorities about this last petition.

According to a participant working in the Planning Office, his colleagues seemed to think that the Rio Blanco movement was creating panic among the project's buyers, and investors. For them, trust in Manizales' planning procedures were at risk if the housing project was stopped by the Municipality. This participant also claimed that TSRB was manipulating information to gain followers and allies. For example, he argued that there were other lots near the reservoir that represented a higher risk for water resource security than La Aurora, which had been farming land for decades. In his view, if TSRB is concerned about water security they should be more worried about other lots uphill that started to be used for agriculture and cattle only a few months ago.

Collective action in Rio Blanco

Figure 7 Collective action in Rio Blanco

The coalition that formed the TSRB was a core factor for the movement's success. The coalition included different groups coming from various parts of the city, including civic society as well as academia, and some local institutions such as the Botanical Garden, and the Bank of the Republic's Cultural Centre. The activity and presence of TSRB in digital spaces was highly visible, with many of the groups and

leaders posting and reposting messages on their own social media accounts about the coalition's activities and concerns. Moreover, there were some council representatives firmly supporting TSRB, battling against the private corporations who were promoting the housing project and also against, the supposed negligence from the planning authorities in the Rio Blanco case. The controversy around the planned development caught the attention of the press media, both local and national, making the situation and the movement well known in the city and beyond. Rio Blanco showed a situation in which a planning decision, that did not have a direct negative impact in an urban area, was rapidly contested by hundreds of people in various sectors of society. The housing project did not represent risk of eviction to anyone since the land was previously used for farming. Apart from a sand dealer's family located near the project, no other local community's livelihood was directly affected. This was a very different scenario than the one presented about the San Jose movement in the previous section. For instance, it seemed that many more people protested in support of Rio Blanco in comparison with other urban struggles, such as the San Jose's case, which was a situation that affected thousands of citizens in direct ways. However, my findings suggested that such difference in support had to do with three factors; the topic itself, the coalition of collectives and their intense visibility in digital media, both in official press and in social media.

The claims being made around the protection of the natural environment, and the security of water resources for the city, was a matter of interest to many more citizens, and not only to those in the affected area. Moreover, social leaders from the adjacent neighbourhoods to La Aurora actively took part in the WhatsApp group chat "Amigos de Rio Blanco" (Rio Blanco's friends), which was a chat group open to members and supporters of the movement. In a way, adjacent neighbourhoods became the movement's local grievers, as though they represented a part of the city's population that was more likely to enjoy the benefits of the reservoir more frequently, due to its proximity.

Image 19 demonstation in support of TSRB. source:
https://www.eltiempo.com/vida/medio-ambiente/el-complejo-urbanistico-que-podria-
afectar-la-reserva-forestal-rio-blanco-240360

All research participants coming from social collectives and academia were familiar
with the Rio Blanco movement, and most were either members of TSRB or had
supported the movement's demonstrations and petitions. The Rio Blanco movement
seemed to attract new followers and sympathetic allies easily. Natural environment
protection and urban gardening were interests shared by several collectives that
were members or supporters of TSRB, among them Comunativa, from San Jose.
On the other hand, the dissent against planning authorities not doing enough to
secure land use for environmental protection make SABPOT an ally of TSRB,
sharing as well some of their key leaders. Collectives forming TSRB recognised and
used the experience of San Jose and similar situations in the city's past; learning
from their legal struggle and using their networks in academia and professional
support to scale up their concerns and proposals.

4.4.2.1 Types and local uses of media for collective action in Rio Blanco
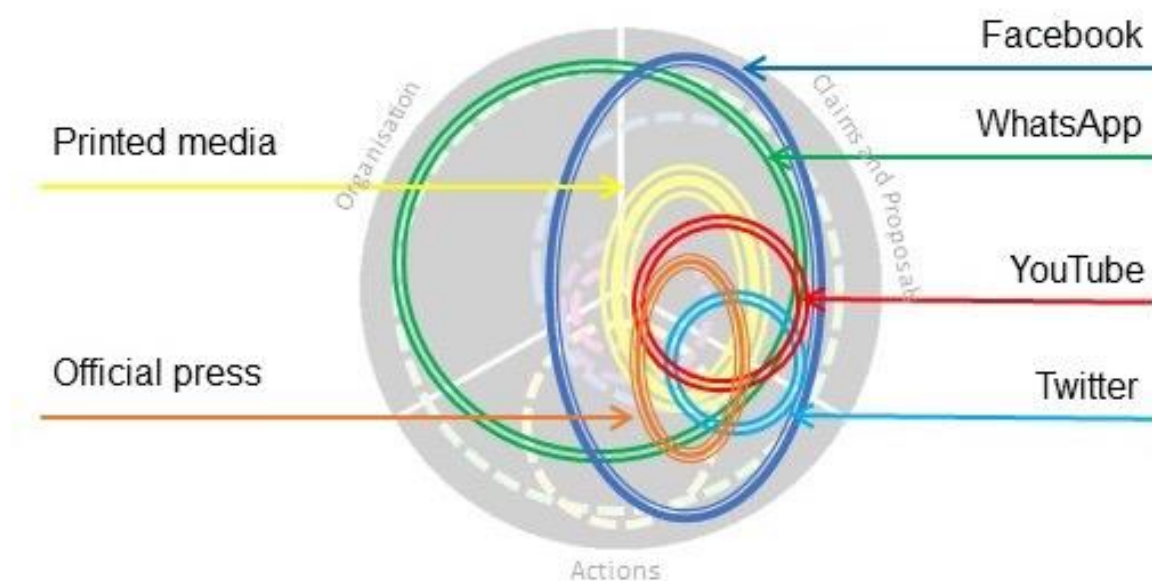
Figure 8 Media for collective action in Rio Blanco

TSRB had a Communication Committee to which I was invited to participate while doing my research. The committee held face-to-face meetings every week if possible, but some were done via Skype if that meant more members could attend. Moreover, a WhatsApp group was created for organisation, and to share ideas about communication strategies. The WhatsApp group started with 10 members and a few more people joined over time. However, five members were the most active ones, participating and preparing pieces for printed and digital media. Overall, this WhatsApp group was the most organised among the other groups in which I participated for this research. Comments and information shared usually kept close to the purpose of the group. Members who asked for feedback about an idea or an ongoing communicative piece, tended to receive prompt answers from other members. Moreover, disagreements were solved politely and pragmatically. On the few times when there seemed to be a problem of miscommunication, a woman who acted on a number of occasions as the leader of the group, suggested a Skype call between those affected to sort out the matter.

WhatsApp seemed a crucial form of media for organisation and communications in the movement in general. However, two people among the leading committee did not have smart phones, and therefore, did not have WhatsApp accounts either. Other

leaders frequently complained about this situation, despite those without WhatsApp being easily contactable on phone or email. Moreover, the movement also had an open WhatsApp group called "Rio Blanco's Friends" (earlier mentioned) to keep general members and followers updated about activities and news. The group managed to have hundreds of members, peaking near and during demonstrations, according to the person who managed it. I was a member of this group for over a year and usually kept its notifications muted, following a recommendation from the person who invited me in. The regular number of daily messages were overwhelming, sometimes over a hundred, from which most content was irrelevant to Rio Blanco's movement. Many members of this group used it to advertise products and services, and to share content with political and religious connotations.

Rio Blanco had a leading committee which had very few changes since its creation. However, due to how quick the Rio Blanco's concern turned into a movement in the city, many members had joined, volunteered with specific functions on temporary basis and then left. To overcome the disorder this created, various committees were created around specific functions, like the Communications Committee. This committee was recently created when I was invited to participate in the movement's meetings, which allowed me to observe the efforts done to organise communication-related tasks that were previously carried out in a rather disjointed manner. For example, the Communication Committee found it hard to contact and coordinate with the person who initially opened and managed the Twitter account. Apparently, that person was no longer living in Manizales and were not that involved in the movement's daily matters anymore. Eventually, that person joined the committee's WhatsApp group, and someone else in the committee took over the role of managing the Twitter account.

Rio Blanco was the most active in Twitter, in comparison with San Jose and the RttC Manizales movements. This seemed to reflect the personal preferences of those managing social media for the movement, since they were also active users of Twitter in their personal lives. Interestingly, Twitter was not that commonly used among other participants in Manizales. However, most of the social media activity in the Rio Blanco movement was focused on Facebook. Often, Twitter posts replicated Facebook posts, which ranged from invitation to demonstrations or events,

messages about natural environment protection, photos with messages to show the deterioration of the area where the construction site was located, sharing documents supporting the movement's claims, re-posting external content related to Rio Blanco or to natural environment and resources protection beyond Manizales.

The Rio Blanco movement organised two important demonstrations in June and July 2017 (and two more in 2018 and 2019 after my fieldwork ended). These demonstrations were called '*Gran Marcha Carnaval Todos Somos Rio Blanco'* (Great carnival-march 'We all are Rio Blanco') (Image 20). The Facebook event created in preparation for the second Carnival-march stated:

> *Rio Blanco is still in danger and still needs us! We made progress in the first debate at the Council, but Rio Blanco is not safe yet. The building company claims to have rights over the territory and want to start works soon, going against the 'sentir Manizaleño' [Manizales people's feeling and opinions]. MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND PRIVATE COMPANIES CAN'T STEP OVER THE GENERAL INTEREST! Let's demonstrate our rejection of the ECOCIDE!*
>
> *Welcome all artists, banners and contributions. Let natural environment be our only flag.*
>
> *RIO BLANCO BELONGS TO ALL! (Todos Somos Rio Blanco, n.d.)* [original in Spanish*]*

Members of Rio Blanco claimed that thousands of citizens participated in these demonstrations. The demonstrations were used as opportunities to record videos of participants statements and photographs of banners. Videos and photos were shared live during the demonstration on social media pages of the Rio Blanco movement, alongside the social media of people who attended the events. Such audio-visual material also served to feed social media posts and presentations of the movement during the following months. The original files were gathered and saved on the Google Drive managed by the Communications Committee.
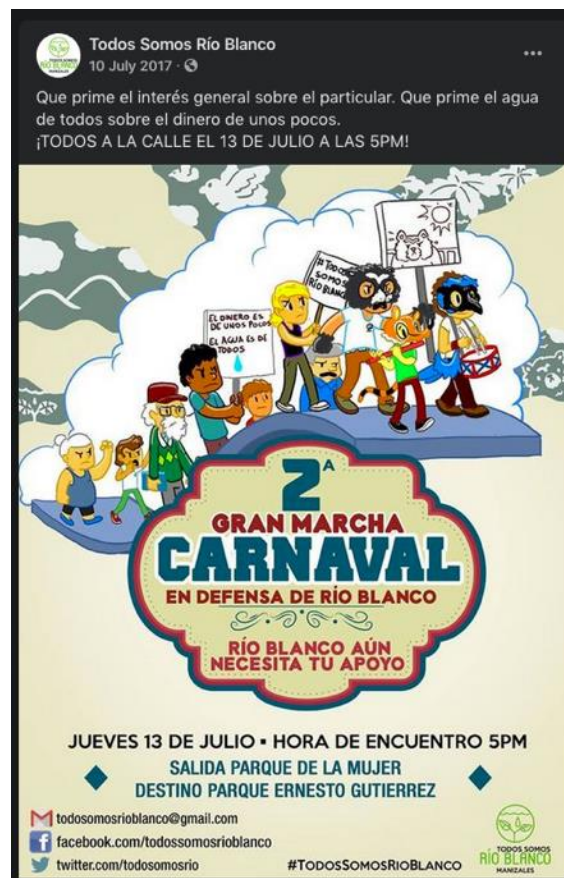
Image 20 TSRB invitation to the 2nd
Great Carnival-March. (Todos Somos
Rio Blanco, n.d.)

 YouTube was also a tool frequently used by the Rio Blanco movement. Videos in
this platform were recorded and edited by different members and not necessarily
those in the Communications Committee. YouTube videos were used to report and
share highlights about events and demonstrations, and also to present the
movement's claims about the importance of defending Rio Blanco's reservoir, and
the negative impact the housing project could have in local ecosystems and water
resource of the city. Several members of the movement had a great interest in
natural ecosystems; many were doing natural science's degrees, and two collectives
were focused on natural conservation. Therefore, the movement's videos included
facts about the reservoir's biodiversity, as well as technical information highlighting
the risks that urbanisation represented to the natural ecosystems of Rio Blanco.

News about the Rio Blanco movement, their demands and demonstrations often
appeared on reports by official press, mostly from Manizales but a few times they

made their way into national newspapers, including online news websites, radio and television.

Moreover, non-digital media such as crafted banners, printed posters, flyers and documents, and loudspeaker were always present in Rio Blanco demonstrations and events. Alongside these, artistic performances and music seemed indispensable elements during the Carnival-Marches.

4.4.3 Derecho a la Ciudad – Manizales (RttC Manizales)

Figure 9 Fact sheet sub-case Right to the City - Manizales

Unlike the other two sub-cases regarding particular areas of the city, this one uses the entire city and its rural adjacent area as the territory in question. Another particularity is that this sub-case was initially thought as an event that turned into a series of regular conversation between collectives, as an ongoing project to re-think the city. In this socio-territorial movement, the RttC becomes the central topic connecting several collectives in the city. By May 2019, a year after the original workshop, the discussion was still ongoing locally and some collectives were planning a next version of the workshop.

My positionality in relation with this sub-case marked another difference in comparison with the other two (see section 3.3.3). Despite my initial idea of not getting involved more than necessary with activities of the organisations I was studying, I joined a group with representatives from six urban collectives to plan and develop this workshop. Thus, my role in this sub-case moved beyond being a researcher; I was seen as another actor who was co-designing and having an impact on the processes and outcomes of the workshop.

This movement started as a conversation with some of my research participants about the local meanings and implications of the Right to the City in Manizales . Then, it evolved into a series of *conversas* (a name that some representatives from San Jose and SABPOT gave to informal seminars or workshops). These *conversas* were run weekly in the *Plaza de Mercado Popular* (Popular City Market, located in San Jose) following different topics and open to everyone who wanted to attend. The topics included issues such as the right of public space for all, the right to food autonomy (urban food gardening) in the city, alternative ways to educate and promote citizenship, the empowering potential of weaving collective action in the city (*tejiendo colectivos*), among others. Regular conversations naturally grew into a movement, becoming a space of commonality, where collectives kept meeting regularly. Leaders from some collectives soon defined the need to design a city-scale workshop, as a way to extend the discussion with other collectives, and interested communities in other sectors of the city.

The workshop was planned as a day of events, and it was called '*Derecho a la Ciudad – Manizales. Deber de la ciudadanía'* (which translates The Right to the City - Manizales, a citizens' duty, from now on referred as the RttC Manizales Workshop).

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss meanings and implications of the Right to the City locally, irrespective of whether people attending belonged, or not, to any social organisation in Manizales. In terms of the workshop outcomes, there were two crucial ones, which were satisfactorily accomplished up to a certain extent, considering natural obstacles in relation to the production and organisation of the event itself, lack of resources and the various levels of commitment and capabilities in the organising committee.

One of the outcomes was the actual exercise of exchange among collectives in the city. Since the first meetings, participants showed a common concern about the need for networking, even only for recognition among the many citizens' initiatives in Manizales. Some expressed that there could be groups dealing with similar situations in different parts of the city and the workshop should serve as an opportunity to map them, and foster stronger connections among the different inititaives. For example, some participants who belonged to the *Red de Huerterxs* (Urban Food Gardeners Network), explained that it was in fact that same need what encouraged them to form the Network, and create an online map displaying urban gardens in the city. Their experience was used to create an activity to map collectives during the workshop. The workshop as an exchange was not only to bring together initiatives with similar causes, but also to create a picture of the diversity of claims and concerns that people have in the same city. Therefore, the Right to the City, as a central topic, could become the common ground for building relationships among different civic groups in Manizales.

The second outcome was to build one or several citizens' manifestos, about the Right to the City in Manizales, exploring the contributions city collectives could make in order to create a better city, alongside making crucial demands to local government. The idea was to have as many voices as possible to create manifestos, in a collabortive and creative way, to express alternative thinking for city-making. Bearing this in mind, one core activity of the workshop focused on creating manifestos , and the result was a large format book-style collage, integrating ideas and contributions from many participants, including several children and teenagers who particularly enjoyed that activity (Image 21).

Image 21 Some pages from the manifesto created during the workshop (source: Author)

The workshop was designed as an open day of activities, from 10 am to 7 pm, in which participants could stay for as short or as long as they wanted. There were 160 people registered as participants of the workshop, excluding those working as organisers.

The venue was the *Centro Cultural del Banco de la Republica* (Cultural Centre), which is an independent and nationally recognised cultural institution with centres in 29 Colombian cities. The Cultural Centre provided us three spaces free of charge in their building: the main room that hosted most of the activities, a hall in the first floor and a computers' room in the second floor. The contacts in the Cultural Centre asked the workshop organisers to make sure that the content of the activities was not charged politically, mainly referring to the national elections that took place in the following weeks. Therefore, the Cultural Centre would not allow any type of political propaganda related to the national elections during the day. A requirement that was accepted and respected by all collectives participating in the event.

The day's program was divided in two parts; the morning as various parallel group work sessions, and the afternoon as a fair of collective action. Moreover, there was an introduction at 10 am and conclusions and wrapping up between 6 and 7 pm. The parallel group work sessions incorporated five different activities, as seen in

Table 4, running simultaneously, with groups of participants moving from activity to activity every 40 minutes. There were two volunteers who took on theatrical roles as masters of ceremonies, running the day's program and were in charge of reminding people to change activities.

Table 4 Group work sessions in the RttC Manizales Workshop

Group work sessions	Purpose
Manifiesto colectivo (collective manifesto)	To build manifestos about the Right to the City in Manizales, having as many voices as possible to express alternative thinking for city-making.
Tejiendo colectivos (weaving collectives)	To discuss the need and strategies for a stronger network of collective action in the city.
La paz se toma la palabra (Peace takes the floor)	To explore the role of peace in participation and the construction of territories. Understanding territories from our own bodies to the local and regional context.
Descolonizando el paisaje cafetero (decolonising the coffee landscape)	Challenging notions and the language of colonization in the region of Manizales, by superimposing messages and pieces over an existent map on the floor. The original map showed the route of colonizers in Caldas (Manizales region)
Manizales participa (Manizales participates)	To share and discuss perceptions about participation, social media uses, and the possibilities of digital aspects in improving the city. This session was run by me in collaboration with other two people.

At 12.30pm organisers and a team of collaborators had lunch in the *Plaza de Mercado* (Popular Market Square); an activity that was hosted by one of the leading collectives, *Unitierra. Plaza de Mercado* was a space that people in Manizales tend to associate with poverty and delinquency, but that remains as the central supply of agricultural and farm produce for the city and the region. Moreover, in the last decade *Plaza de Mercado* became the house for a number of citizens' initiatives, among them, a kiosk and meeting place for *Unitierra*, a children library and a kiosk for learning and experimenting with regional fruits, herbs and vegetables, and popular recipes. Three of my research participants (see Pen Portraits of Gustavo, Luis & Ramón) were involved in managing those spaces and initiatives in *Plaza de Mercado*. For this reason, lunch took place there, and this also raised awareness with the workshop attendees about the role of the *Plaza de Mercado* as a place for

alternative thinking. The initial conversations about the workshop and regular *conversas* also frequently took place in the *Plaza de Mercado*.

The afternoon was planned as a space for encounter and exchange among collectives, and individuals interested in citizens' initiatives. Thus, it was organised as a fair of collective action; with 24 groups simultaneously presenting their projects and campaigns around the main room of the venue (Image 22).

Collective action in the workshop: Right to the City - Manizales

Image 22 Workshop 'the Right to the City – Manizales'. Fair of collective action. (source: Author)

The organising committee for the workshop was formed by representatives of seven collectives, as shown in Table 5. However, collaborators and individuals outside this committee took on various jobs during the planning and executing of the event. The development of the workshop, from an idea to an organised event, worked on the basis of defining tasks, and assigning resources and tasks to different people. Decisions of this matter were taken during face-to-face meetings and also over conversations on WhatsApp.

It is important to note that the resources needed to design and complete this workshop were not only financial funds. For example, conditions such as having spare time, a computer, a printer, a vehicle, a key contact, the knowledge and skills to work on design software, the ability to write well, or to speak in public, were considered as resources to complete different jobs for the organisation of the event.

Table 5 Conformation of collective action in RttC Manizales Workshop

Sector of collaboration	Key actors
Leading collectives	*Comunativa – Huertas Urbanas, Malahierba, Pluriversos – Cultura y Poder, Convergencia Todos Somos Rio Blanco* (TSRB), Unitierra, SABPOT, Sociedad de Mejoras Públicas, and *Red de Huerterxs* (Urban Food Gardeners Network).
Public institutions	Instituto Manizales (Public primary and high school). Two grades with their teachers participated in the workshop. Multiple representatives from the Municipality were invited but only one attended, the City's Ombudsman.
Academia	*Universidad de Caldas* (Schools of Law, Anthropology, Geology, Biology, and the University Botanical Garden), *Universidad de Manizales* (School of Communication and Journalism), *Universidad Nacional de Colombia* (School of Architecture), *Universidad Católica* (School of Architecture).
Citizens and participant collectives	Representatives from San Jose, Rio Blanco, city centre, Plaza de Mercado, Gallerias (central neighbourhood), Community LGBTI, transgender sexual workers, groups in defence of women and girls' rights, and groups pro cannabis culture. In general, individuals supporting collectives, or who followed the invitation shared by social media and local radio. Private sector: *Dinámico, Estratósfera* (both are creative companies and technology developers) Independent organisations: *Centro Cultural del Banco de la República* (Cultural Centre), which provided the venue and supported the event with publicity and logistics

Aside from acknowledging the many tasks and roles people took at the various stages of the workshop's process, Figure 10 shows, in essence, my observations on how different groups collaborated with tasks around organisation, the making of proposals and the actions. Actions, in this case, refers to the meetings and support activities, as well as the event of the workshop itself.
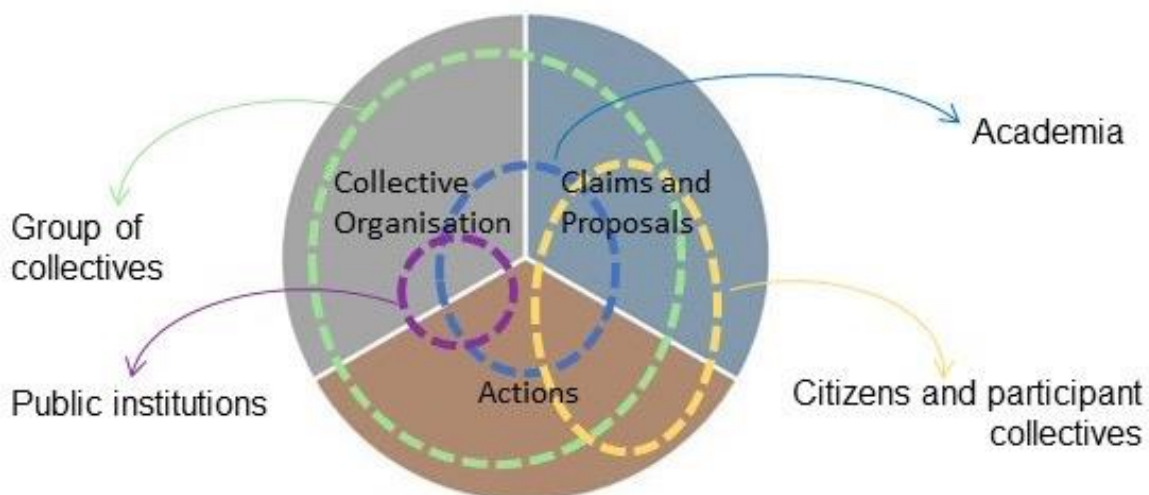
Figure 10 Collective action in the RttC Workshop – Manizales

Academia took a central role in all three aspects of the workshop. Arguably, the subject in itself, the Right to the City, meant a high interest from people in academia. Also, children and teenagers from a public school in San Jose, Instituto Manizales, were part of the event, mostly as atendees. However, a few of them presented a project about their understanding of land use planning regulations, and their version of a development plan for the city.

Unlike the cases of Rio Blanco and San Jose, there is no circle for a group determined as local community in the graphic, since the territory in question here is the city. However, there were various communities represented in the workshop, as shown in Table 5. Moreover, in this case, citizens participating in the workshop, who therefore had a limited commitment to the socio-territorial movement, managed to contribute into the sphere of claims and proposals, mainly through the building of manifestos.

Although organisers assumed leadership of the workshop in a horizontal way and on a task by task basis, the collective SABPOT made the workshop a priority in their

schedules, allocating own resources and dedicating many of their regular meetings for the planning of the workshop with other collectives. SABPOT was formed as a collective in 2014 when a group of members started working on an alternative cirtizen lead version of the official POT proposed by the Municipality. Due to the collective's interest in urban planning, the Righ to the City was a concept widely discussed internally and promoted in their practices. According to SABPOT members and an interview with a planning officer, a contribution made in a participatory exercise from SABPOT managed to get integrated into the official POT vision of Manizales for 2030. It is important to higlight that SABPOT seemed to the the only civic organisation of their kind in the country at the time of the research. There is no obvious information about other civic collectives organised around alternative ways for urban planning and POTs in Colombia.

Types and local uses of media for collective action in the workshop: Right to the City - Manizales
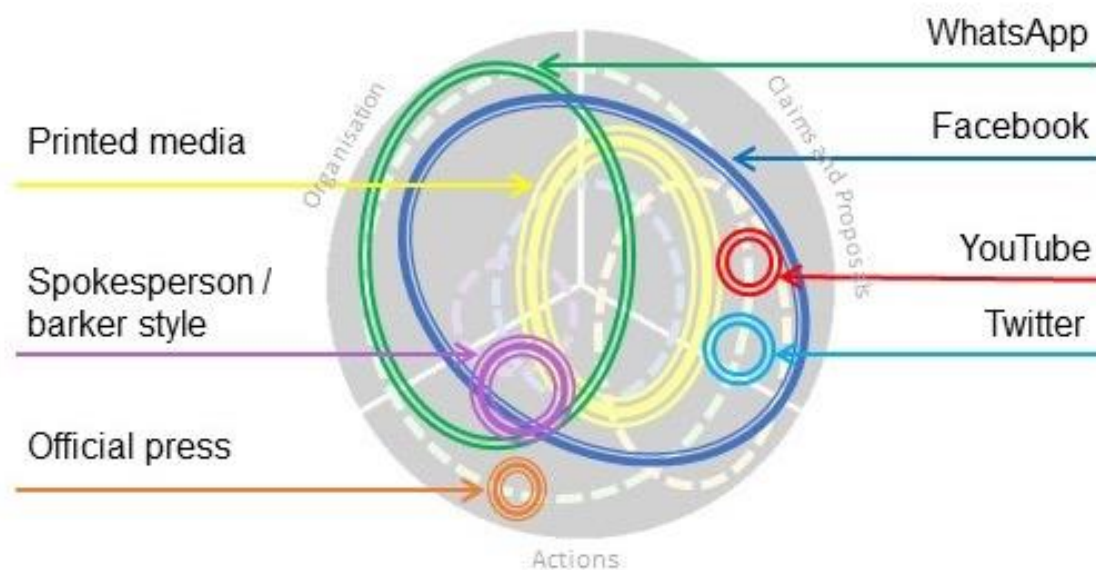
Figure 11 Media for collective action in RttC Manizales

The workshop was designed in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Henri Lefebvre's ([1968] 1996) publication *The Right to the City*, following an international social media call, from the Global Platform for the Right to the City (2019), in which social movements around the world where openly invited to share their projects and campaigns online, using the hashtag #righttothecity50years. Thus, this hashtag was included in most of the publications on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and

WhatsApp, and they were posted from a number of accounts, including personal and organisation accounts.

Image 23 Facebook post about the workshop. (Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/DerechoalaciudadManizales)

Accounts on Gmail (Google) and Facebook were created under the name of the workshop. Consequently, one YouTube account (generated automatically by the Google account) and one on Instagram (generated by Facebook) were also created and used for the workshop organisation, although less frequently. In addition, a WhatsApp group was created to coordinate actions and discuss ideas among the workshop's organisers. The WhatsApp group chat, the Google Drive and the Facebook page became the digital tools most used for the planning of the event, as well as organisation and recording during and after the workshop. The Gmail Drive included files that were open to organisers to view and edit around matters such as the proposal of the workshop, data base for invitations, formal invitations, schedule of tasks and progress, images and video to share on social media and to use for online and printed posters, list of attendees, video, photographs and audio recorded during the workshop, among others.

I was one of the two administrators of the Facebook page for the workshop, which was useful for the research as it allowed me to learn about the platform by making use of it for a collective initiative for the first time. Facebook analytics helped us, the organisers, to understand at what point during the day, and what type of content had more chance to reach a larger audience in the city. We learnt that content posted around noon or late in the afternoon tended to get more attention, and also that images and video could produce more reactions (as 'likes', sharing or commenting). Moreover, we decided to promote two posts at strategic moments one week before the workshop, which means, we paid Facebook to advertise our posts broadly outside our contacts. The online invitation that we specifically designed for Facebook reached more than 3000 people, according to Facebook analytics, after paying 10 USD for its promotion. In comparison, the organic (non-paid) posts that managed to reach the most people were two videos, one prepared in anticipation of the workshop, which reached 1400 people, and one posted in real time during the workshop, reaching 1034 people, according to Facebook analytics.

The digital mapping of collectives in Manizales was a task inteded to be completed during the workshop while participants were registered. However, there was a problem with the computer used for that purpose and the activity could not be run as initially planned. However, the collective Pluriversos, who was one of the organisers, took the information collected during the workshop and integrated it afterwards into an online map in their website (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1). Pluriversos had been working in mapping collective action in the city before the workshop was planned.

Traditional and non-digital media were also crucial for the planning and delivery of the workshop. Printed posters and flyers inviting citizens to the workhop were put up in various parts of the city, where organisers thought it was strategic to reach a variety of people. Some of the places where printed material was placed or distributed were universities, busy streets in the city centre, cultural and community meeting centres in San Jose and other neighbourhoods in the city, and headquarters of participant collectives. Moreover, loud speaker in a barker style was used in the city centre street two days before the workshop, and on the same day, to invite pedestrians to attend or visit the workshop. A short interview on a local radio station also served to advertise the workshop.

During the workshopt itself, all group work sessions (see Table 4) used physical materials and crafts in their activities. Therefore, most outcomes of the workhop were non-digital before being digitalised and shared on social media, as seen in Image 21 about the Citizen's manifesto. *Manizales Participa*, used a combination of physical materials for crafting and interacting with posters, but also integrated two computers and an electronic device called JigsAudio for scaning and recording participants' ideas (see section 3.4.4).

4.5 Stories from the field

The stories found in Manizales, as well as the ones I constructed though experiencing the field – both, in the physical and the digital spaces – were packed with richness and contrasting views. These elements became not only crucial as data to be analysed, but also as tools to represent in this document the heterogeneity of the context explored within the thesis. With this, I hope that the reader gets some of the richness and variety of voices from the field to make better sense of the analysis and discussions. In order to do so, I present four pen portraits from my participants (using pseudonyms[12]), to explore the different roles, intentions and approaches to citizen participation and collective action in the city. This technique is also referred as 'personas' and is very established in 'user experience (UX) design'. In addition, the following section draws on three key moments during fieldwork, as vignettes, to complement the reader's picture of my experience in Manizales.

I divided research participants into three main groups; (a) members of the socio-territorial movements mentioned earlier in this chapter, (b) people from academia or the private sector who act as supporters of collective action but do not recognise themselves as members of any movement, and (c) contacts inside public institutions. As shown in Figure 12, the people behind the pen portraits had connections (i.e., acting as members or supporters) with more than one of the socio-territorial movements, except Linda, whose interests were on the digital engagement of citizens with the local government.

---

[12] After consulting participants, they agreed on me using fictional names but preferred to use real names for their organisations, linking websites, and social media profiles when necessary.

	Socio-territorial movements			External supporters	Public Institutions
	San Jose	Rio Blanco	RttC Workshop		
GUSTAVO	▨	▨	▨	▨	
LINDA					▨
LUIS & RAMON	▨	▨	▨		
ERIKA	▨		▨	▨	

(Pen Portraits)

Figure 12 connections between pen portraits with socio-territorial movements, external supporters and public institutions studied in Manizales.

4.5.1 Gustavo

Image 24 Activity organised by Gustavo. Discussing Manizales regional development in the Plaza de Mercado.

Maybe because of the recent history of violence in Colombia, some people seem careful, or more discreet than others, about stating their political stance. Gustavo, on the contrary, speaks his mind, letting others see that he shares ideals with left and central parties, although he is not currently affiliated to any of those. Gustavo, in his 50s, is polite but frank, with the type of personality people tend to find charming and convincing. He is deeply involved in the three socio-territorial movements, as well as several other initiatives at local and regional level.

Often when speaking about his ideas, his tone is very much alike the one of a playful invitation and not like one of frustration by defeat. Incidentally, his ideas usually sound like already ongoing projects, including sound titles commonly framed into bigger city programs, which makes it hard to identify whether he is talking about just an idea, or is reporting about something important that is already happening, and of which people need to become participants as soon as possible. From my own experience, differentiating these two can be done the more you get to know Gustavo. No matter how confusing this could be, Gustavo always seems to have enough people following his ideas and contributing to his projects.

I could not understand the reason why some old friends of Gustavo called him 'the magician', usually followed by a smile. However, I like to imagine it has to do with his natural ability not only to convince people to join his projects, but also to encourage them to take the lead on them. Because of this aspect of his personality, I can only think of the word "*animador*" in Spanish, or "*animateur*" in French, which implies not only the role of leader or organiser but also the task of cheering people on engaging in a certain activity. Perhaps Gustavo's nickname has also something to do with his strong interest in using games and objects as part of his projects. For example, when presenting the claims in relation to San Jose, Gustavo have used in many occasions an industrial funnel, the size of a chair, wrapped with a collage of an urban map and words (Image 25). He explained to me once that the funnel represents how the planning system oversimplified all the components and problematics of San Jose into only one or two, such as insecurity and housing deficit, in order to support a renovation project that has being dismissive with all the other socio-economic and cultural issues in San Jose. Despite this playful manner to support his initiatives, Gustavo is also a confident speaker. Whenever he has the chance to speak in a meeting, particularly when public authorities attend, his speech is structured and convincing, and his ideas are well supported in regulatory frameworks.

Image 25 Gustavo and the Macro-project's funnel in the *Concejo de Manizales* (City's Council) (Source: author)

He was once a supporter of Fernando's, another participant in the research, Campaign for Mayor. Gustavo explains he does not want to be that close to political parties again, although he kept on collaborating with Fernando on several occasions. Gustavo acts on his own, usually under the name of one of the various civic organisations from which he takes part, in order to generate proposals 'to awaken people's interest', as he would say. This way, he believes more people in the city would become concerned about their territory and the ways in which they can be part of decision-making processes. His principal concerns are about nature and water protection, improving education on regional and urban planning, participation, land uses and value justice, social inclusion and democracy, the protection of cultures and popular knowledge, and food security, among others.

Gustavo manages to play between the activism and the protocols of citizen participation like no other participant I met in Manizales. People in public institutions know him, and many even seem to trust his opinions. Nevertheless, some of his actions might seem ambiguous and can jeopardise potential relationships with public institutions in the city. For example, in any given week he can be guiding – or participating at least – in a public demonstration, located in front of the same building

where he was giving a formal presentation days before; sometimes in relation to the same topic and sometimes in support of a different cause.

Finding Gustavo can be difficult sometimes. He chose not to own either a smart phone or a mobile phone, despite the advice of friends and family for him to keep up with technology and be easier to reach. My experience proved me that the two quickest ways to communicate with him was either leaving him a message at the café he owns with his family or texting him on Messenger. In terms of social media, Facebook is Gustavo's favourite platform, and the only one he used then. I observed, he uses Facebook mostly as it is his own newspaper. He takes the time to write notes, in a similar way as news articles, in relation to his projects and public concerns. In 2014 he created a Facebook account called La Matria, in criticism of La Patria, which is the oldest and most popular newspaper in Manizales and the region. La Matria as a name is also a word game, referring to matriarchy instead of the patriarchy implied in the word "patria", which translates homeland or country in English. Apart from La Matria, I knew of at least four other Facebook pages or accounts created by Gustavo in relation to different projects. Most of these pages were active at some point but seem to have been forgotten soon after. Some are currently used to re-post invitations or information from Gustavo's current projects. At a glance, I can see followers from the various pages are almost the same group of people. Additionally, it seems like Gustavo is not worried about the interaction people have with his posts. In other words, he claims he is not doing it for 'the likes'. Many of his posts have fewer than 10 likes, and sometimes not even one. Perhaps that is a consequence of having several pages in one platform. But it could also be related to the format of the content, that is to say, his posts usually include a large proportion of text with one or two images, which is deemed an ineffective format for creating engaging content on Facebook. ("Facebook Social Impact", 2020)

Gustavo clarified to me once, that he does see value in audio-visual content and would prefer to have more videos in his posts, but he uses what is according to his current abilities, in this case photography and texts.

Image 26 Notes section in La Matria

4.5.2 Linda
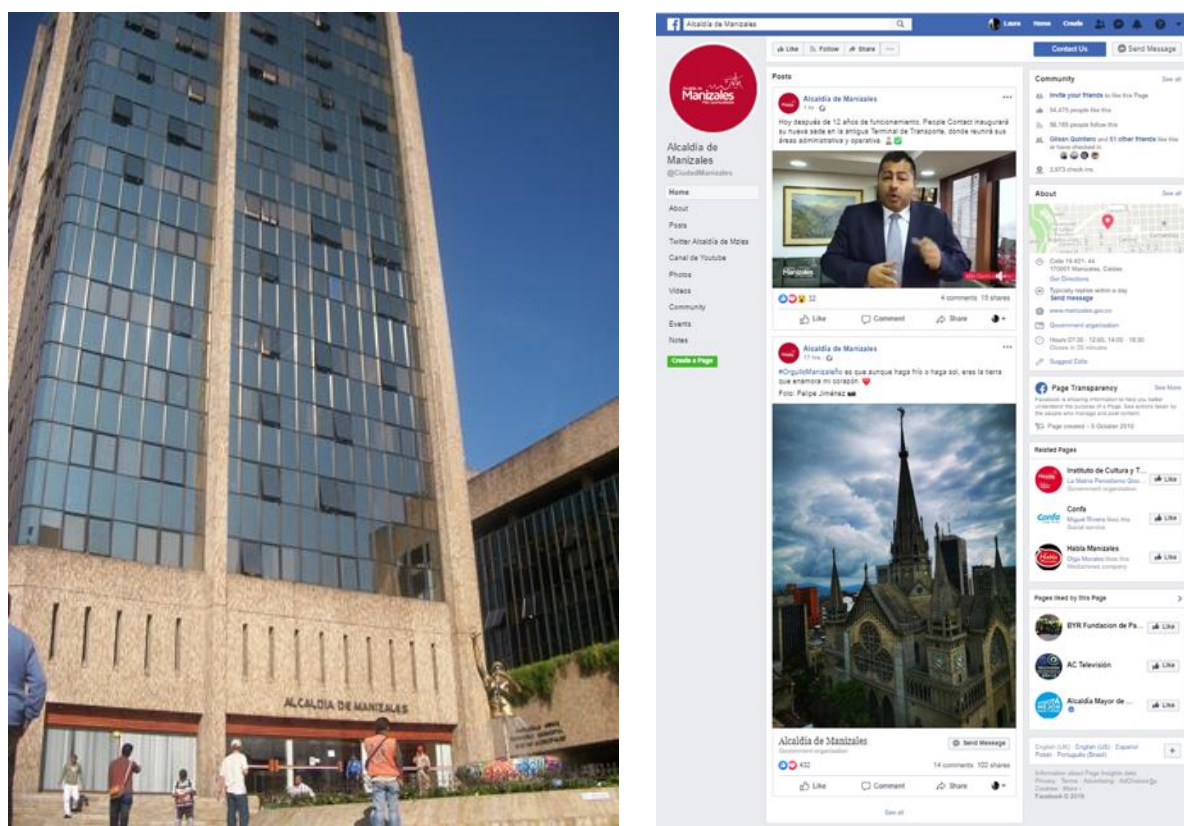
Image 27 Left: Municipality Building. Right: Municipality Facebook page

Linda is the principal coordinator of the official social media accounts from Manizales Municipality. This is one among her various coordination roles in the *Oficina de Prensa de la Alcaldia de Manizales* (Municipality Office for Press and Communications), where she has worked for the last three years. After spending less than an hour with her, I can already tell that she is doing the job equivalent to two or three people. Nonetheless, she talks about her job with passion and pride, convinced of the good work and commitment from the current Mayor and his administration. For Linda, their social media accounts are in their own an everyday process of participation open to the citizens 24/7.

Linda is a young woman, between 25 and 30 years old. She is not the Press Chief; in the Press team she goes below the chief, but her responsibilities are far from simple. She speaks clearly and quickly, occasionally checking her computer screen or glancing at the notifications from her mobile phones. She has two smart phones, and both are work related. I am grateful she took time from her busy

day to talk with me. She seems to be the type of person that takes on challenging tasks with enthusiasm, regardless of the possibility of investing extra time in working on them, with no additional pay. This might be the reason why she is coordinating a group of more than 10 people, most of who are journalists. Her team is in charge of covering events and writing news in relation to the different secretaries from the Municipality. These are common tasks from a press office, however they are also in charge of managing the Municipality social media accounts on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, as well as on the official website where all news and social media posts are linked, in the style of a digital newspaper, called *Sala de Prensa* (Press Room). Linda seems excited to tell me how new and older journalists are now getting better at preparing material for different media; better written and extended for printed or digital press, and shorter (in many cases a couple of lines) for social media posts, with relevant images and videos, if possible.

Many people write to the social media accounts of the Municipality addressing the Mayor, as if they are convinced it is the Mayor himself who is managing such spaces, which is something Linda finds amusing. She also explains that every question, even when is not related to the Municipality's duties, gets a prompt answer, and she thinks that is one of the reasons of their success in citizens engagement through social media. There are several facts justifying their feeling of success, and Linda is happy to share those with me. Her argument is based on Facebook statistics of views, reactions, impacts and percentages of replies, in comparison to other municipalities in the country. Linda is also proud to tell me how they have been approached by external organisations at national level, such as Google Colombia, who were interested in online government and participation and wanted to discuss the experience and good practices of Manizales' Municipality.

When I asked Linda how she thinks social media from the municipality is making a difference for citizen engagement, she replied that now there are multiple and more accessible channels to get in contact with the various Municipality's offices. In her view, that is already improving citizen participation in the city because she feels more people are being listened to and their questions are being addressed.

4.5.3 Luis and Ramon

Image 28 *'Minga al Parque'*. Comunativa's activity in San Jose on a Sunday, for community recreation and fundraising.

This is a pen portrait of two participants, and it is important to clarify that, although they do not always agree on everyday decision about their foundation, they work admirably as a team and complement each others' tasks, based on shared principles and objectives. Consequently, it felt natural, and fair considering the way they work, to portray their story as one for the purpose of this research. Luis and Ramon run a social foundation called Comunativa – Urban Gardens (*Comunativa – Huertas Urbanas* in Spanish), located in San Jose since 2009. Comunativa serves as a cultural space for children and young teenagers in San Jose. They also run a communal garden and look after a public green space (Image 28), which they recovered after the demolitions carried by the macro-project.

Luis lives in the house where Comunativa is located. It is his family house in San Jose, where he and his siblings grew up and where his father died, soon after the macro-project started. He is younger and usually more extroverted than Ramon, perhaps that is why Luis tends to be associated as Comunativa's face. However, they both agree that there is no hierarchy in their roles.

Ramon runs in parallel a small collaborative audio-visual company, called Sabalopro, from which Ramon earns some money, depending on the type of projects available. Inevitably, Sabalopro and Comunativa work in cooperation. Ramon and his company have produced numerous pieces of video and photography for Comunativa and for friends in similar organisations in Manizales (Image 29). Moreover, Sabalopro has run free film-making classes for kids and teenagers in San Jose, for the last few years. It seems that more than often, Ramon and his friend work for free for social projects.

Image 29 Screenshot of a video in Unitierra's YouTube channel, produced by Luis, Ramon and his company. (Source: https://youtu.be/AU0EcVjmdXg)

From my experience in Manizales, Luis and Ramon seem to be part of the people tired of politics. Often, they seem not to care much about political parties, and prefer to be seen as an independent collective. However, in the everyday life, their actions

and comments seem to come from ideals that criticize the status quo of the city, and particularly, the conservative and often corrupted systems of democracy.

They condemn also the misrepresentation of the poorest and most vulnerable in the city, as in the case of San Jose's population. Moreover, Luis and Ramon are apparently influenced by the ideals of older leaders like Gustavo, who seems to have a better understanding of the sometimes invisible grid of political interests and bureaucracy in Manizales. In addition, Comunativa's course of action seems to be shaped partially by the ideals discussed by academics and activists of Unitierra – La Universidad de la Tierra. This is an international network of alternative learning formed by social groups in South, Central and North America, with common ideals originated from the Zapatista movement in Mexico.[13]

Luis and Ramon connect online every last Saturday of the month for the Unitierra Seminar, using a videoconference website called Zoom[14]. They participate with more than a dozen of groups in various countries, in order to discuss a given topic based on selected readings and the experiences of the different collectives in the continent. Comunativa does not merely connect and attend all the seminars, but also serves as the physical 'classroom' where other collectives from Manizales or the region, can join and be part of the online seminar. They have a video projector, a portable screen, audio set, chairs and floor seating space; all ready before people arrive.

During my fieldwork, I attended three of these seminars. Each time the scene was similar to the previous one, but somehow very different, mainly due to the variety of topics, the physical arrangement of the space and the international interventions. These seminars were supposed to be two hours long, but they always lasted at least an hour longer, needing to have one or two breaks. Some of the breaks were planned, in order to get a coffee and a snack, always provided by Luis' mother, but

---

[13] Zapatistas is an anticolonial movement, as well as anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist, mainly concerned with recovering the lost knowledge of indigenous ancestors and the connection to nature, to improve people's life as well as the democratic structures in the communities, whether rural or urban.

[14] During fieldwork, Zoom was hardly known by participants who did not participate in Unitierra seminars. By the time I submitted this thesis, Zoom became one of the most popular digital tools for videoconferences, during COVID-19 lockdowns.

sometimes a break was demanded by technical failures in one of the many ends of the online seminar.

Luis and Ramon are active on social media, mainly Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Luis has used OpenStreet and Google Maps in a few occasions to map a network of urban gardeners in Manizales, in which he participates and sometimes coordinates. Both of them administrate Comunativa's Facebook page and its messenger chat. Often, during a conversation on Messenger, I had to ask which of them was texting, to know with whom I was speaking. Despite considering social media and digital technology as a necessity for social organisations like theirs, describing them as tools to improve the way they work, to connect with others and visualize their issues and projects, they never consider social media and digital technology as at end itself. In everyday life, Luis and Ramon prioritise the offline actions, the recreational and educational activities with San Jose's children, the urban farming, and the film making workshops for their neighbours, or the collaboration with other collectives, over online activities. Uploading images, videos or invitations in their social media is an important role in their days, but it seemed to be a secondary and even tiring endeavour.

Having said that, there were moments were Luis happily took on the role of designing digital invitations, despite not having a background in such matters. He found tutorials online and soon mastered the options given in a free website called Canva[15], which contains numerous templates for specific formats that responded to the different platforms where the content would be shared. Thus, invitations to be used in Facebook, WhatsApp or Twitter would have slightly different formats ensuring no content is missed in previsualizations.[16]

---

[15] Canva is an online free graphic-design tool with an accessible interface, used by over ten million people around the world (Canva.com, 2020). Templates, features and tutorials facilitate designs for digital pnand printed media aimed to users with none or little experience.
[16] Previsualisation is the image shown as shared in a WhatsApp group chat, for example, before the receiver open the file. Parts of the image or texts shared in the visual piece cannot be seen in the previsualization if the file's format differs greatly from the format of the previsualization frame.

4.5.4 Erika
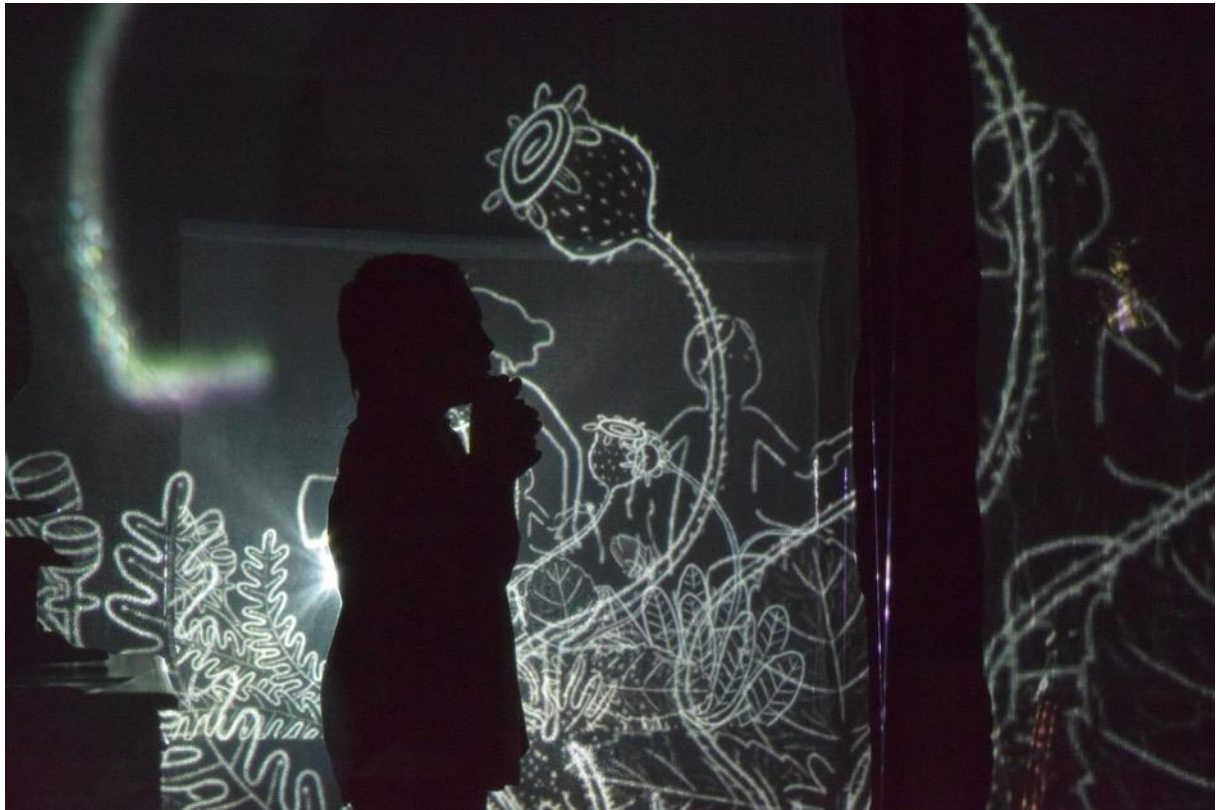
Image 30 Video installation by Erika's company. (source:
https://www.facebook.com/ESTRATOSFERAcolectivo/)

Erika graduated a few years ago from Visual Design from a university in Manizales,
and before finishing her 5-year undergraduate program she formed a company with
two colleagues. They do editorial support and transmedia strategies for several
organisations in and out of Manizales. Apart from the commercial products, they
have also supported social projects with their work, and it seems this has been an
important motivation for the team, and something that has given them regional
recognition. Erika believes that their work has contributed to forming publics in
Manizales about digital technology appropriation. With appropriation, she refers to
the process of removing the barrier of entry to technical concepts and applications,
by explaining these to people in simple terms, while showing them basic ways in
which they can also design and use digital technology for their community projects.

Erika talks about the social problems of the city with passion but also with modesty
and caution. It does not seem that she has the interest or the energy to be
considered an activist, however, I can see from the way she speaks

her speech that she wants to be part of the solutions to local social struggles, contributing with her work.

Her point of view about participation and uses of digital media in the city is critical but provocative. Being an outsider but a supporter of socio-territorial movements in the city, while frequently linked to programs from the local universities and the government, gives her an interesting perspective of problems and possibilities around using digital innovative technology in a more inclusive manner for the development of social organisations in Manizales. From that context, Erika claims that participation in Manizales is mainly happening around art collectives and independent collaborative projects around digital innovation, usually promoted by young professionals like her. She thinks that in comparison to older generations, or people working in local government or universities, her generation – between 20 and 30 years old – is more interested in the process of finding ways to put technology in use for social problems, rather than protecting their ideas and developments out of the reach from other sectors of society.

A couple of years ago her team in collaboration with other collectives in the city started making interactive video installations in Manizales, mainly for the sake of testing and showing this type of technology application to wider publics outside academia. Since then, they have developed a number of similar projects, starting them independently and sometimes finding support from other institutions. One of these projects was done in San Jose in collaboration with Comunativa and funded as a workshop of the *Festival Internacional de la Imagen* (an international festival around digital arts held in Manizales every year). It was the only workshop done outside of academic scenarios in the city, and it was Erika's team idea. It was a critical response to the tendency of the *Festival Internacional de la Imagen* of using the same formal scenarios, where only people with knowledge on digital technology would attend. Every participant in the workshop in San Jose, who formed a group of 15 people between 7 and 60 years old, was given a digital video camera, and were invited to record a place in San Jose that was important in their lives, explaining in a short video the reasons why they felt that way about the selected place. Later, all individual videos were put together in a video mapping installation displayed in the park outside Comunativa (park shown in Image 28). Erika describes the process as

challenging, given that most participants lacked technical skills needed for doing the exercise in a fully collaborative way. Nevertheless, she explains that everybody seemed to enjoy the process and the outcomes, and more importantly, some young participants were motivated to keep exploring with audio-visual techniques in their own initiatives.

For Erika, Manizales has the conditions to grow into a national reference of digital innovation, but it is not fully there thus far. She thinks the *Festival Internacional de la Imagen*, for example, has contributed largely in encouraging younger generations to experiment with digital media. She feels that in comparison with students from other cities, those in Manizales have access to the latest applications of digital technologies that can be used to explore or visualise social issues. That fact, according to Erika, needs to become in an advantage for the city. However, she stresses that the access to technology in Manizales is restricted to academia, and the applications bounded by private or particular interests. Erika gives two examples of important investments in technology where use and access is highly restricted to a small part of Manizales' society. One is a research centre for bio-technology called BioManizales, which is supposed to have some of the best computers and digital devices for biological research in the country, and was initially funded with public resources. The other example is a new technology lab in a public school called INEM. According to her, INEM lab has computers and machines hardly found somewhere else in Manizales, but the problem is that the school does not have staff enough qualified to use all the new equipment and software. Erika thinks this is a wasted opportunity because students could be learning much more and developing ideas in an innovative way if they could make the most of the technology around them. Furthermore, in both cases, investment in technology is aimed at very specific circles of people in the city, well-educated, professionals and students, and while that is positioning Manizales as a centre of digital technology in the country, it is not making a real impact inside the city itself.

4.5.5 Manizales in four voices

The previous stories served to introduce the range of meanings and perceptions, encountered in the field around concepts such as participation, activism, collective action and digital innovation. This variety as well as the scales of action, in which

these meanings are constructed locally, enriched the analysis process reminding the research about the complexities of depicting urban scenarios without overlooking key socio-cultural factors.

On the one hand, there is the city as portrayed by local government as a regional centre of digital development, which is based in some interesting initiatives. On the other hand, the stories also depict how limited the impact of government initiatives are in the everyday life of Manizales society, particularly in sections of a population that has something to say, seeking to be part of decision-making processes in the city. In addition, the stories of Gustavo, Luis and Ramon show some of the extents in which activists use digital and other media for organisation, collaboration and communication purposes. In the meantime, the story of Erika gives insights, from an arguably outsider and non-activist point of view, about the local possibilities and obstacles on taking digital media uses to the next level in Manizales, knocking digital technology off its pedestal and placing it closer to social struggles in the city.

In some ways, it seems as though the four central characters are narrating stories about different cities, and this in itself is a crucial point. Manizales, like most Latin American cities that deal with exclusion, misrepresentation and planning conflicts, is a collection of scenarios, real and imaginary, as result of the different perceptions people form in their everyday life, or what Lefebvre refers to the lived city (Lefebvre, 1991). The diverse understandings perceived from the pen portraits are highly informed by protagonists' roles in their communities; their convictions, their quality of life, as well as the obstacles and opportunities the urban life provides to their personal goals.

The stories are also showing how active and creative collective action can be in Manizales. Representatives of marginal communities, as in the cases of Gustavo, Luis and Ramon, moved beyond demanding answers from the local authorities. They were proposing and creating alternatives, at the scales that their resources and capability allowed them. Sometimes they did this in order to provide a temporary solution to a local struggle, or to highlight in a creative manner a fault in urban planning or public administration.

4.6 Vignettes

To complement the stories from the field in the previous section, the following vignettes describe key moments during fieldwork including some of the more complex, surprising and chaotic situations experienced in the field. This serves to illustrate various points in the following analysis chapters.
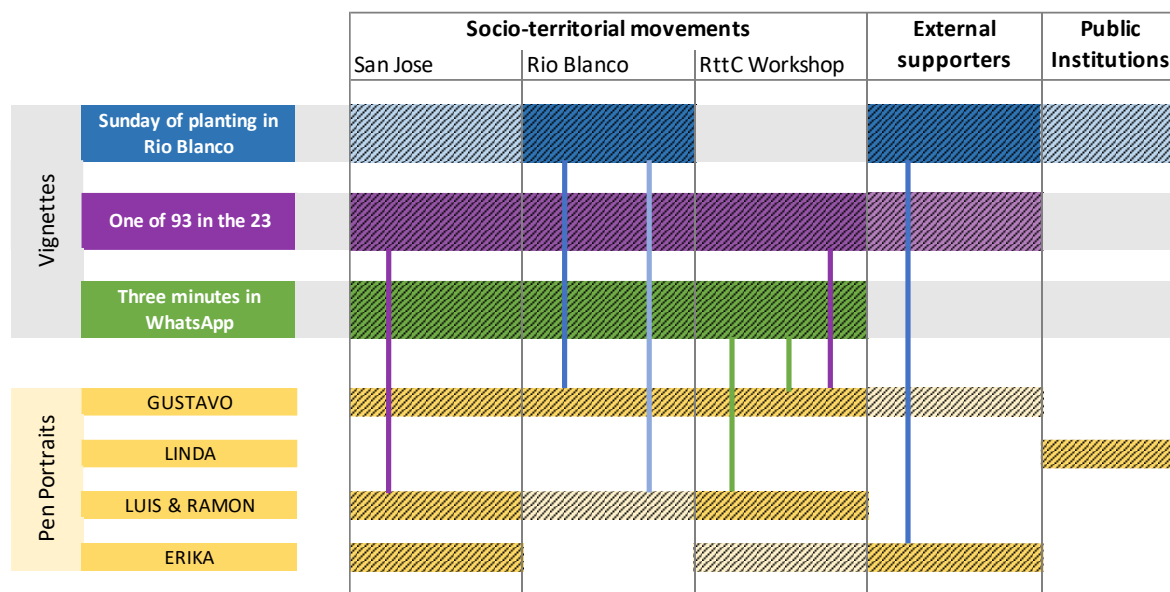
Figure 13 Vignettes, pen portraits and the socio-territorial movements. (source author)

Each vignette read in isolation serves to interpret what I experienced during fieldwork, highlighting eventualities, behaviours, and approaches to collective action and the uses of various media. However, Figure 13 shows a range of connections between the vignettes and pen portraits in relation with the groups of participants I reached in Manizales, to contextualise these into the research's narrative. I divided the participants into three main groups; (a) members of the socio-territorial movements mentioned earlier in this chapter, (b) people from academia or the private sector who act as supporters of collective action but do not recognise themselves as members of any movement, and (c) contacts inside public institutions. Therefore, vertical coloured lines show the connection between the actors in the pen portraits and the vignettes, with the exception of Linda, who has no direct link with the events from the vignettes. The horizontal colour filling shows the relation of either vignettes or pen portraits with the socio-territorial movements, and with external

supporters and public institutions. The two type of intensity on colour fillings reflects my perception on the strength of the connections represented in figure 13.

4.6.1 Sunday of planting in Rio Blanco

One Saturday evening I was talking to my friend Olga and invited her to come with me next morning to a day of planting promoted by the movement *Todos Somos Rio Blanco* (TSRB). She was gladly surprised about the invitation because she was already planning to attend. On Sunday morning I arrived at the event but could not see Olga. When I texted her asking if she was there, she replied saying: "yes! we took the buses provided by the event earlier this morning and the planting is already finishing. We are in the site where the houses are going to be built. We are taking the buses back to the city shortly". I was even more confused after our short exchange of messages in WhatsApp, as I imagine she was. I was in a different place – it was not the housing project land, there were no buses provided – there was some clear hints that a community event was happening, but the organisation of it seemed so casual that I was not even sure if any planting would take place that morning.

When I talked to two of the organisers about the messages from Olga and showed them a couple of pictures she sent me, we all realised that there was another planting exercise happening in parallel that same morning, organised by the building company. Consequently, the situation raised a few questions, in addition to some immediate signs of annoyance in the organisers' faces. Some of the questions were, why did Olga get confused about the two events when she initially thought she was going to be supporting TSRB, but ended up planting trees voluntarily for the building company? Was it a coincidence that the two planting events took place on the same Sunday morning? Alternatively, was it a strategy from the building company to prepare their event on the same morning and somehow managed to make it look as if it was organised by the community?

Only the first question was answered after I talked that night with Olga. For the other two questions, I did not find answers, but it was easy to assume it was not a coincidence.

Image 31 Olga's morning of planting. Photo shared with me via WhatsApp

Olga described her morning like this. She and her sister met with some others in a designated park at 9 am, where two private buses were waiting for them to take them to the site. Olga's sister was thinking on buying a flat from the housing project but changed her mind weeks before that day, after seeing it could affect the natural reservoir. That is the reason why they were interested in contributing somehow with the call to plant some trees in the boundaries of the reservoir. They have been invited by a Facebook event from a group called "*Yo soy Tierra Viva*" (I am Tierra Viva). Tierra Viva is the name of the housing project. However, the Facebook invitation and the sort of invitation sounded to Olga and her sister like a type of activity in support of the nature environment, probably promoted by people that were not happy with the idea of the housing project, they did not imagine it was an event organised by the project developers. Olga and her sister did not remember exactly the name of the collective that was against the project, but they thought the name and the intentions of the event looked like something that collective would do. When Olga arrived on the site that morning, the holes for the plants were in place. People were then organised in small groups and in less than an hour there were numerous trees planted. Olga thought there were about 100 trees planted. After the planting, people were invited to a tent for snacks and refreshments. During that moment, the building company director thanked people attending and explained the benefits and

the compromise of the project with the protection of the natural environment. The company also distributed flyers that offered discount for new buyers. Olga mentioned that while they were planting, there were people taking pictures and a drone was flying above the event, probably taking photographs as well. Soon after that, the buses returned people to a central place in Manizales. The whole event lasted less than three hours. When I talked to Olga on Sunday night to exchange experiences, she was surprised to hear that the planting of 10000 trees in the perimeter of the project land is a requirement stipulated by the environmental authorities that housing developers must adhere to. Thus, the company saved money by getting volunteers to do some of this planting work.

My day of planting was very different to Olga's. It was not a morning. Instead, it lasted until 8pm. People attending assumed different tasks, some planted trees near the river, some entertained and looked after children, and some, including me, helped in the kitchen to prepare lunch for those attending – approximately 35 people, including the dwellers of the houses where the event took place. The hosting families are known in the area as "*areneros*" (sand dealers). Most of the family members work collecting and selling sand from the river shores. Their houses, made of bamboo, timber and bricks, are built around an open area that plays the role of a patio. Most of the day activities took place in or around that patio.

Image 32 my morning of planting. (Source: personal archive)

During the day, there were various presentations of people interested in the protection of the reservoir and some group conversations to discuss the progress of some legal actions against the housing project, and to decide new possible actions. There was live music from a collective that also works in San Jose. Indeed, a few of the people and collectives present that Sunday were also part of other movements in the city, including San Jose. Many of them were also part of the RttC Manizales workshop (explained in section 4.4.3), either attending or co-producing it. At some point during the afternoon, there was a camera drone flying on top of us for a few minutes. We assumed it was the housing developers taking pictures of the planting activity and TSRB members. To my surprise, people reacted peacefully, waving at the drone and making jokes about that situation.

4.6.2 One out of 93 in the 23

Image 33 Micro garden around a palm. (source: personal archive)

Gustavo and Comunativa planned this planting activity overnight, to call attention to planning and environmental authorities about the poor state of the 93 palm trees along the *Carrera 23,* the main commercial street in the city centre. Hence the name of the day's action: one of 93 in the 23. The initial objective of the activity was to plant a micro garden around one of the palms (Image 33). However, a few hours into the activity there were posters, maps and pictures with a variety of messages, as well as words written on the pavement with white chalk, besides the improvised garden around the palm. Thus, what started as a spontaneous gardening activity turned quickly into a meeting point for representatives of several collectives and movements in the city. Some of the messages in place talked against the project proposed in Rio Blanco, and the macro-project in San Jose, but also about major issues such as fracking and mining at regional and national levels.

The palm picked for this activity was located in front of the entrance of the *Banco de la Republica*; a cultural institution in which the RttC Workshop would take place the following week. Because of the spontaneous quality of the activity, the *Banco de la*

Republica was not informed about it. This created discomfort with our contacts inside the institution who feared that the institution could see Gustavo's actions as a transgression that could in turn risk the cancelation of the event. Thankfully, after some calls and conversations, the situation was clarified and the *Banco de la Republica* confirmed their support for the RttC Workshop.

At some point in the afternoon two people approached Gustavo, and the others in the palm, and asked them to remove the plants, posters and other materials around it, claiming it was an invasion to public space. These people were wearing jackets from the municipality with a tag that translated: Public Space Guardians. Gustavo explained it was not an invasion since it was temporary and was causing no harm to the palm, but the opposite. Besides, the activity was framed into a day of pedestrianisation and artistic display in the Carrera 23, promoted by the Municipality and various theatre and artist groups in the city. Nevertheless, the discussion escalated and soon after two police officers were asking Gustavo to follow them to the station, and for the rest to clear the area around the palm. The participants and supporters of this activity showed peaceful resistance against the police demands, and defended Gustavo's right to refuse to go with the police officers. After about 30 minutes of discussions, the police let the matter drop but stuck around until 6 pm, when the activity ended, as all the artistic displays in the Carrera 23 were required to do so too.

At the end of the afternoon, we found a few posters per block along Carrera 23 with messages about the Right to the City, which were crafted during the day by several people in a table next to Gustavo's palm. These posters were done in a spontaneous, but somehow organised manner. Moreover, the following day there was a video with the photos of the posters and the gardening activity, posted initially by Comunativa and Gustavo, and shared by many others in Facebook.

For me, this was an intense day in which I thought the RttC Workshop could be cancelled and Gustavo could have been taken by the police. But beyond that, it was a key opportunity to observe the improvisation of collective action, the ambiguous relationship of social leaders, such as Gustavo and the public institutions and authorities in the city. It was also a moment to experience the extents of collaboration, spontaneous organisation and support between collectives. Moreover,

that day of artistic display in the Carrera 23 exhibited a clear connection between artistic expression and civic contestation, giving me the impression that arts and the protection of the natural environment could be a trigger, or an excuse, for demonstrations dealing with inequality and misrepresentation in city-making.

4.6.3 Five minutes in WhatsApp

I was on a bus on my way to a meeting in the city centre, and I needed to talk to Luis before the meeting to coordinate some logistics about the workshop we were organising. It was then when I noticed Luis had not been connected for the last 24 hours and he was not answering his phone, it was a clear signed that his phone was broken or stolen. Later in the day, I knew it was the second. It only took me between three to five minutes to get Luis' new phone number, however, it was the first time I was fully aware of how chaotic and overwhelming hyper-connectivity can be, in particularly when you are connected to several collectives through WhatsApp group chats. During my fieldwork I was part of five group chats.

In one chat called "Rio Blanco's friends", with more than 200 members, people were vigorously arguing about the type of content that was being shared lately. As a consequence, one of the administrators asked a member to leave because he/she kept on sending political ads and videos not related to the chat's purpose. That group chat was created by a few of the leaders in TSRB to keep supporters of the movement informed about activities and demonstrations, while exchanging ideas to strengthen the case of the movement against the housing project near Rio Blanco. Despite the organisers' efforts to remind people of the purpose of the chat, several members used to share unrelated content on a daily basis, most of which included political or religious messages, and some less common but still frequent, included jokes, poetic messages, private ads and invitations to activities non-related with TSRB. Consequently, the important messages regarding TSRB agenda were usually lost among the noise created by those unrelated posts, which populated the chat.

On a smaller group chat, created by the Communication Committee of TSRB and with only 12 members, the conversation and the dynamic were very different and arguably much more productive. The chat would help as an extension of the topics discussed in their face-to-face meetings. On this occasion, they were deciding upon

three possible visual messages to circulate in Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram with environmental facts about Rio Blanco, and the need to protect the reservoir. Two members were doing the initial sketches and sharing the images in the chat, so the rest could comment and discuss. The main discussion during those five minutes concerned how much text to include and how to make the message stronger. One of the most active members was a woman from Manizales but living in Florida, USA, who was working on advertising. She had key comments about size text, colours, and the emotions a message could generate.

In other group, members were sharing audio clips from *Unitierra Conversas*, to inform others who had not attended the meeting. Audio clips were too long, people were not following them and asking by text what these audios were about. It was creating confusion and people sending the clips were not giving much explanation, maybe because they were in the meeting, or perhaps they felt sharing the audio clips was already self-explanatory.

During those minutes, while many conversations and exchanges were taking place, I also experienced some of the frustration of 'being seen' but not being replied to. I sent various messages to individuals and groups asking for Luis' new mobile number, or his house landline. I could see on individual conversations that most of the contacts have seen my message, yet only a couple replied, and none had the information needed. I finally found the number by the least expected source, Gustavo. Although he did not have a mobile phone and therefore, no WhatsApp account, I saw he was online on Facebook and he replied soon after I asked him for Luis' new number.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the necessary context and presented the case of Manizales, and the socio-territorial movements studied in the city, as tools for the analytical reflections proposed in the following chapters. Ranging from national regulation and frameworks about citizen participation and digital innovation for local democracy, to very local stories and anecdotes of collective action in Manizales. This chapter provided different perspectives encountered around the meanings and practices of

citizen participation and collective action, as well as everyday occurrence of collective action in between online and offline spaces.

Chapter 5. Between formalised participation and citizen contestation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores everyday practices between what was perceived as citizen participation and contestation, drawing from the findings of Manizales's case and the socio-territorial movements presented in Chapter 4. The chapter is divided into two sections, each answering a research question that correlates with the other. Thus, it is important to present them together as part of the same chapter. Section 5.2 deals with the question RQ1: How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to the everyday life of social organizations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city? And section 5.3 explores RQ2: How do citizens mobilise - online and offline - towards spatial justice in a city self-proclaimed as democratic, inclusive, and innovative?

This chapter starts by providing an understanding of the different local perceptions around citizen participation, digital innovation for the city, and collective action, and will then explore the type of initiatives promoted by the municipality and their connection to the most pressing matters around spatial justice in the city. The first section ends with a proposal of a categorisation of the type of relationship I found in the field, to answer the research question RQ1. This overview of the context and limitations of citizen participation in Manizales sets the ground for the second section, which as previously mentioned, analyses the practices of civic mobilisations around social and urban development in the city. That section (5.3) goes beyond the scenarios presented in Chapter 4 to depict a range of identities and influences reflected in the practices of collective action, observed during my fieldwork. The findings analysed in this section challenge the presupposition of insurgency as the main, and most common, strategy for mobilisations in the Latin American context (Holston, 2008; O'Donnell, 1999). As a result, I present the experience of Manizales as one of 'transgressive citizenship', drawing from the work of Lucy Earle (2012, 2017), in which the insurgent elements of mobilisation strategies coexist with the support that movements find in existing regulations for citizen participation, and political control.

5.2 Relations and disassociations between governmental initiatives and collective action

This section addresses research question RQ1: How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to everyday life of social organizations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city? Exploring this question is the first step in understanding the problems and possibilities between citizen participation approaches in the city and civic practices of contestation. In that order, the first point reviews the perceptions found in the field about citizen participation, collective action and digital innovation. The second point brings to the surface key issues found in such perceptions to understand the problem in the context of Manizales. Lastly, the third point presents concluding thoughts about the relations suggested by the research findings.

5.2.1 Perceptions from the field

The many conversations and interviews carried out during the fieldwork exhibited a significant heterogeneity of views, opinions, and roles in relation to digital innovation, participation, and collective action in the city. To represent such variety, Table 6 presents illustrative examples of the most pertinent positions that are often contradictory or complementary to one another[17]. Perceptions are grouped into three columns representing the source of the various participants. The first column, titled "Municipal officers" lists the common perceptions from participants working in governmental institutions such as the Planning Office, the Secretary for ICT and Competitiveness, the Municipal Press Office and the Online Government Office. The middle column lists perceptions of participants who belong to one or several of the socio-territorial movements. Finally, the third column includes the perceptions gathered from a group of varied participants from academia, private and third sector. I call this group 'supporters', since they have collaborated on several joint projects, despite not necessarily being members, leaders or activists in the social movements.

---

[17] See Appendix 4 for the extended version of Table 6

Table 6 Perceptions around citizen participation, collective action and digital innovation in Manizales

Topics	Perceptions from:		
	Municipal officers	Participants from socio-territorial movements	Supporters of participation
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	• POT and Women's Secretary as examples of good practices in participation. • POT's participation followed the law. Several spaces designed by the planning office. • Manizales received national recognition for their participatory mechanisms in the creation of the Women's Secretary.	• Perceived as institutional events already defined. Mostly informative. • Political misuse of participation for manipulation. • Social interests from the government and the community are different. Then, formal participation is not enough. • Some were interested in participatory mechanisms of political control, as established by the National Constitution.	• Municipal initiatives are restrictive for citizens, but also permissive to the privileged. • The municipality is only interested in citizen participation under their control. • Younger leaders lack awareness about formal mechanisms of political control. • Citizen participation is still weak. It needs more and better information to argue against the power structures.
COLLECTIVE ACTION	• Some referred to it as activism (negative connotation of disruptive opposition). • Some saw citizen collectives had potential to propose solutions. • Collective action was not seen as citizen participation without a prior invitation from an institutional initiative.	• Status quo required citizen alternatives to move beyond protesting, but acting, filling gaps. • Transformation must go hand-in-hand with social pressure. • Need for training and education so collective action can intervene directly in decision-making. • Corruption at very local levels can impair collective action. • Citizen's collectives need to work together.	• For some, Manizales society is apathetic to protest, as a result of boosterism and high sense of belonging. • City planning is a new matter of public debate thanks to collective action. • Collectives are generally reactive but willing to work in collaboration. • Weak collectives are targets for politicians in electoral campaigns. • Issues around environment, heritage, diversity, public space and spatial justice are the most common for collective action.

DIGITAL INNOVATION	• Manizales as leading in citizen participation, employing digital and traditional media. • The Municipality is recognized nationally for their use of social media (Facebook, Instagram,Twitter and WhatsApp) • MinTIC and international bodies recognised Manizales' digital innovation for participation and online government. • Digital innovation in place for local business development and education.	• Digital innovation does not reach marginal communities. • Manizales' technology investment is based on private interests. • Lack of skills to integrate digital and social media into people's lives. • Younger participants saw 'digital innovation' as the development of their own capacities to create and share content in diverse platforms. (i.e., self-taught video editing for YouTube, or using Canva to design posters and invitations)	• City's interest in digital innovation is focused on elites. • Outcomes around digital innovation were motivated by private interests and the benefit of external investment. (i.e., Call centres and the National research Centre for Bio-informatics and Computational Biology - BIOS) • Rankings showing Manizales at the top of social progress and innovation were based on manipulated data. Challenging research is usually silenced.

5.2.2 Understanding participation in context.

The case of Manizales appeared to be a common example of a city where citizen participation seems to be understood by people in the local government and planning as a privileged act that occurs following an invitation from governmental bodies. This idea reiterates what Korn and Voida (2015:146) described about civic engagement being limited in modern societies to special situations for opinion exchange provided by public institutions. According to them, these scenarios show one of the most critical concerns of citizen participation today.

Moreover, this understanding of participation appeared to be taken-for-granted and unquestioned in the field, it was not seen as problematic. When I had the opportunity to ask interviewees in governmental bodies, about their thoughts on participation initiated by civic groups, they commonly replied somehow puzzled, as if I had a different understanding to theirs of the word 'participation'. They sometimes answered with a question along the line of: "oh, are you talking about activism?". It is important to mention here that the word 'activism' usually has a negative connotation in Colombia, this was both confirmed, and a few times challenged in my fieldwork findings.

On the other hand, participants belonging to socio territorial movements tended to refer to their activities as collective action, instead of describing them as citizen participation, while avoiding calling themselves as 'activists'. Nevertheless, there were a few participants who defended the use of the term 'activism' in an attempt to free it from its bad connotation. Additionally, most of the participants in this group, as outlined in Table 6, referred to citizen participation mainly in situations when local authorities wanted to gather or influence public opinion, or votes from citizens, or when civic groups exercised the right to political control. This was commonly done through civic oversight committees, and particular legal actions like class action suits (*Acción Popular*) and lawsuits.

The various meanings and expectations around the concept and practice of citizen participation posed a visible challenge in the relationship between local authorities and social movements in the city. People in local government seemed to consider that their efforts were having a positive impact in the participatory dynamics in the city, which is a statement that would require a research project aimed at exploring such impacts. Such in-depth type of study was out of the scope of my research, however, the findings from my fieldwork confronted, at some extents, that argued positive impact from the local government initiatives. Therefore, I found that despite reasonable efforts, most of what the municipality claimed to achieve mainly related to opening more channels of communication through digital media, in addition to being present and active day and night. This constant presence and availability to promptly respond to citizens was seen as a temporarily relief to civic pressure, which from several interviews were found to be treated as a sign of improving participation. In an interview with representatives from a national government program to promote citizen participation and government transparency in digital media, the interviewee mentioned that according to their studies, what citizens often wanted the most was a reply from local authorities. This implied that for concerned citizens a prompt response from the government, indifferent on the institution, was sometimes not only unexpected but enough to build trust and improve future communications. The interviewee also added that sometimes, all that citizens wanted was to be heard, even when the answer they obtained did not satisfy their concerns.

Improving the communication and building political trust among government and various sectors of society is a key step to improving citizen participation, however, the risk lies in considering that step as being equivalent to an enhancement in participation. Additionally, citizens can also perceive such understanding as an insulting assumption, particularly when people approach authorities due to delicate matters where being heard is clearly not enough. The next extract from an interview, with a member of the socio-territorial movement in San Jose, exemplifies such situation:

> *Participant: today, I received a phone call from the Contraloria Municipal (Municipal Audit Office), asking me how I evaluated their attention and response regarding a Right of Petition I filed in June? (2017) about a tower block in La Avanzada (to relocate families from San Jose). That construction has been stopped since the 18th of February (2017). […] Only 24 of the flats are occupied, but the first tower was finished by April 2015, more than two years ago! So, I replied to the woman on the phone: how do I evaluate your service? Awfully! You have no idea the risk I am putting myself into by denouncing this. I was asking you for help so you could draw attention and demand a response at least from the legal oversight committee, the public prosecutor or public defenders, but you have done nothing!*

> *The woman calling replied: No miss, you do not understand, we are not calling to fight, we call to ask if you are satisfied with our services.*

> *Participant: No, shame on you! Are you recording? Yes? No, I am not happy and instead I am completely disappointed with the role that you provide to the city. I am aware that the responsible entity to demand compliance to the Urban Renovation Company (developers of the San Jose's Macro-Project) and the Municipality, is the General Audit Office, but you as the Municipal Audit Office are in charge of informing them, and follow the process locally as well. You have done nothing! What do we need to do now in San Jose? Wait for someone else to die? How many more people need to lose their houses?*

> *Woman calling: No, miss, please stay calm. Thank you for your time.*

Participant: okay then. And then I hanged up.

(female participant, community leader from San Jose, Manizales.)

One element to highlight from this quote is that for the public officer making the call, a 'good service' implied receiving a communication and getting back to the citizen. Moreover, similar approaches were present in conversations in the field, indicating a sign of the Municipality's mode of governance rather than an individual behaviour from a public officer. From situations such as those in the previous interview excerpt, it appears that Manizales' government tends to perform, increasingly, under the same quality standards of private service provider companies. Governance here seemed segregated into independent operations or services that can be rated independently. These are signs of the post-political city discussed by Swyngedouw (2009:609) and Mouffe (2005:103). Thus, for a moment citizen are reduced to 'users' and the mission of the institution can be rated as a 'service', disassociating the city governance from its expected socio-political responsibilities.

Another element exposed in the interview extract is the risk of deteriorating relationships between government bodies and citizens caused by such approaches. When a citizen, such as the participant, places trust in local authorities, asking for help and remediating actions about a critical matter that was affecting hundreds of families in vulnerable situations, the expected action was much more than a simple confirmation message. Representatives from communities in vulnerable positions usually expect public institutions not just to open more channels of communication, but to engage with their calls for justice.

5.2.3 Does improving the digital correlate with improving participation?

To recap the main context of Chapter 4, Manizales was gaining recognition for their practices of citizen participation using multiple channels, and due to their presence and activity on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. The sixteen secretaries in the city government, the City Council, Mayor's Office, Press, Municipal Comptroller Office and Ombudsman Office had official accounts on Facebook and Twitter, and the directors of these offices were in daily communication through various groups in WhatsApp. According to an interviewee from the Press

Office, some offices were more active than others on social media, and some struggled to add content or interact through their accounts on a daily basis. Furthermore, ten people in the Press Office, who were mainly responsible for managing the social media accounts, were overworked due to the additional responsibilities that managing social media was added to their schedules. Moreover, from my interviews, it became apparent there was an assumption among the municipal officers, that having more digital channels would immediately increase and improve the communication with more citizens, which is an assumption highlighted in similar studies in various contexts (Mossberger, Wu, & Crawford, 2013; Mergel, 2013; Zheng & Zheng, 2014). This is connected with another common conception, found in the conversations with municipal officers, that improving communication is in itself advancing city participation. However, this approach neglects existing issues of accessibility and digital illiteracy within marginal sections of the population. It also gives the impression that opinions and interactions that occurred on those platforms were representative of the majority of the population, which revealed a poor understanding of the ways in which platforms like Facebook govern the communication of organic content (not paid or promoted), independent of the organization type. [18]

Participants working in local government felt generally proud of their work in terms of improving citizen participation. In two of these interviews, participants mentioned that what Manizales was doing differently to other cities, was that they were making use of the information obtained from people's participation; as public officers claimed there was a visible outcome from participation exercises. An example of this was that both participants interviewed talked about the participatory process to create and define the *Secretaria de la Mujer* (Women's Secretary). In this process, thousands of citizens were asked, through various media including social media, printed surveys, and also through Short Message Service (SMS), what kind of services should be the priority for the new Women's Secretary? Consequently, the two first programs of the

---

[18] Due to national regulations about spending public money for institutional press, none of their content in Facebook could be 'promoted'. The Municipality could not pay Facebook to increase the visibility and impact of their content. Which meant that only a section of the Municipality's followers would see their activity on the news feed.

Women's Secretary, defined and operating since 2018, responded to the two ideas that received the most votes from citizens participating in the call.

Behind the need to feel proud of the efforts they are doing in the local government there is an external pressure, coming mostly from national levels, to perform in accordance to national and international standards for citizen participation, inter-sectoral collaboration and online government (i.e., OECD requirements)[19]. Also, in the interviews, some other international standards were mentioned in relation to smart cities and smart tourism, which seemed to be guiding new programs in local government. Regarding such external pressure, particularly referring to the ones pushing Manizales to be more participative and digital, I found two counteracting sides of the story. On one hand, external pressure to maintain certain standards can be beneficial to instill programs independently of the administration in turn. Thus, outstanding programs that were well received by local communities can have a chance to survive the new municipal administrations. A clear example of this found in the field was the active presence of government offices on social media, and the fact that they treated citizen's requests on these channels with the same legal responsibility as a right of petition placed in physical form. A new administration could tear this initiative down, however it would be a politically challenging move, once this situation was established and used by citizens, and it was also recognised as a good practice by national and international competent bodies. These bodies in turn, such as the MinTIC or the OECD among others, might influence the competitive potential of the city at regional levels. They could do so by supporting local initiatives, recognising exemplary performance, or on the contrary adding requirements to local government programs.

The other side of the story depicts a city that on paper,   as well as on websites and reports, looks innovative and democratic, but in the everyday life, shows a city where many did not feel identified with the key initiatives promoted by the government under the calls of improving participation, inclusion, and development. I based this observation on the comments gathered in response to the flagship projects of Manizales around the model of "Manizales, as centre for knowledge" (presented in

---

[19] Since 2011 Colombia started the process to becoming a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The country's membership was officialised in April 2020.

section 4.3.1), particularly about BIOS (the research centre for bioinformatics and computational biology) and the complex of call centres. Criticisms from some participants implied that such initiatives were not born from existing crucial struggles affecting vast numbers or vulnerable groups, which for them, should be the main reason motivating important investments in digital innovation in pro of local development.

In general, participants' opinions concurred on highlighting the lack of social responsibility in the outcomes of such projects. For example, despite the promises of economic development and regional connectivity associated with the call centres' project, participants had a common complaint about the low quality of the contracts versus the excessive demands of the job. Some participants also claimed this project had nothing to do with Manizales as a centre of knowledge, and that it was primarily a result of private interests and political favours.

> [T]hey proudly said; "this is the city of call-centres", and I found that offensive! It is maquila! They [people working there] were teenagers doing shifts from 10pm to 6am and then heading to class. Now, the moment these companies find somewhere cheaper to set a call-centre in a different place […] they would close the 'sheds', unplug everything and off they go. What does it leave for Manizales? Nothing at all! It does not leave knowledge; it does not leave infrastructure." (Female participant, academic, from Computer Sciences)

> "It was sad what happened with the outcome of the policy of "Manizales, axis of knowledge", which led the city to become the capital of the call-centre, that's how they call it now. [what the government did was] To subsidize foreign entrepreneurs, to generate cheap jobs and sell communication services, taking advantage of the mayor's contacts, who used to work as managing director in Emtelsa (regional telecommunication services provider). He [the mayor at that moment] used his position to set these call-centres and today is one of the business partners in those call-centres. That is when the city lost the hope in turning into a smart city, a city of knowledge, one that could utilise technology to improve the quality of life, and to improve local businesses' production. It all fell apart because the meaning of such projects was never clear. It was an advertising strategy to transfer resources from

public to private through projects." (Male participant, academic – Architecture and Urban Planning, ex-candidate for mayor of Manizales, blogger, supporter of socio-territorial movements Rio Blanco, and San Jose)

The call-centres as a city project has nothing to do with participation, and as stressed by the participants, has little to do with digital innovation for the city. However, it was a relevant situation to highlight since it illustrated a common situation in public administration, where a government project proved to be implemented to benefit the private sector, despite being born out of a socio-economic model for local development - "Manizales, a city of knowledge", in this case.

Again, on the issue of external pressure that cities face to promote participation and digital innovation, the situation in Manizales illustrated a disconnect between external recognition on good practices, and the capacity of those practices to positively impact the everyday life of a majority of citizens. It seemed that the need to gain a competitive edge at regional scale, in the eyes of international standards can lead a municipality to invest in what can have faster and more visible results, which often is not the same as investing in improving deep socio-economic and spatial urban struggles.

Furthermore, the case study also highlights the importance of differentiating between communication and participation. Thus, increasing channels for communication between citizens and government (i.e., social media and digital platforms) cannot be counted as an improvement in participation in itself, unless participatory processes through such channels went beyond a digitalization of a system of enquiries, claims and complaints. When the use of digital media is aimed at collaborative constructions with citizens, integrating the recognition of conflicting views about local development, then it could be said that citizen participation is being transformed via digital media.

These situations depicted from Manizales' municipality should not be only attributed to lack of political will. As seen in Linda's story in Chapter 4, lack of institutional resources and professional staff dedicated to deal with the innate new challenges of multiple social media, puts a limit to the adaptive and transformative capacity from

the municipality in the interest of deploying digital possibilities to improve their relationship with citizens. The limitations presented in Linda's story can easily translate to other unprepared departments in local government, in and beyond Manizales, having to respond resourcefully to new burdens related to opening communication and participation via digital channels, as a requirement for regional competitiveness under expected international standards.

5.2.4 Limited interest

Going back to the question RQ1 for this section, how do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to the everyday lives of social organisations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building Manizales' city? I found in Manizales that there was a relation of limited interest. The efforts from the local government around citizen participation and digital innovation were in place to follow national standards and regulations. However, the biggest investments from the city around participation and innovation seemed disconnected from the most visible problems that were emphasized by urban contestation. Thus, what seemed to be the source of pride in the municipality for their recognition around good practices for citizen engagement, appeared to have no meaningful impact in the everyday life of civic groups who were fighting against spatial injustices, and for more opportunities to participate in planning decisions. Participants from socio-territorial movements in Manizales asserted that the presence of the Municipality on social media was not changing the dynamics of their communication. They reported that government representatives were careful not to engage in discussing sensitive topics in Facebook or Twitter; sometimes they got superficial answers from the mayor or municipal officers, at other times their questions were not addressed at all.

Drawing from conversations with city government representatives, it seemed that there was more than one possible reason contributing to the poor relationship between governmental initiatives and collective action in Manizales. It would be simplistic to attribute this issue only to the lack of political will, particularly in a government who insisted that they were doing their best to improve citizen engagement. Nevertheless, I found no connections between political interests in the city and direct technological innovation towards transforming the local landscape of

democracy. Especially around collaboration between civic movements and institutions. Therefore, the deficiency of political will in this sense was a key reason behind the problem.

Another possible explanation lies in the various interpretations about citizen participation in Manizales. For the local government, the meaning of participation seemed to imply a controlled and temporary exercise initiated by the Municipality; a role traditionally noted in the literature as a main limitation in citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969; Korn & Voida, 2015). This understanding cannot possibly recognize citizen-initiated actions as participatory, thus excluding all other initiatives outside governmental interest, including those recognized as legal forms of participation for political control, which tend to fall into categories of political opposition, and activism. These last two aspects could naturally relate to collective action, however, in the Colombian context these terms often tend to have a negative connotation, which in turn seems to justify the inability of governments to include the difference into their programs. The way the Manizales government dealt with participation showed no possible room for dissensus towards a collective construction of the city.

There is another possible cause, which is simultaneously a consequence of the limited interest from the government in digital innovation and citizen participation. It is about the narrow role given to social media and digital technology; a role that primarily digitalizes old procedures for the sake of efficiency and liability (Foth et al., 2015). Despite finding people in government with the interest to explore and expand the possibilities that digital media can allow, the obstacles in practical terms came to be a deficiency of institutional capacity and resources, versus the expectations of results according to national standards. The Manizales government, due to its size, was granted only a small team of journalists to manage communication and press, a group that was also in charge of all related to social media. I found that officers were as active and resourceful as their roles expected them to be, but their work on multiple social media platforms was limited as an amplification of old systems for petitions, claims, and complaints. Without a doubt, this was seen by many as an improvement in the communication, however, it could not transform citizen participation on its own.

5.3 Contesting spatial justice in a supposedly democratic and inclusive city

This section deals with the research question RQ2: How do citizens mobilise - online and offline - towards spatial justice in a city self-proclaimed as democratic, inclusive, and innovative? The reason why this and the first research question explored in sections 5.2 are in the same chapter, is due to their close connection in the everyday life of the city. The type of relationship that the local government establishes with the citizens around participatory planning, in addition to the regulations in place to support citizen participation and political control, are determining factors in the ways in which citizens mobilise. In a way, collective action for contestation is a response shaped after the limitations in local government initiatives, and the range of impact these can have in people's lives.

The following points explore some other factors influencing collective action in Manizales, as well as the common approaches and rationale behind these. The aim is to understand how citizens mobilise in a city with an arguably misleading interest in social inclusion and participation, that in practice presented several limitations, as shown in the previous section. Thus, the next section deals with identities and viewpoints affecting collective action. The second section examines the position, or positions, of collectives in the city in between law abiding and insurgency, and the ways in which local context can impact such stances. The third section proposes an understanding of the local scene as one of creative and transgressive citizenship, in a dialogue with relevant ideas from the literature, particularly drawing from Lucy Earle's works on Transgressive Citizenship (2012, 2017). Lastly, the concluding section explores the extent to which collective action can challenge normalising power structures in city-making.

5.3.1 Intersectionality in collective action
This section draws from the concept of intersectionality, traditionally used in social sciences' research "that focuses upon mutually constitutive forms of social oppression rather than on single axes of difference. Intersectionality is not only about multiple identities but is about relationality, social context, power relations, complexity, social justice and inequalities." (Hopkins, 2019:937) Usually, the concept aims at bringing elements around race and gender at the core of social studies of

inequality and marginality. However, in this case, I draw from ideas of intersectionality to explore the heterogeneity of political identities, cultural backgrounds, trends of thought, and concerns about urban life exhibited in the collectives and participants that make up this research. It is important to clarify here that a research with a central focus on intersectionality would have produced an entirely different outcome to this thesis. Alternatively, I am exclusively calling on this concept, at this time of the analysis, to highlight the importance of avoiding simplistic views on identities, interests, and levels of social exclusion behind individual and collective approaches to urban contestation.

Groups concerned about socio-spatial justice in the city can recognise themselves, as a group and as individuals with a wide variety of identities, which in turn shape the strategies and outcomes of collective action. The Manizales case illustrated this situation. Additionally, the exercise of participant observation, between the offline and online spaces, enabled me to get a deeper sense of the multiple identities and concerns behind collective action in the city. Avoiding either a generalisation, or an unnecessary extensive description, this section highlights three key points about the relationality of contextual and individual factors associated with approaches to contestation found in the case study. The first point explores the influence of the recent national history of violence, and the situation of post-conflict, in the political stances of members of socio-territorial movements. The second point   covers local language related to collective action and its connection with the Latin American Critical Thinking. The third point shows how individual identities and interests come together for particular causes to contest city authorities, highlighting some difficulties and strengths found in such processes.

Post-conflict identities in urban contestation

Despite the multiplicity of motivations and characteristics present in the number of collectives contacted in Manizales, the experience indicated that there was a common factor among most of the participants, an ambiguity in their political identification turned into a commonality among several collectives. Despite sharing ideals with political parties, the majority of collectives considered themselves independent from established parties in Colombia. This seemed to be a situation rooted in the post-conflict era that the country was living. The long-lasting conflict

between the left-wing guerrilla FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and the country's government (traditionally right wing) was supposedly over since August 2016. However, there were still many tangible tensions in the political environment of the everyday for those contesting government decisions in Colombia. Some participants were explicit about a fear that being associated with opposition, which in the case of Manizales at that time would be associated with left ideals, could represent a risk of being discriminated from certain circles of society, but could also lead to risking their own lives[20].

Independent of how clear the political stances of urban collectives were, their discourse and actions showed an ambiguity touching many shades ranging from recognising themselves as political actors, in representation of their communities, and not wanting to be involved in the political environment of the city at all.   Some of the participants perceived that being a political actor to improve their territories could be done without being associated with figures of the local political parties' scene. The story of Luis and Ramon in Chapter 4 is an example of this situation. In that respect, it showed the case of active leaders with a focus on producing local alternatives to supply some of the social and cultural needs in their territory, without depending on political parties' support, or political favours in general.

Nevertheless, in the three scenarios studied in Manizales and drawing from three interviews (two with members of socio-territorial movements, and one with a supporter from the third sector), detractors of collective initiatives often claimed that there were hidden political interests behind such projects. For example, opponents to the Rio Blanco movement stated that it was organised as part of a political campaign, in favour of a key supporter – a council representative, who planned to become a mayor candidate in the next run. Such claims were perceived by the interviewees as an attempt to deviate the attention away from the initiative, and to discourage possible supporters who, as many other Colombians, could have been alienated or fatigued from political arguments in the country.

---

[20] By the 9th of April 2019, the number of social leaders and human rights defenders killed in Colombia after the signature of the Peace Agreement in 2016 reached almost 600. (TelesurTV, 2019; Redacción Pares, 2020)

Epistemologies from the South

There was another common factor regularly appearing in the interviews and interactions during fieldwork. This was initially noted by the differentiated use of language, for example, member of various collectives often used the word "senti-pensar" (thinking-feeling) to refer to a more responsible way to act, that integrated both 'thinking' and 'feeling'. Similarly, participants hardly ever used the word 'activism' or 'activist', and rarely use 'social leaders', 'leaders', or 'social organisations'. They preferred to refer to themselves as 'collectives', or 'citizen collectives', and 'urban collective'. When talking about articulated efforts between several groups, participants usually referred to these as '_tejido de colectivos_' (weaving of collectives), '_convergencias ciudadanas'_ ('citizens' convergence', as in the case of _Todos Somos Rio Blanco_), and also – but less common – as '_red de colectivos'_ (collectives network). The word _tejido_ is highly used to describe the process of handmade weaving, and from their discourse, it is associated with the rural and indigenous roots. _Campesinos_ and indigenous communities typically weave clothes and baskets in Colombia, and these items can still be found in popular markets. A couple of times, participants from Comunativa, and Unitierra would make this connection between the articulation of different collective action in and outside of the city, with the ancestral act of weaving, thus, giving the term '_tejido de colectivos_' even more character and support of their purposes. Similarly, they talk about topics such as food rights in the city, governance, conviviality and coexistence, and education with a language – and based on ideas – that resemble ancestral indigenous ontology. They also claim to do so, by acting with respect for nature and for their community, where handmade, local, and collectively produced items, or projects, have more value than what is nowadays recognised in urban societies in Colombia.

By the end of the fieldwork the influence of a regional trend of thought became evident behind that use of language – somehow new to me. Ideas from the Latin American Critical Thinking (LACT) (_Pensamiento Critico Latinoamericano)_ had been incorporated in the everyday speech of collective action in Manizales. In several occasions, some participants referred to ideas from authors like Escobar (2016), de Sousa Santos (2014), Fals Borda (1984), among other well-known representatives of such current of thought. However, I also noticed a number of times ideas were used

by members that did not seem aware of the academic background of some of the terms. From my findings, I could argue that collectives' members and supporters coming from academia, and particularly those from social sciences and law, could have influenced the integration of such concepts and ideas into the everyday life of social movements. Possibly, this process occurred naturally during several years, in response to the inequalities fought by socio-territorial movements in the city, which, in essence, were about contesting patriarchal, capitalists and colonialists' ideas. At the same time, these are the ideals contested by the Latin American Critical Thinking, and it is there where the main connection lies with the civic movements studied in Manizales.[21]

Individual identities coming together

It is important not to romanticise collective action or present it as a process led by stability and agreement. In fact, the opportunity of experiencing parts of the everyday life of collectives in meetings and events during fieldwork, gave me insight to the internal struggles of arriving at a consensus. This was present in all the socio-territorial cases studied. Collective action is formed by individuals who share an interest, but also bring their personal identities, past experiences, situations of privilege and inequality, as well as individual biases and interests with them. Therefore, it was common to hear someone lobbying to include ideas that represented their personal identities into a collective proposal, which was not always welcomed by the majority and sometimes perceived as troublesome. For example, in a meeting about the RttC Workshop, on the subject of public space in the city, one young participant stated that the activity dealing with this matter during the workshop should deal with problems caused by police aggression towards cannabis users in the city. Some other participants agreed on the importance of the concern, but some commented it was not the time or place to deal with such a delicate matter. Particularly because a new Police Code was released that year at national level, and one of the strongest points was about banning alcohol and drugs consumption on public spaces. An older participant, who was leading the conversation, did not find the first contribution valid, stating his position in support of that item of the police

---

[21] Chapter 7 further explores the connection of the Latin American Critical Thinking with local interpretations of the Right to the City, and practices of transgressive citizenship.

code, which led to further discussions that became personal. This situation illustrates to some extent the complexity inside collective organisations, and the obstacles in coordinating strategical activities, where some voices and interests would be represented but others would be excluded. Participants who identified with the cannabis community eventually agreed on leaving their complaint out of the workshop's program, however relevant it was for them.

Moreover, disagreements among groups also happened with less controversial matters than cannabis consumption. However, individual needs for representation were included several times in activities promoted by collectives, which more often than not added a level of complexity in the conveyed content. For example, the message in one of Rio Blanco's demonstrations would strongly claim for the defence of the Rio Blanco reserve, but also asking to ban bullfighting in the city, and to improve infrastructure and security for cycling in the city. Some members or supporters seemed to think the demonstration should have focussed only on matters about Rio Blanco, but for some organisers it was important to give space for other struggles to be heard.

Some of those struggles that commonly found space among the socio-territorial demonstrations were related to the promotion of rights for women and youth, ethnic minorities, ancestral territories and traditions, LGBT community, and the support of environmentalist, antipatriarchal, anti-capitalists, and indigenist ideals.

The sense of injustice seemed to be the common ground between the heterogeneous range of social movements in the city. This situation became evident during the development of the RttC Workshop in Manizales. According to several participants, that event was the first time for some of the collectives in the city to exchange experiences, while discussing ideas about the city with other groups and individuals. Soja (2010) states that the concern around the city, injustice in the city, can be the common ground for civic contestation to work together. This was illustrated in the RttC workshop in Manizales that I helped to plan and deliver as part of my fieldwork.

Another characteristic to highlight, from Manizales' case, was the strategic support among different causes in the city, mostly associated with increasing social pressure

(i.e., collectives would join other group's demonstrations or events to increase activities' visibility), and by sharing key contacts for professional assistance (i.e., legal, scientific, communication expertise). Some participants mentioned that there were busy times when collectives needed to be selfish and could not support others' events because their own movement was going through a critical moment. However, they also stated that there was a general understanding among various groups; more than competition, *weaving collectives* – or working as a network - was a better way to achieve their goals while empowering not only one, but several causes simultaneously.

5.3.2 Not enough discontent for a revolt

When thinking about the different practices from the socio-territorial movements that I observed during fieldwork, it would be a mistake to categorise these as either insurgent or law-abiding. Instead, their political stance seemed to be flexible and sometimes volatile, depending on the context and their strategies. It is important to remember that the groups I analysed were seeking to produce change in planning and city-making processes, and these are actions mostly coordinated – or defined as legitimate, by governmental bodies. Hence, the tendency to collaborate, even if momentarily, with participatory initiatives from local authorities. Despite a general feeling of mistrust in the motivations behind governmental programs, and in their commitment with socially-just urban projects, collectives tended to be part of participatory projects coordinated by local authorities. In a way, members of such collectives were giving another chance to protocolary ways of planning and governance, as some participants expressed. Sometimes the trust was placed on a personal connection linked to the initiative, rather than on the institution per se (Hillier, 2000). That personal link was usually someone known by a collective's member, and who seemed reliable. This situation was visible in all the collectives I observed in Manizales. They all had someone they trusted in public institutions such as the Planning Office, Government Office, Municipal Council, Municipal Ombudsman, among others.

Despite the possible links and moments of collaboration with local authorities, all the three socio-territorial movements in Manizales, were rooted in contesting inequality and exclusion in city-making. Such motivations, exclusion and inequality, are

comparable to the ones of larger and more radical social movements at regional and national levels, seeking a fundamental transformation in regulatory frameworks and structures of governance, and in defence of human rights (i.e., social movements demanding truth and reparation for victims of the armed conflict in Colombia). However, the strategies of such movements might be more of an insurgent nature. It is important to mention those more radical social movements to highlight the diversity of political stances and approaches to structures of governance power for socio-territorial movements. Arguably, the less insurgent approach found in the cases studied in Manizales responded to the essence of the struggle, which was the urgency to remedy urban spatial injustice, in relation to individual and collective identities, as well as to other local factors previously covered (see section 5.3.1). Based on my findings, it was apparent that the first goal for the socio-territorial movements was to change a decision made about the development of a territory in the city. Therefore, the need to establish communication with local authorities as a first approach as opposed to entirely disregarding them. In cases like San Jose, where the community had been demanding justice for over 10 years without proper compensation, a first protesting approach was soon complemented by seeking assistance from national and international institutions. At the same time groups in San Jose started acting alternatively, and informally, to solve pressing social matters affecting the *Comuna.*

Moreover, the scale of contestation – local instead of national – can help to explain the stance of collectives in between collaboration and insubordination. Living in a mid-size or small city enables more opportunities to establish personal connections with local government representatives, and institutions responsible for the matters being contested. As mentioned previously, these connections can positively influence the relationship between civic groups and government initiatives which builds trust and fosters collaboration.

5.3.3 A creative transgressive citizenship

My study of collective action in Manizales provided me with findings to support the argument that their story is not one of purely insurgent citizenship, but rather one of 'transgressive citizenship' (Earle, 2012, 2017). Authors like Holston (2008) and O'Donnell (1999) claim that recent Latin American social movements contest formal

status quo by ignoring regulations and playing by their own rules. Thus, stating that the most used strategy for social movements, in the cases they studied, was through insurgency. However, I found the cases I studied in Manizales were telling a different story, and as such I can reasonably conclude that it may not be that different from other urban contexts in Colombia, and possibly wider Latin America. Earle's work (2012, 2017) proposes the term of 'transgressive citizenship' to illustrate the practices of social movements and their political stances in relation to the Right to the City in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In her work, Earle (2012, 2017) explores the need to talk about transgressive instead of insurgent citizenship in Brazil, and highlights two crucial conditions for socio-spatial justice to support her argument. One is the existence of national laws that cherish the principles from the RttC, as well as those of inclusion and participation in public debates. Consequently, citizen movements find great tools to support their agendas in such laws, despite the fact that mobilisation practices fluctuate between the legal and illegal routes. The second point is about the transgressive element of social movements in the city:

> *"While the guarantee of the right to housing in São Paulo is one part of the movements' strategy, the transgressive nature of occupations is also a way to critique socio-spatial segregation and to present a vision of an alternative future for the city." (Earle, 2017:261)"*

Similar to the case of Sao Paulo, both conditions comprised the socio-political landscape of collective action in Manizales. Citizen participation and inclusion had a substantial role when the new National Constitution in Colombia was created in 1991, as described in Chapter 4. Alongside, the National Urban Regulation that served as a legal frame for the POTs in all municipalities in Colombia was designed following principles from the RttC. As such, regulation for inclusion and participation in city decision-making were in place in Colombia, despite common critiques about the lack of clarity and control over the quality of their implementation (Acebedo, 2014; Ley 388 de 1997). Moreover, members of urban collectives, at least the most experienced ones, were aware of such tools and used them to support their claims and initiatives.

The transgressive element was a noteworthy trait of my Manizales case study. The participant collectives in Manizales were not only advocating for rights as citizens, or

demanding better results from the government, they were more focused on co-producing alternatives to what they felt was missing in their territories. In the case of San Jose, collectives built a public park and community garden from a void left after the demolition of houses for the Macro-Project. They also co-created, with the support from the Universidad de Caldas and other institutions in the city, a parallel socio-cultural survey from the *Comuna* San Jose, and a parallel proposal called the Re-formulation of the Macro Project San Jose. With this proposal they explored avenues of development based on, and in the interest of, the actual conditions of San Jose's dwellers. That re-formulation was done in an attempt to show the Municipality and the developers, that they have omitted many crucial factors and realities in the official surveys and the planning of the project, contradicting the supposed social interest of the government in developing the Macro-project.

My decision to classify the practices in Manizales as transgressive citizenship, is not to downplay the significance of insurgency in urban mobilisations. Depending on the context and nature of the struggles, sometimes fully insurgent approaches have proven necessary, not only to achieve the goals of the movements, but also to create awareness of the most complex problems in the city (see Frediani and Cociña, 2019). This usually refers to problems that urban and socio-economic regulations fail to tackle (i.e. just, inclusive and affordable housing for the lowest incomes in central parts of the city) (De Carli & Frediani, 2016). Global North and South literature about radical urbanism and housing, explores several contexts that illustrate the relevance and learning opportunities behind insurgent practices of citizenship, promoting a deeper engagement of urban studies and planning with the groups at the farthest margins of the formal city (Miraftab, 2016; 2018; Gualini, 2015). Therefore, Earle's idea about 'transgressive citizenship' is not a negation, but rather an extension on insurgency as a key strategy for contesting the city. In that regard, it is important to acknowledge the situations when urban collectives also find support on existing legal tools as an equally relevant strategy to achieve their goals (Earle, 2012, 2017). I found that in the case of Manizales, these approaches, that can be understood as ambiguous were part of daily decisions taken by the collectives. Moreover, such positions also shifted depending on the space of deliberation; whether it was a private meeting, a workshop, or a presentation from a public institution, through WhatsApp or Messenger, or on a publicly accessible post on social media, usually

Facebook, sometimes Twitter or on their WhatsApp status. In the following points I present the actions and situations that better illustrate three noticeable stances, shifting between rejection and collaboration with municipal initiatives, which I called: (a) insurgent stances, (b) playing by the rules, and (c) creative provocation.

I found that the participant collectives took openly **<u>insurgent stances</u>** when organising spontaneous demonstration in public spaces and main streets in the city. The vignette in section 4.6.2, 'One out of 93 in the 23', illustrates this situation. Additionally, the appropriation of spaces on a more permanent basis, as in the case of Comunativa's Domo in San Jose, was also a representation of the transgressive aspect of collective action in the city. These actions were not only a local citizens' demand not attended by authorities (i.e., in the case of San Jose, the demand was of public spaces and improvement of demolished areas), but were also constructing local symbolic value, while serving as experiments of alternative co-production of spaces outside of protocolary ways (De Carli & Frediani, 2016; Earle, 2017). Participants from Rio Blanco and San Jose reported another typical situation that exemplifies this point; they referred to this as having a strong presence in decisive moments (also mentioned as '*hacer tumulto*' – form tumult). For example, close neighbours and larger community in San Jose often were called to support families on eviction days, particularly when the project developers resorted to the police to carry out dwellings' dispossessions. According to one interviewee, who participated in several of these gatherings, the social pressure of neighbours managed to stop several evictions, while giving more time to the affected families to find new shelter. In Rio Blanco, members of the collective went to the site when the environmental authorities were doing a site visit with the developers. Apparently, the information about this private meeting leaked, and the collective took it as an opportunity to put pressure on the environmental authorities, who some believed were not doing a fair assessment. There were rumours about personal and economic interests from the directors of the environmental authority in the housing development.

Collectives in Manizales were keen to **<u>play by the rules</u>**, or follow formal protocols for participation, when attending participatory workshops or meetings organised by public institutions in the city. Sometimes, members of the collectives even helped the coordinating institutions by passing on invitations and relevant information to their

contacts and local communities, via social media, or by printing, and word-of-mouth. When the events allowed, collectives tended to participate by making presentations about their concerns and proposals. In such instances, collectives were interested in having an active role and getting their main concerns heard. Moreover, the decision of some collectives to contact relevant authorities regarding their struggles as a first measure, indicated recognition and some levels of confidence in the local system of governance. Despite this, they would resort to transgressive procedures later on, or simultaneously. Furthermore, members of collectives could be regarded as **playing by the rules** when they were running for a position of political representation in the city. There were a number of collectives' members (inside and outside the group of participants) who had taken positions as communal and town councillors, as well as one interviewee who had run for mayor but did not get elected. Finally, collectives frequently used legal tools for civic control over public services and management in the city, which is also another way to recognise formal protocols of participation. The range of such tools included individual and group requests for information in the form of a letter, or an online communication, registered as Right of Petition to local authorities and public institutions, Act of Enforcement (Accion de Tutela) used when an individual considered their fundamental rights had been infringed, and *Acción Popular* that is a mechanism to protect collective interests in defence of their rights. Another common participatory tool commonly initiated by the community, and often used in the case of Manizales is the Open Council meeting (*Cabildo Abierto).* This space is used to discuss matters affecting a community with representatives from the local government. Often for these events, the mayor sent a representative, and sometimes there was no attendance from the municipality at all, even though the intention of such spaces was to communicate directly with local authorities.

Many times, the position from collectives or individual members was not clear-cut; their approach was not completely of insubordination, but neither entirely law-abiding. Instead, they found ways to challenge formal protocols of participation, without necessarily resorting to deny the relevance of such spaces altogether. This is my reasoning for labelling this as a stance of **creative provocation**. A common procedure that illustrated this stance was the edited versions of maps and documents related to urban planning. For example, the collective SABPOT often used their own edited versions of local and regional maps during their campaigns to

educate citizens about urban planning and the need for increasing citizen participation in designing the POT. They expressed their idea was not to confuse people, instead they would made it clear that theirs was a different version from the maps used in the POT and the Planning Office (Image 34). By doing this, they wanted to highlight the importance of sharing planning information in a more inclusive manner, while replacing the technical language with more common terminology to include more citizens in decision-making processes. Another similar situation was observed when collectives created alternative documents in parallel to municipal or private projects, to contrast intentions and interests. (i.e., the Re-formulation of San Jose's Macro-project developed by the movement (Image 35), and the compilation of scientific documents prepared by the movement of Rio Blanco, to prove the potential impact of the housing development in the natural reserve).
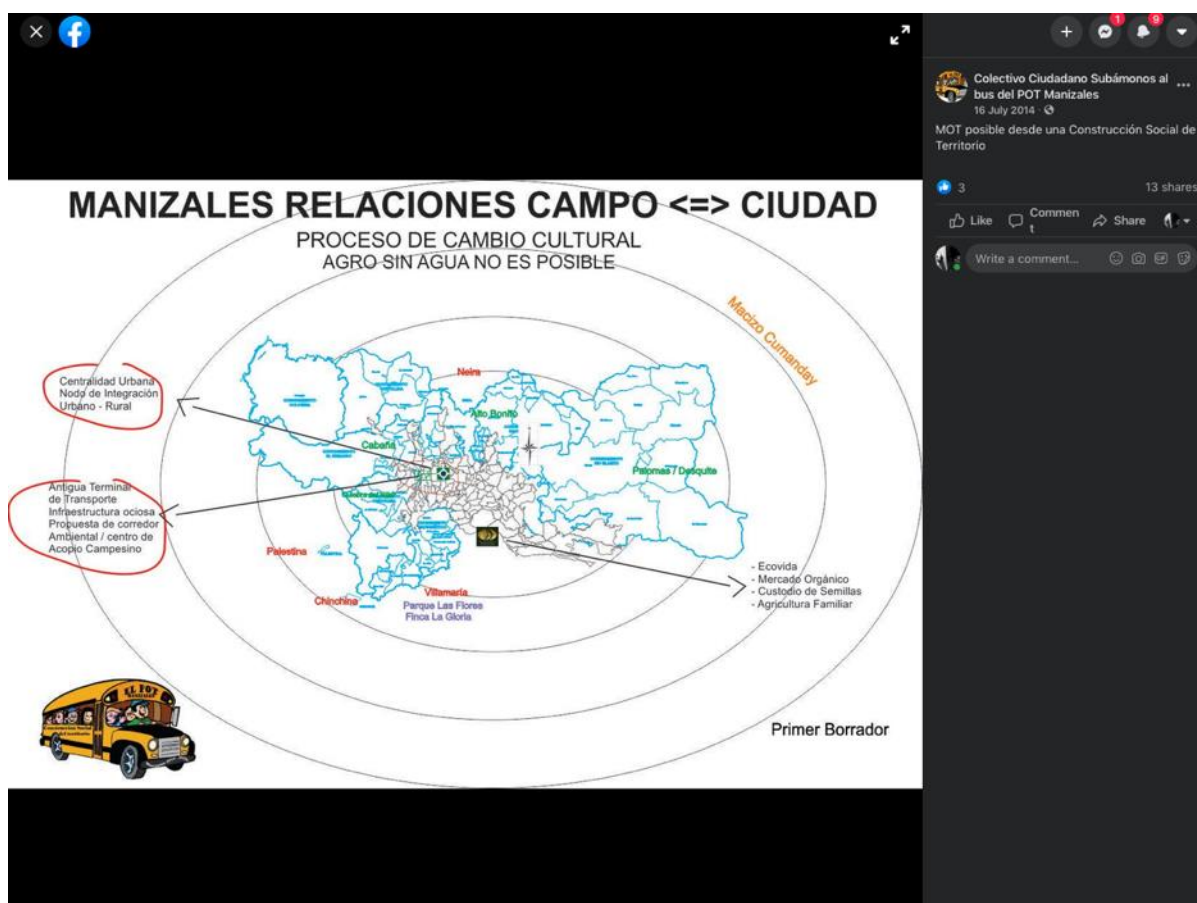
Image 34 SABPOT's version of city/rural relations for designing the POT. Source: https://www.facebook.com/subamonosalbusdelpotmanizales/photos/514210555378146
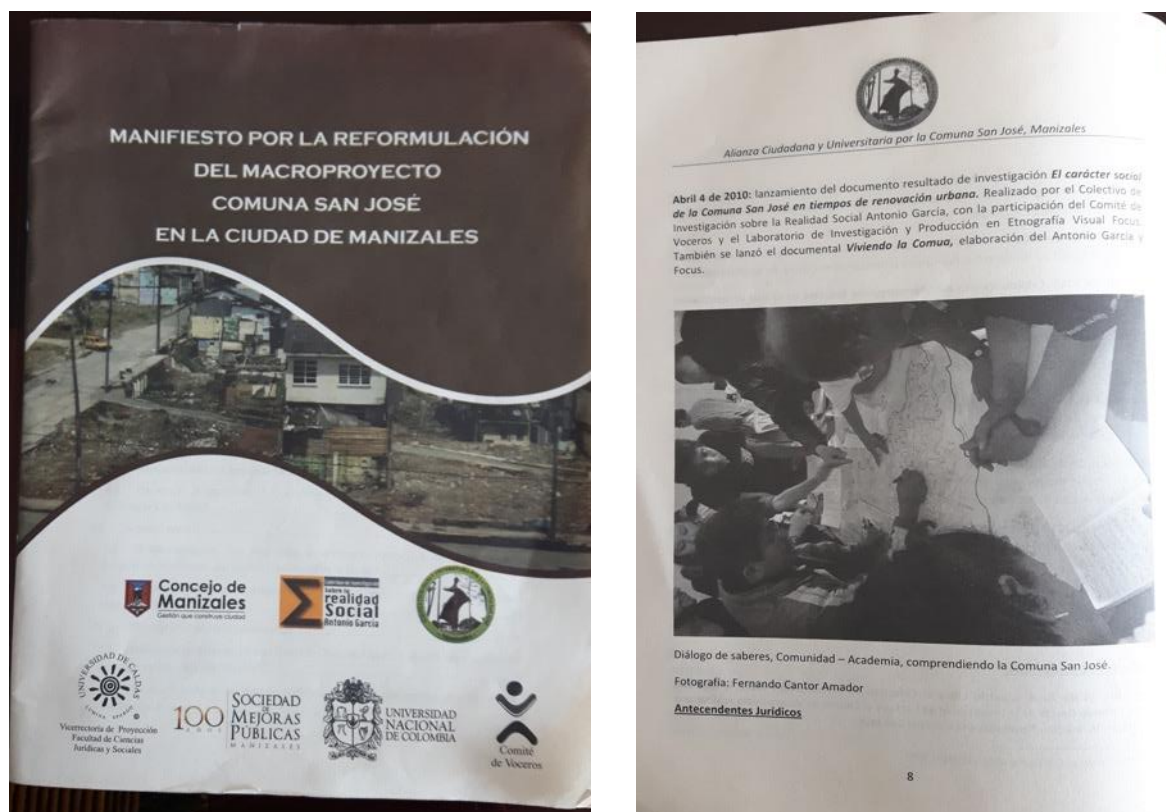
Image 35 Manifesto for the Re-formulation of San Jose's Macro-project

The use of different words, in written and spoken language, was also an illustration of a stance of creative provocation against the official and technical language used by the municipality. For example, people from San Jose often referred to the Macro-project as the Macro-disaster. They would even use this term in meetings with representatives from the planning authorities. Moreover, participants from various collectives usually name their spaces for deliberation and co-production differing from the official language used in public institutions. For example, instead of '*conversatorio*' (discussion group) or '*conferencia*' (conference), people commonly used '*conversas*' (talks), which is close to *conversatorio* but with an informal connotation. Some participants explained that using the term 'conversas' allowed them to set a horizontal understanding of powers during the event. Therefore, even if the meeting had special guests, the conversation was expected to be fluid and inclusive giving equal importance to the guest and the participants. Another common situation regarding a differentiated used of language was about gender inclusion. In Spanish nouns, plural pronouns and adjectives often imply the gender of the subject, which in plural cases is always masculine, unless it is referring to a group of women

exclusively. To challenge this, that some assumed as a biased patriarchal expression of the language, some participants replaced the 'o' (referring to male gender) in words like '*todos*', 'los', 'ciudadanos', etc., for the letter 'e' in spoken language, or 'x' in written language, producing gender-neutral but non-existent words in the formal Spanish.

Creative expressions of art, usually in the form of objects, installations, or phrases, accompanied many of the events prepared by collectives (Image 36). Disregarding of the approach taken in a particular moment, in between insurgency and following protocols, it was common to see elements such as posters, collages, modified objects, or phrases in t-shirts and banners as protagonist of citizen mobilisation in Manizales. When participants got asked about this, it seemed there was no conclusive reason behind this practice. However, artistic expressions appeared to be key elements in the collective identity formed around a temporary or long-term cause.
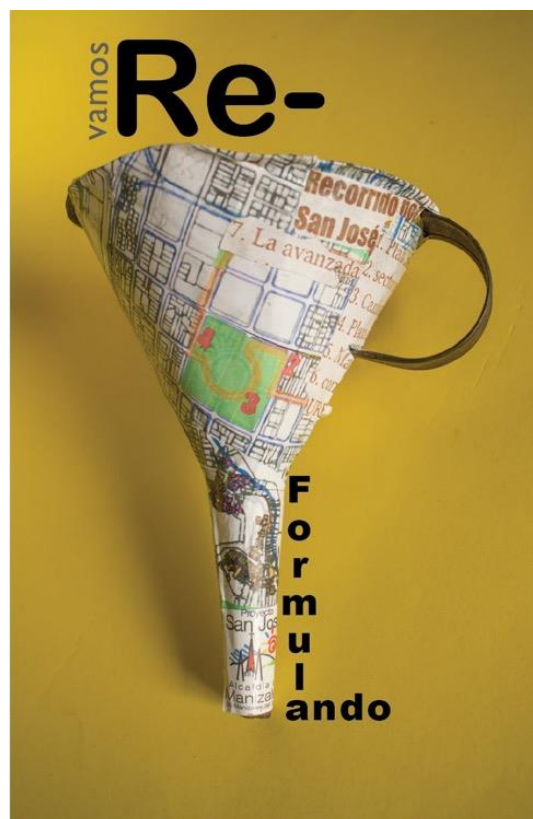
Image 36 Collage used by collectives to invite to re-formulate San Jose's macro-project. (Source: https://www.facebook.com/subamono salbusdelpotmanizales/photos/68600

The RttC Workshop (section 4.3.3) was an opportunity to display the creative potential of collective action, challenging formal spaces and protocols of participation. One of the intentions behind the production of the event was to avoid problems with authorities, especially because the institution where the workshop was held set two particular conditions; that the event did not turn into a demonstration against the municipality, and that there was no political propaganda, given that the date was a couple of weeks before national elections. All participants and collectives followed these recommendations, but their message remained critical in relation to the problems neglected or created by decision-making processes in the city. The workshop activities exhibited the use of artistic expressions, the appropriation of language, and the presentation and production of collaborative alternative documents to counteract formal decisions affecting communities in Manizales.

Image 37 Installation at the RttC Workshop, representing the Popular Market 'Galerias' in San Jose, Manizales
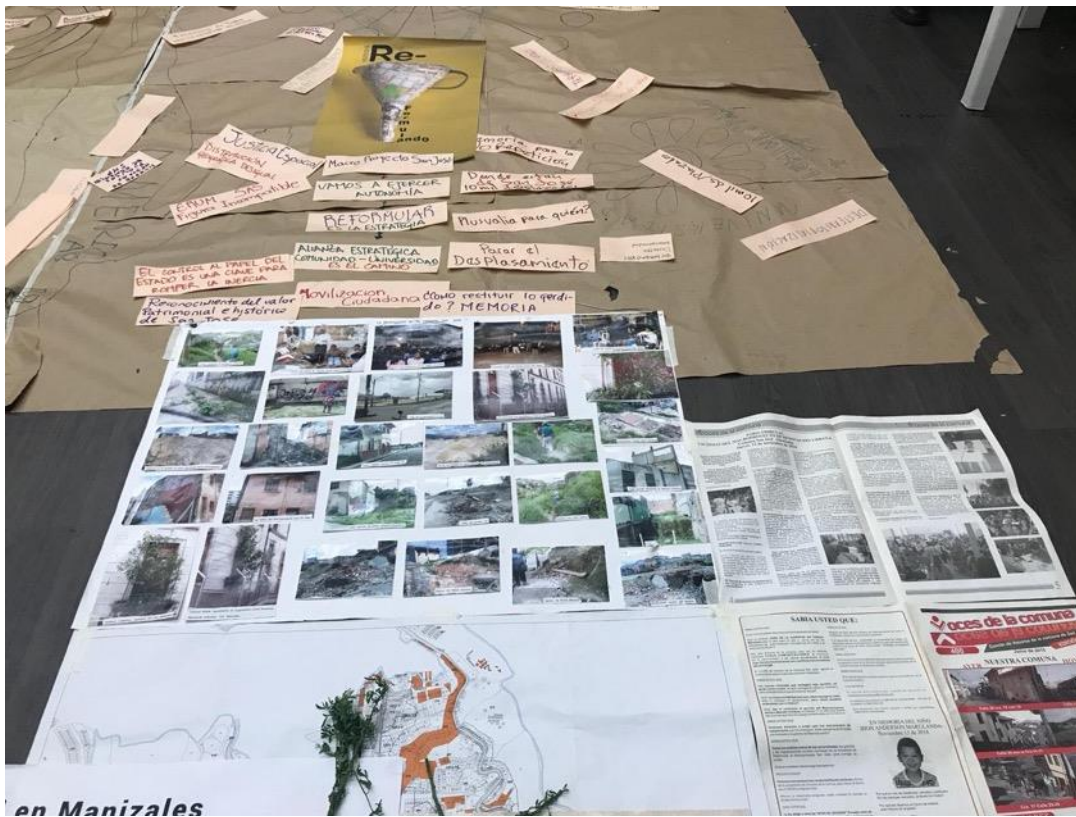
Image 38 Collage / memory map produced during the RttC Workshop.

5.3.4 Challenging normalising planning power through collective action

With 'normalising planning power' I refer to the instances and protocols that have become the 'norm' of what citizen participation should be like in a city, according to city planners. In Manizales, this was usually reinforced by the limited initiatives around participation from planning authorities, sustaining the idea that citizen participation could only happen if it was originated from the government. Anything external to this, independent of its social and community value, was not perceived as participation. This perception was not only shared inside the municipality but also among members of the socio-territorial movements, which seemed to encourage civic groups to identify their initiatives as collective action instead.

As presented in this section, collective action in Manizales seemed to challenge the 'normal' established protocols, around urban planning and decision-making in the city. The strategies found in the field in between insurgency and law-abiding, as exposed earlier, depict socio-territorial movements in Manizales using several approaches; sometimes to find legal support to their claims, other times to collaborate in government-controlled scenarios of participation. However, the common factor in their various approaches was to demonstrate that there were other alternatives to organisational structures and programs of development produced by the formal city. Therefore, the practice of transgressive citizenship observed in the field defied the formal protocols of participation implemented by the municipal authorities in Manizales. Due to the ambiguity of stances, which sometimes followed and sometimes contested protocols, socio-territorial movements often managed to gain attention needed in support of their alternative views on the city. The fact that collectives recognised to differing extents, and even temporarily, the validity of planning authorities in the city, helped them to develop a relationship with some representatives of local and national authorities, which in turn translated into support for their agendas. Simultaneously, collectives commonly claimed that authorities were not doing enough, which motivated collective action to operate in independent ways.

Therefore, the alternatives presented by the socio-territorial movements, either as proposals or as everyday actions in their territories, highlighted gaps in the endeavour of planning authorities in the city. Chapter 7 explores the need for

recognition, integration and redistribution of such non-conventional approaches in order to expand the practice and impact of citizen participation in urban planning.

5.4 Conclusions

The first section of this chapter explored the research question: How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation, relate to the everyday life of social organizations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city? The section covered a comparison of local perceptions about citizen participation, collective action and digital innovation in the city, including opinions from municipal officers, participants and from socio-territorial movements and supporters of participation in Manizales. Moreover, local connotations about expectations around citizen participation and the correlation of digital innovation with such processes were also presented. I named the findings as a relation of 'limited interest', where efforts from local government around citizen participation and digital innovation responded to expected national standards. Furthermore, initiatives seemed to reflect private interests and the competitive pressure to excel in using digital and social media, without going much beyond a mere digitalization of traditional services of petitions, claims and complaints, and broadcasting. That limited interest appeared to be also a reflection on a lack of political will, and a restrictive understanding of participation that leaves no space for the difference to construct collaborative visions of the city.

The second section of the chapter dealt with the question: How do citizens mobilise, both online and offline, towards spatial justice aims in a city that brands itself as democratic, inclusive and innovative? In order to approach the practices and strategies of mobilisation found in the city, it was necessary to understand the composition and backgrounds shaping urban collectives. Therefore, the section began by looking at the implications of the national environment of post-conflict, as well as the ideas of the Latin American Critical Thinking, in the shaping of discourses, political stances and agendas of contestation for spatial justice. Moreover, in that intersectionality of identities behind urban collectives, the section highlighted the problems behind the wish of inclusive representation of all individual social concerns in a movement; but also how the 'city', or the 'urban injustice', can become a common ground where multiple individual concerns find a shared matter

of interest, as suggested by Soja (2010). Having a better understanding of the interests and influences behind collective action, in addition to the scenario depicted in the first section of the chapter, served for a background to analyse the common stances of contestation found in Manizales. Thus, the findings suggested that the practices studied were not entirely insurgent, fluctuating in their actions, stances and discourses in between recognising and dissenting formal protocols of city-making and participation. Drawing from Earle's work (2012, 2017), I proposed to depict the practices from the field as creative transgressive citizenship, in which socio-territorial movements complemented their insurgent stances, with the strategical support on regulations and mechanisms of political control and citizen participation. That ambiguity of positions often translated in what I called 'creative provocation'. Thus, collectives maintained a critical message about the deficiencies of the formal city, while using and modifying established elements and spaces of participation and planning.

The analysis presented in this chapter serves as an introduction for a further discussion presented in Chapter 7. That chapter explores the implications of the research in the transformation of debates and practices about social and spatial justice in Manizales, and beyond. Thus, the questions addressed in Chapter 5 set the context to explore conflicts between power and interests in just city-making, as well as expanding on the local understandings around the Right to the City, in relation to the epistemological backgrounds found in the case study. Moreover, the transgressive and enterprising aspect of collective action explored in this chapter, which often fills a need not met by local authorities, is further analysed in Chapter 7 in relation to concepts of legitimacy (recognition, redistribution and integration), in order to discuss possibilities for expanding participation in urban planning.

Chapter 6. Online and offline modes of engagement for collective action

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses research question RQ3: How do online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in the city?

Throughout this chapter I analyse the various tasks, applications and stances reflected in the uses of digital media, in addition to traditional non-digital media, for socio-territorial movements in Manizales. My interest behind the research question is to discover the capacities in which different media acted for collective action, and whether the uses of digital media were enabling, amplifying or inhibiting practices of collective action for spatial justice.

As stated in Chapter Two, Cruz-Rodriguez (2014), among other authors, critically explores the relation of ICT's penetration in society with the development of collective action. Moreover, his work is particularly useful for this research because of his emphasis in the contemporary Colombian context. According to Cruz-Rodriguez (2014), there remains a need in studies connecting digital media and social movements, to identify the societal impact of ICT over the production and development of collective action. He also adds that the impact of ICT over social movements depends on the appropriation of new technology and its relation with practices and discourses of social movements. Therefore, Cruz-Rodriguez' concern is in line with the motivation behind the research question explored in this chapter. It backs up the critical approach guiding this research that ponders the implications of digital media in the everyday processes of collective action, without assuming that an increase in Internet penetration is directly proportional to the empowering of collective action. Instead, a local study on the uses and roles of digital media from various situations of collective action is needed to discern between the occurring transformations, possibilities and obstacles posed by the levels of access and application of digital media, and the fulfilling of citizen's rights and participation.

The considerations in this chapter, based on the stories of Manizales shared in Chapter 4, show how fluid and relational the discussion of Manizales' case can be,

between the two extremes of technological determinism, which magnifies the impact of the internet over social movements, and the extreme of social determinism, which reduces that possible impact to the minimum (Unas, 2010:261 in Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014:119).

The chapter starts with an exploration of the everyday aspects of digital media uses, in section 6.2. This shows relevant findings about the common and particular uses of digital tools, services and platforms; discusses issues about the production of information, the spaces in between the online and offline of collective action; and exposes sources of frustration I perceived from the participants, and from my own experience in Manizales. Section 6.3 presents the different uses of digital media from each of the three socio-territorial movements studied and their relation to various purposes. Then, section 6.4 directly address the research question RQ3 by proposing five points in which online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in Manizales. Section 6.5 complements the previous section by exploring missing opportunities from Manizales' case. Finally, section 6.6 concludes the chapter reflecting on the potential of digital media uses in Manizales to promote collective action towards just ways of urban transformation.

6.2 Digital media and everyday life.

From the findings exposed in Chapter 4 and following the analysis in Chapter 5, it is important to highlight that digital innovation, in the way it is conceived by municipal authorities, does not influence the everyday of the majority of citizens in Manizales. Efforts around innovation in the city are mostly aimed at industry development and high-end research centres. Therefore, the type of digital tools integrated in the everyday of people participating in collective action needed to be gathered by gaining an insight into their daily routines around communication, strategic organisation, collaboration and co-production in their own collectives and with larger networks. Members of collective action in Manizales were supporting their agenda using both, traditional – non-digital – media and various instruments from digital social media, particularly those that were free, accessible, user-friendly and popular. This later condition, of a tool being popular, is probably the most important aspect for social organisations to value and decide where to have group conversations and

share their communications to maximise the dissemination in the digital sphere (Pinzón, 2013). It is therefore the value of the network – the numbers of users – that attracts new users and not the platform *per se*. Thus, the more people using a platform such as Facebook or WhatsApp, the more valuable these become, persuading others to join, but also encouraging organisations, institutions and the private sector to connect and be present in these digital arenas. Gardner and Mars (2011:12) refer to this phenomenon as the "band-wagon effect" of networks. Furthermore, this might explain why most mobile phones companies in Colombia included access to Facebook, Twitter and/or WhatsApp as a plus (for free or very low rates) even in the most basic payment plans.[22]

In that sense, Facebook and WhatsApp proved to be the most popular platforms used by participants in Manizales on a daily basis. Having said that, it is worth to clarifying that there were considerable variations between the uses people gave to such platforms, and in the communication strategies I observed. For example, one of the WhatsApp groups where I was invited as a member, had the task to collaboratively produce communication pieces regarding the issues the movement were highlighting, their stances and proposals for both printed and digital media. Compared to other group chats in which I participated, participants in this group were more organised and disciplined about the type of content and opinions shared, so that the conversation remained focused and productive. Thus, their conversations on WhatsApp were key to support the creative process throughout its entirety. Someone would set a priority of action (i.e., an image for Facebook and WhatsApp in relation to an important national event in the following days), then some other member would send an example of what they imagine it should look like. Soon after, someone would point out the location of relevant images in their online cloud storage, while someone else suggested the type of message, stressing the idea of keeping it short and blunt. Other members would give feedback for images and text, until the active

---

[22] Facebook had subsidised free access to his platform in countries with pricey mobile data, like in the case of the Philippines, which is a case allegedly linked to political manipulation and misinformation that led to the national election of Duterte, widely considered a dictator (Swearingen, 2018). Facebook controversial campaign was called 'Internet.org'. It was set to improve internet access in poor countries through subsidies on data – to be used exclusively to access Facebook. Human rights organisations, governments and communication companies challenged and managed to stop Facebook's free-access initiative in many countries. However, I could not find official data in Colombia to confirm or exclude Facebook's direct incidence in the fact that most mobile data plans in the country included free (but usually limited) data to use Facebook and WhatsApp.

members in the conversation approved both aspects. Two people in the group used to develop most of the content, since they were the most skilled using image edition software. Eventually, sometimes less than an hour since the conversation took place, they would share drafts of the content for a last chance of feedback. The final pieces would be shared in the group and also with the movement organisers, to then be officially posted in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and distributed on WhatsApp.

That occurrence described above was not commonly perceived in the other three WhatsApp group chats in which I was also a member during fieldwork. It was a unique use of WhatsApp in my experience but, nonetheless, an important one to highlight. Table 7 shows key empirical observations considering both the common and the remarkable uses of digital media I experienced from the participants who were part of the socio-territorial movements studied in Manizales. In order to ease the reading of this document this table presents a summary version of my observations (see extended version in Appendix 5).

Table 7 Digital media tools in the everyday of collective action. Manizales 2017-2018

Digital media tools	Common uses	Incidence in the everyday	Unusual uses	Requirements	Obstacles
Email	Formal communications. Coordinating actions. Sharing information.	High	NA	Low. Participants used emails in a regular basis.	Mostly read from computers, which create delays in answers.
Facebook (Instagram and Messenger)	Promote collectives. Self-produced content. Connect to similar initiatives, in and out of the city. Replicate information. Real-time video streaming of events.	High	Same person opening individual accounts for every initiative they led. Public replies in disagreement to communications from local government	Low. Most people had accounts, used them actively and had access from their phones.	Mix of personal matters with organisational purposes, and political stances. Need to pay to reach more people. Autonomy and privacy issues. Potential hacking.

WhatsApp	Coordinate activities. Share audio-visual content from own events, and from other initiatives. Share non-related content.	High	Platform for simultaneous creative processes (i.e. discussing the design for a communicative piece for social media).	Low. Most people had accounts, used them actively and had access from their phones.	Assumptions of inclusion and agreement. Conversation disruption by sharing non-related material. Misinterpretations on the tone of messages.
Online cloud storage (i.e., Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox)	Share supporting documents. Facilitate simultaneous and multiple collaboration in one document.	Medium-high	Linked to websites as an open digital library / document centre.	Medium. Mostly accessed from computers.	Skills needed to access, use and edit content. Not enough space on free services Control of access and organisation. Risks of being hacked.
YouTube	Display of audio-visual content by collectives. Usually linked to other platforms. Search and make lists of content posted by other individuals and collectives.	Medium-high	Big efforts around video editing are seen in some cases but are not that common.	Medium. Specific equipment is required depending on the quality for recording and editing videos.	Required skills that not all members of a collective have. Tasks tend to rely on the same individuals.
Online maps	Show urban collectives for visibility and networking. (i.e. Mapping urban food gardens to work as a network.)	Medium	Adding information to 'formal' maps. (i.e. Adding San Jose's community park to Open Street map)	Medium-high. It is easier to edit maps from computers than on mobile phones.	Skills needed. Making maps more visible for people in Manizales is a remaining challenge.
Skype / Zoom	Tele-conferences with multiple users, remote meetings to coordinate projects.	Medium	Collaborating online on a document or project while connected through Skype or Zoom.	From low to high, depending on the use.	Delays and low fluency of conversations. Risk of conversations feeling unnatural. Unclear ethics about access and privacy.

Blogs	Share opinions on official projects. Post notes about collective action visions, activities, and proposals. Sometimes linked to other platforms.	Medium-low	Share academic projects in relation to socio-territorial issues to larger audiences.	Medium. Need more time to prepare. Need computer. Some include audio-visuals.	Dilemma: blogs vs Facebook and Twitter. For some, these replace the necessity to run blogs.
Twitter	Glimpse news and opinions. Connect to similar organisations at national and international levels. Share opinions, criticism, documents or activities. Differ and discuss with others.	Low	Communicate with others via direct messaging.	Low. Twitter application comes installed in most smart phones. Skills used for Facebook and WhatsApp are easily transferable to using Twitter.	Twitter was not that popular among participants. Those who used it, employ it mostly to share other users' posts and to upload events' invitations.
Websites	Central point to display collective's history, vision, projects, collaborations and contacts.	Low	Space for collaboration and open archive to support collective action. (i.e. Pluriversos' website)	Medium to high, depending on the quality and capacity of the website.	Compete for attention with and social media platforms. Extra efforts to keep websites active and integrated to other platforms.
Podcasts	Only one case of self-produced podcast found in fieldwork	Low	Record and broadcast meetings and conversations. Posts are not periodical. Links are shared on social media.	Medium to high depending on the quality desired and the broadcasting service.	Structure and editing need technical skills, and time. Poor editing ends up in long podcasts, risking not being listened.

6.2.1 Production of information

Earlier literature greatly highlighted the act of self-producing information as a turn in everyday communication depicting people as creators of content, and not merely as

audience in social media (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000; McCullough, 2005; Castells, 2009; Shirky, 2009; Foth et al, 2011; Horelli et al., 2015). However, nowadays that the novelty is worn out, the act of self-producing information seems to be in a secondary level of importance in academic debates, being taken for granted as an intrinsic part of using digital and social media. In contrast, the experience of Manizales demonstrated that there is a rich field for exploring the ways, motivations and tools used by members of urban collectives to produce digital content to support socio-territorial movements in the city. My research touched upon this query only in a sufficient way, given natural restrictions of time and that the scope of my research needed to prioritise objectives that were more comprehensive. Nevertheless, soon into my fieldwork it was apparent that producing internet content to support collective action at local levels had a great potential for future research or engagement projects with urban communities.

The four stories of participants represented in section 4.5 integrate digital self-production of information at different levels or complexity, aimed at various population targets, and using diverse formats, based on a variety of purposes. Text, photographs and non-edited video are the most used and commonly shared on daily basis. Nevertheless, the story of Luis and Ramon showed how some members of collective action are self-learning simple software, usually of free access, such as Canva (Canva.com, 2020), to design communicative pieces tailored to particular digital platforms of social media[23]. Moreover, the story of Erika presented the existing local potential, that is not yet commonly spread in society, of developing more complex products such as interactive video installations, in a collaborative manner and as a way to support socio-territorial struggles.

From my research findings in Manizales, I argue that the innovative processes that were worth studying were mostly arising from citizen initiatives and collective action, and not from the municipality, despite what the city conveyed to increase its competitiveness in a regional and national level. Citizens in various collectives, with basic knowledge of digital tools managed on an everyday basis, to find new accessible software and media to support their productive ideas. For example, I experienced two situations where members of associated collectives were learning

---

[23] See footnote 15 in Chapter 4.

to use Google Maps and Open Street Maps on their own, and only weeks later, were comparing the two services and deciding with other members which of these was easier and better to use for the objective they had in mind.

Paying further attention to the ways in which citizens are producing information, the media they are using, the purposes and the obstacles, is also a way to identify the penetration of digital technology and innovation into the daily life of a society.

6.2.2 In between the online and offline

In practical terms, it is generally difficult to separate the offline and online as spheres of action for socio-territorial movements in Manizales. Participants in Manizales tended to decide about the channels for their actions and communications mostly based in terms of convenience, regarding the time and resources it would consume. For example, for an invitation to an event, participants would decide whether it was better to go for a few printed posters placed in strategic locations, hundreds of flyers, or perhaps a digital image - as a poster or an invitation, or the creation of an 'event' in Facebook, depending on the target population. Often, the answer would include a number of these options with additional strategies, including word-of-mouth, and loud-speaker announcements in the neighbourhood streets. Such decisions were taken collectively, mainly during offline meetings but very often, the conversation would keep going on social media (i.e. on a group chat in WhatsApp or Messenger). Within these conversations, that moved between online and offline spaces, key decisions where taken. These were not only about the communication strategy, but about other central points to their activities. Therefore, it is important to highlight that collective action, at least in the case of Manizales but presumably in many other similar scenarios, happens naturally in between the offline and online spaces of communication.

In my view, this is an important distinction that serves two purposes. One, it helps researchers like me not to get lost in defining where or in which extreme of the online or offline, is the core of the collective action potential, in a world that is increasingly moving daily activities of communication, organisation and collaboration, towards digital spheres. Two, understanding that social movements flow naturally in between these two spheres, whilst recognising that the flow is dependent on how accessible,

popular and welcoming spaces in the offline and online are in specific contexts, places the focus back in the situations of encounters, conversations and processes of co-production, regardless of how physical or virtual these can be. In my experience in Manizales, members of socio-territorial movements defined key proposals and actions through continuous conversations that took place in the offline and online spaces, in consecutive and sometimes in parallel ways. For example, when some participants could not attend a meeting they connected and participated through digital media, sometimes by WhatsApp texts or audio, and sometimes via Skype. This mobility between the offline and online can also feel chaotic and it can randomly exclude other members from the process, such as when people were not online during an urgent decision-taking conversation. However, it seemed that most of the participants understood such issues as part of the incidental norm of communications today, taking the situation of missing out decisive conversations not as a personal matter but as a natural side effect of collective action. Indeed, some felt that nowadays there are less ways to feel excluded, because digital media can include remote members into meetings and events happening somewhere else in real-time.

I found in Manizales different generational approaches to using various online and offline media for collective action. Some older members of a collective would use and check emails on a more regular basis (expecting others to do so as well), and would try to have organised conversation through these. At the same time, younger members would prefer to use WhatsApp or Messenger to have such type of conversations, using emails for more structured and informative messages, for example, invitations to events, sharing documents, or communicating with external contacts or institutions. Differences like these tended to create disagreements between members of collective action. However, all research participants agreed that face-to-face offline meetings were necessary to structure and move forward their agenda and activities, precisely to avoid or remedy organisational problems regarding exclusion and misunderstandings. In the words of several participants in Manizales, the importance of physical spaces and face-to-face conversations is irreplaceable by the digital.

6.2.3 Sources of frustration

Apart from the specific points shown as Obstacles in Table 7, it is important to discuss the more general and common issues perceived in the case of Manizales. Most of the participants referred to the overload of information, the noise created by not relevant content, and the potential for manipulation (I.e. using and spreading fake news) as the main sources of frustration when using social media. Another common complaint was about the misinterpretations of the message or the tone in chat conversations, a problem that according to some can take longer to clarify in an online chat than in an offline face-to-face meeting. During a conversation where some participants discussed the problem about online arguments gone wrong, someone said that people on Twitter sometimes behaved like stressed people driving cars. That person explained that it is easier being disrespectful to others and rest easy knowing you are safe inside a car of behind a screen, but perhaps you would not address the same person in that way in a face-to-face encounter, or over the phone. With this, the participant highlighted the importance of face-to-face meetings to debate differences with local authorities, but also among urban collectives.

Regarding manipulation of information, it is not a problem exclusively connected to the uses of digital media, however growing research in the field claims that social media impacts people's behaviours in many aspects of daily life (Aral & Eckles, 2019). The very possibility of disseminating information using traditional linear means (from one to many, as Castells, 2009, describes them) such as printed media, speech, radio, or television potentially makes content vulnerable to manipulation. Nevertheless, research in the topic suggests that manipulation in social media influences opinions more dramatically than watching the same information on television, for example (Castells, 2009), because in social media the information gets to users in a personalised way. (i.e, the message is coming from an acquaintance). Here I am not referring to the tailored manipulation of masses through social media, for example during electoral campaigns, because it is out of the range of my research. By this, I mean the spreading of rumours or misinformation in texts and audio-visual forms, which sometimes could systematically be arranged by a political interest at the top of power structures, and powered by concerned citizens spreading the message to their networks. However,

misinformation can sometimes start from a civic group with the purpose of increasing people's discontent with local authorities, and causing new alarms about the civic causes they defend. During my time in Manizales I asked a personal contact in the Municipal Planning Department about the veracity of something that was circulating in social media on previous days. The message claimed that new buildings in the Rio Blanco project would not have water access because of their location, and that the building company deceived buyers by not informing them about this. My source explained that the claim was false; the building company had all permits in order, and to do so they had to have approval for service connections, including water supply services. Perhaps there were other instances during my fieldwork when false information was being disseminated in the digital networks I was studying, but my role was not to test the veracity of every claim in relation to the causes of the socio-territorial movements. Instead, the point I want to highlight with my experience is to recognise that misinformation is an old and popular strategy that now has a digital media with different formats and times to impact people. Therefore, intended misinformation can be originated also from civic movements, and unintended misinformation, in other words, spreading digital content with important socio-political claims without verifying the information, happens on the everyday of social life, both online and offline.

Another source of frustration – particularly to me as a researcher, but also expressed from some participants – usually came from a very well-known characteristic of the Colombian culture, the improvisation. With this term, I am referring to the attitude some take in regards to events, where little care is given for preparation, since experience had shown them that one way or the other things would get done eventually. For example, meetings would be held, community events would happen, letters and proposals would be written, key contacts would be reached, important information would be spread. The lack of preparation tends to lead to improvisation at the moment of solving situations. It is during those moments when social media could become a tool to coordinate urgent actions, but it could also become an obstacle when communication among many is not clear, nor constructive, hindering the process of solving a situation and magnifying communal stress and disappointment. Vignette 4.7.2 'One out 93 in the 23' exposes one of several situations during fieldwork, where improvisation played a significant role in its

development. Resourcefulness is a word that can replace the one of 'improvisation' when results can be valued as successful, and it is important to make this distinction, since improvisation is not only a source of frustration. It is also demonstrating a cultural attitude used to face difficult situations, in which creativity and cooperation can shape the development of an event, for the best.

6.3 The media uses found in Manizales' socio-territorial movements.

When exploring online and offline modes of engagement in collective action towards spatial justice in Manizales, it was important to begin with defining the most popular media found in the field. Simultaneously, through the interviews and conversations I began to establish the reasons behind favourite media platforms in connection with specific purposes. For example, leaders from San Jose used Facebook to connect with larger audiences in and out of the city, while recognizing that this platform was not ideal for communicating with people inside of their neighbourhoods. The reason why seemed to be related with major issues of accessibility and digital illiteracy in the area. Additionally, demolitions and works from the macro-project affected local infrastructures of telecommunications and electric networks, worsening already precarious conditions of Internet access in San Jose. In contrast, the most efficient methods to transmit a message quickly to the entire community included printing posters for strategic spaces such as parks, churches or bakeries, and walking the streets making loudspeaker (or megaphone) announcements.

> *"We worked with Visual Design students from Universidad de Caldas, to create a fanzine and a website. […] But in our Committee we realised that many people in the comuna don't read, very few have access to newspapers and even fewer have access to the Internet. It was very hard to make a website work. I tried and I couldn't do it. People has no access, it is not worth it. It would do the same as Facebook, where everybody outside the comuna knows what is happening, but that resource doesn't really work inside the comuna."   (participant from San Jose, Manizales)*

In the following Diagrams 1, 2 and 3, I present the most popular media and the purposes of using different tools by each of the socio-territorial movements, and as a whole (Diagram 4). Finally, in Diagram 5 I highlight some – expected and

unexpected – findings that helped me forming a better understanding of the situations studied in Manizales. The diagrams' list of media does not include face-to-face encounters or meetings, because that element remained the most crucial aspect of collective action, in relation to all the purposes listed and all three socio-territorial movements. That is why the list is called 'supporting' media. Tools, services and channels there served on specific tasks of communication, organisation and co-production, which were usually discussed previously and agreed on during face-to-face meetings. The offline encounters were a key piece in the structure of collective action.

Before getting into the detail of the images, it is important to clarify that the data supporting these analytical diagrams was of qualitative nature, therefore, subjected to my interpretation. Moreover, it was bounded by a clear context (collective action and citizen participation in Manizales, Colombia) and moment in time (between 2017 and 2018), as explained in Chapter 3. Consequently, it would be expected that a similar structure of a diagram used for another moment in time, with different actors in Manizales, or in another city, would produce very different results. Indeed, COVID-19 and the associated limits to face-to-face contact have likely shifted much more of the activities towards online.
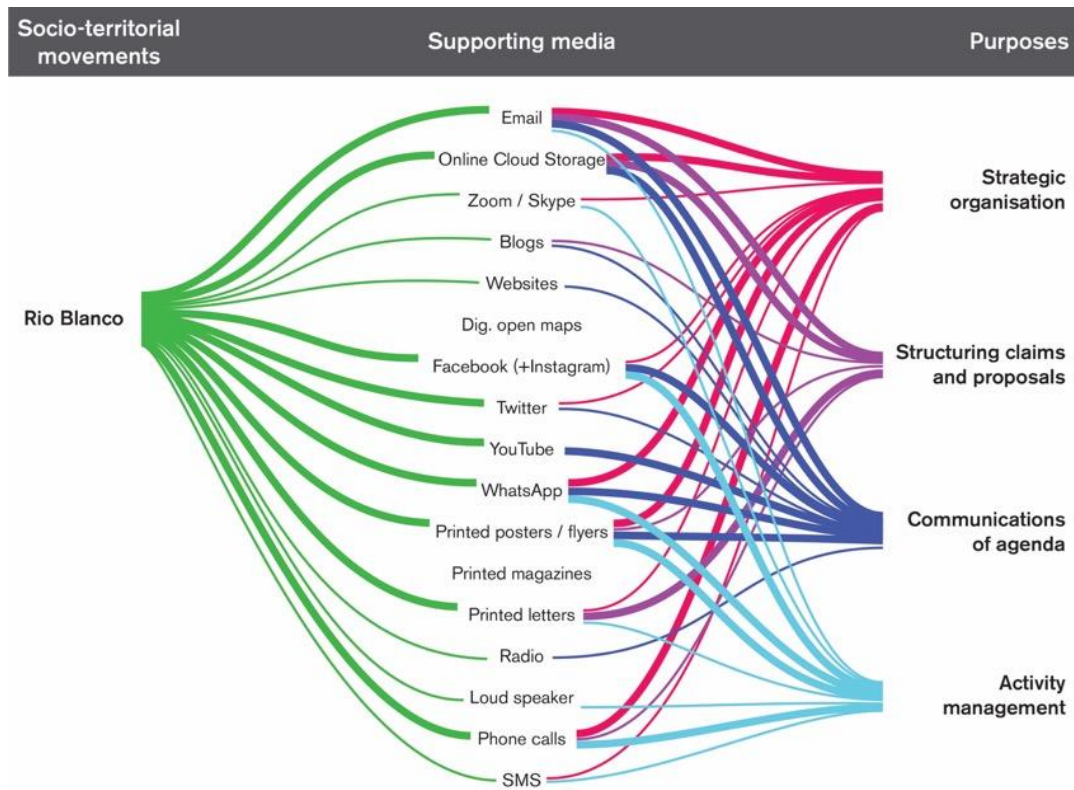
Diagram 1 Media uses for Rio Blanco
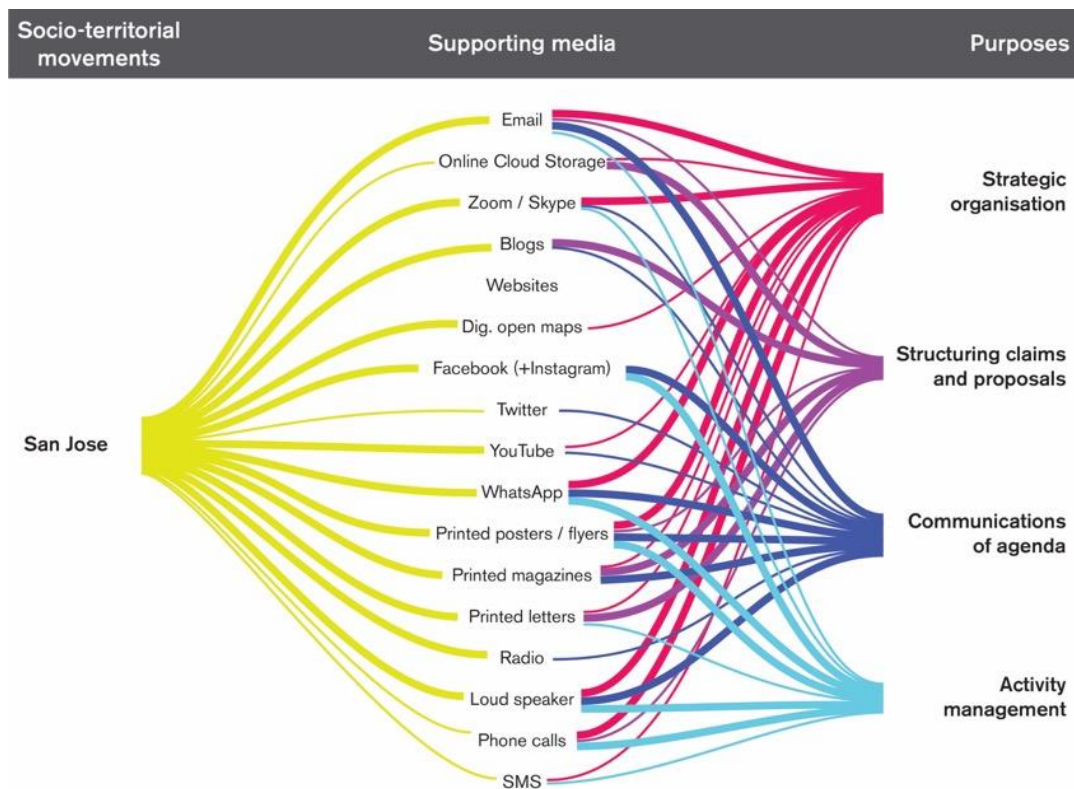
Diagram 2 Media uses for San Jose
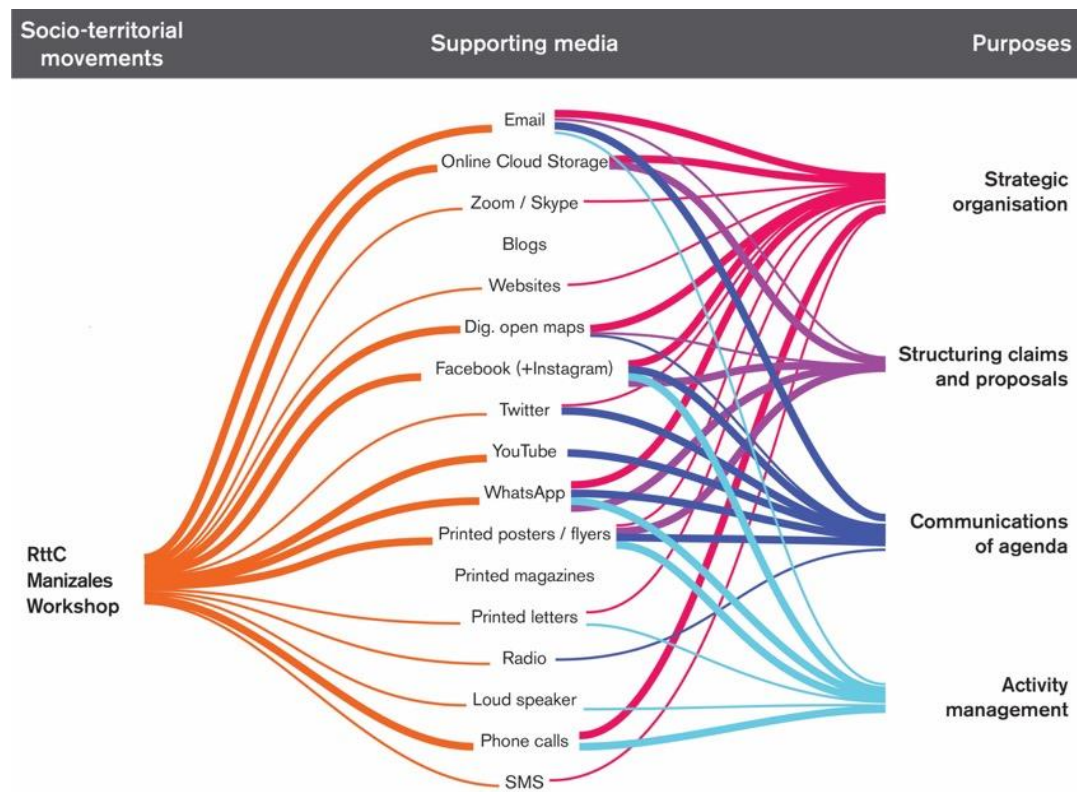
Diagram 3 Media uses for the Right to the City Manizales Workshop
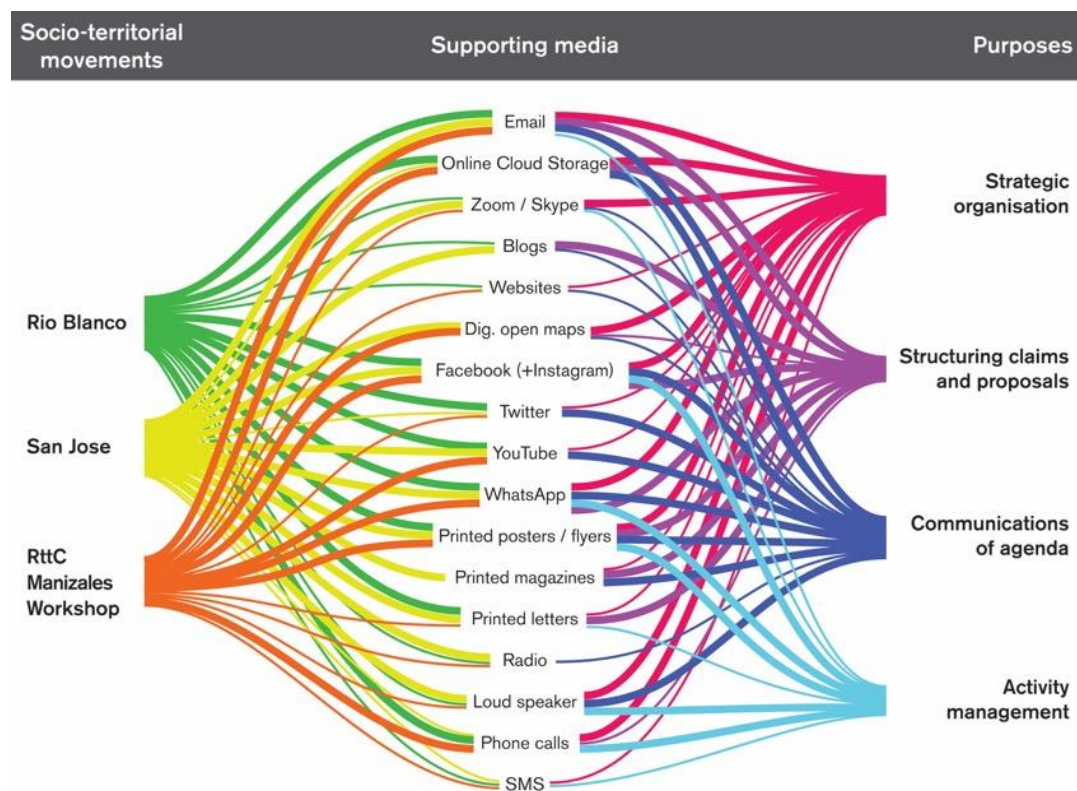
Diagram 4 Socio-territorial movements and their media uses

These diagrams are then a representation of the media uses I found in collective action in Manizales, based on the structure of a fluvial diagram, which helps to show connections and relationships between different elements. They can be read from left to right, right to left and from the centre to either side column. The diagrams (1 to 5) show connections found between types and uses of media by the socio-territorial movements studied and the crucial activities of collective action grouped into four purposes. Thus, the lines on the left show the different types of media used by the three socio-territorial movements studied, and lines on the right show the purposes in connection to such uses. Both, the connections and the two-line intensities in the diagram were the result of my interpretation of the data collected. Lines' colours are determined by the elements in the columns of the left and the right. Therefore, green, yellow and orange correspond to the each of the socio-territorial movements, and magenta, purple, blue and cyan correspond to the four purposes in the right column. There are two thicknesses in the lines showing connections, and thicker lines represent a stronger presence of uses and connections in the everyday life. For example, both WhatsApp and SMS are types of media used by all three socio-territorial movements, however, the lines connecting 'WhatsApp' with the socio-territorial movements are thicker than the ones connecting them with 'SMS'. This distinction is representing what I observe during my interviews, conversations and interactions with various members of these movements. Although in all cases SMS are used, it is a less common resource compared to others like emails or WhatsApp messages. People usually contacted others through SMS when one of the ends did not have a smart phone with applications such as WhatsApp, when they could not get Internet connection or data usage, or when they simply did not want to use WhatsApp. As a result, SMS was not identified as intensively used on a daily basis.

For an easier reading of the diagrams, it is important to explain what I meant by the four purposes presented on the right columns. In general, these were a clear way for me to group the main activities found in the interactions between members and collectives, within each other and with external contacts and institutions.

- **Strategic organisation**: This purpose includes defining steps in reaching the objectives of the collectives involved in the movement, as well as gaining and sustaining important connections with other organisations, individuals and

institutions that can support certain goals of the group. Specific activities that reflect this purpose are, among others, maintaining a good contact with involved communities, mapping collectives and individuals with similar views in the city and the region, keeping a set of presentation documents ready to share with potential allies (i.e. cover letters, formal emails to approach new contacts, presentation videos or slides, having a well-fed and updated Facebook page, and printed brochures, which are less common but still important for some groups).

- **Structuring claims and proposals**: The activities grouped under this purpose aimed at building sound documents to share with an extended community, or with academia but mostly with authorities, in order to legitimise the claims of socio-territorial movements, and to present their alternative proposals. Such processes involved tasks mainly related to internal organisation, co-production and communication. For example, having meetings, taking collective decisions, dividing tasks and setting deadlines, defining needs and possible support from academia or external supporters, and finding ways to keep a record of the progress as well of the supporting material (here is where online cloud storage often came to play an important role).

- **Communications of agenda**: As the title implies, this purpose groups tasks that were purely communicative. This includes communicating within the movement members and supporters, and towards a broader audience of citizens and institutions. The type, message and format of the communicative pieces varied depending the target and media used. Furthermore, activities related with designing, making and producing communicative pieces are also included in this group. For example some collectives preferred to meet in person with the purpose of developing the content for a text, presentation, invitation, poster or other kind of communicative piece, while some other found a way to use digital tools such as group chats in WhatsApp or Facebook, and shared online documents to discuss and co-produce pieces remotely.

- **Activity management**: Here, I referred to organisational and communicative tasks around the production and delivery of activities proposed by the socio-territorial movements, or in which members of the movements were

collaborating. Some of the tasks were done in advance regarding with permits, coordination, raising funds, etc. However, most of the communication around this purpose happened the days before and during the day (or days) of the activity. For example, in the socio-territorial movement about the Right to the City in Manizales, the day before and during the workshop were the most active days of the WhatsApp and Facebook groups created to coordinate this activity. We, the organisers, had split in five stations in different parts of the building and needed to keep coordinated about times and rotations of visitors in each station. Moreover, a few of us had the task of share some of the events of the day in real time on the Facebook page and through our groups in WhatsApp, adding to the many photos and video recording that other organisers and participants were doing simultaneously during the day. The multiple and intense use of various media during the development of collective activities was a constant during the numerous events I attended in Manizales.
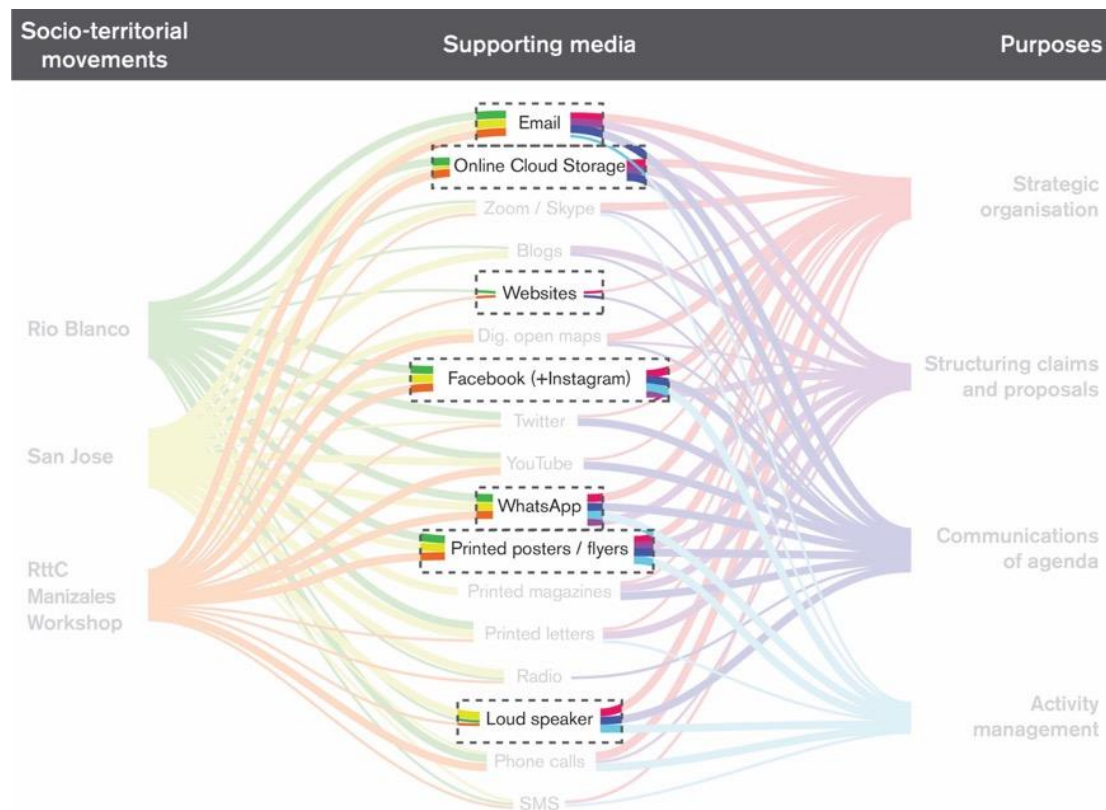
Diagram 5 Elements to highlight in the media uses found

Developing the connections with the elements in the 'supporting media' column in Diagram 4, Diagram 5 highlights some distinctive features following the most and the least connections – with the other two columns – as the criteria for selection. The media services that were frequently used by all the socio-territorial movements and linked to all selected purposes were email services, Facebook, WhatsApp and printed media (mainly flyers and posters). Media such as online cloud storage (I.e., Google Drive or Dropbox), printed letters, videoconference services such as Skype or Zoom, and loudspeaker were frequently used by the participants, although not necessarily for all purposes. To my surprise, the use of Twitter and blogs, while important to some participants in their routines, were not described as deeply relevant for collective action in general. More drastically, websites seemed to be at the risk of extinction. One possible explanation might be the prominence that Facebook has gained as the dominant space for updated information and news according to the collectives studied. This in turn makes the maintenance of a website an unnecessary and time-consuming effort.

In the connections between uses of media and purposes for collective action, it is crucial to understand that factors of time, economy, culture, political events and even individual choices can create very different readings, even in the same case of study. Preferences among generational groups can also change the way to interpret what the most relevant media can be to a particular purpose. For example, older participants from the collectives tended to prefer calling someone on the phone before contacting them through Facebook or WhatsApp. On the contrary, I had the impression that younger leaders would leave the option of a phone call as the last resource for reaching a person. Additionally, behaviours and good practices of using different media were perceived in varied manners among groups and individuals, showing noticeable differences between younger and older participants. Older participants involved in social movements were usually more organized and structured during meetings in comparison to younger leaders, yet, this last group tended to be more disciplined in online group conversations on WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Some older participants would use these scenarios to share content unrelated to the purpose of the groups, obstructing the flow of online conversations more frequently than younger participants did. However provocative these observations were to my research; it is important to clarify that this topic would

require a whole research project to explain the nature of their differences and complementarity.

There are numerous ways to approach this data depending on the type of questions to address. In the case of this research, apart from the observations already mentioned, I propose three filters to apply to the media column in order to get a further examination in terms of possibilities and limitations. Thus, I discuss in the following paragraphs some specific reflections when approaching these diagrams suggesting filters such as, a) media that allows answering back, b) media that allows multiple-actor co-production, and c) media that is accessible from a non-sophisticated smart phone.

If planned properly, communications from the socio-territorial movements, regardless of the media used, would integrate a way, or give clear contact details, so receivers of the information can communicate back to the organisers. However, some media, particularly digital media and telecommunications, allow for a direct and sometimes immediate answer, making communication more fluid and constructive. In that sense, printed media, radio, loud-speaker, and arguably websites and online maps are not considered in this category. These communication methods instead, serve important functions to deliver messages with varying purposes to different target audiences. Conversely, media such as emails, online cloud storage (used by groups), Zoom/Skype, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Phone calls and SMS, which are platforms and services that by their nature offer interactivity and prompt exchange of ideas between two (in the case of phone calls and SMS) or many parts (as is the case for the rest). In the case of Manizales, Blogs and YouTube accounts are in a blurry zone, since they could provide more interaction through tools for comments. However, in the case observed, there was no much of such interactions, and these were not reflecting a constructive nor fluid communication either.

Regarding media that allows multi-actor co-production, there are two relevant distinctions. The first is a group of services that are designed to facilitate such co-production. In the case of Manizales, these are Online Cloud Storage and real-time collaborative editing tools, and digital open maps where various people feed information remotely. The second group of services are the media that supports multi-actor collaboration. Here I noticed that Zoom/Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook

(groups and Messenger) and email services played an important role in Manizales in that respect. Emails are not used as frequently during the day in comparison to WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. However, in the case of projects that involved more time and required exchange of files and documents, emails proved to be a very common media to support collaboration among multiple actors. Here it is worth mentioning that every participant and member of the socio-territorial movements had and used emails. Additionally, few people either were not WhatsApp or Facebook users or accessed them rarely, thus email exchange remained one of the most inclusive media from the digital spectrum.

The third filter is also relevant when thinking about inclusion; here I refer to media that is accessible from a non-sophisticated smart phone. The experience in Manizales showed me both sides of the story, on one hand I realised that services like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger were more used on daily basis than I had initially imagined. However, on the other hand, it was evident that the lack of access to internet and high-end devices remained a persistent obstacle in the everyday uses of digital media. In other words, most of the participants from collectives had smart phones, but the quality of them was generally basic. Additionally, it was also common that people had not enough data allowance in their phones to visit websites, download files, access online clouds or download applications related to such tasks. With this in mind, the media services that proved to be the most accessible from basic smart phones in Manizales were phone calls, SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. Although emails and digital open maps could be in this category, people mostly accessed these from laptops, computers or tablets. Similarly, services like Zoom or Skype could be easily accessible from a basic smartphone; however, this did not prove practical for teleconferences with multiple actors. Additionally, data plans tended to be an obstacle for those services, due to their high data usage demands. Moreover, participants tended to prefer using normal phone calls, or WhatsApp calls instead before using Skype from their phones. Every time I saw, or was part of a Skype or Zoom teleconference, participants were connecting through their computers, and not through their phones.

6.4 Online modes of engagement in collective action

This section explores how online modes of engagement, in addition to offline ones, structure and transform opportunities of collective action in Manizales. The media used by Manizales' socio-territorial movements in relation to a particular purpose, as presented in the fluvial Diagrams 1 to 5, is already facilitating collectives in achieving tasks regarding those listed purposes. In general, and drawing from the literature (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014), digital media provides several modes of engagement in relation to the organisational, productive, communicative and delivery capacities of collective action, such as helping to form collective identities and to form more horizontal organisational structures, as well as amplifying diffusion of actions and making communication more affordable and inclusive. Other roles proposed by Cruz-Rodriguez (2014) are related to the innovation in repertoires of action and the identification of political opportunities.

Manizales' case exposed a variety of digital media uses regarding collective action. The following five points represent how online modes of engagement are transforming collective action in Manizales. The coming reflections resulted from acknowledging the value of particularities as well as common habits among participants' uses of digital media.

6.4.1 Connecting and visualizing citizen initiatives

Connectivity and the amplification of communication are characteristics of digital media frequently mentioned in existing literature (Castells, 2009; Shirky, 2009; Foth et al., 2015; Sassen, 2015). Despite this being obvious, it was important to test the extent in which these attributes were potentially transforming collective action. Early in my fieldwork, I realized that a common ongoing project from several collectives was to map and understand the networks of civic organizations in Manizales. This endeavour was born out of a concern about general disconnection of citizen movements, and formed around various interests, but in essence these were reflecting a discontent with the status quo. In search for strengthening collective action and structures for social pressure, members of collectives felt it was important to understand backgrounds, fields of interest, political stances and types of actions from civic organizations, independent of their scale. Social media and digital tools

allowed exercises of mapping and thematic networking to be developed in prompt and efficient ways by several people simultaneously (i.e., sharing an open document online as a work-in-progress database, or co-managing an open map in Google Maps or Open Street Map). Additionally, collectives defined a range of groups with similar interests, these became target contacts who could share and repost each other's content on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Thus, not only increasing the connectivity but also contributing to amplify relevant information to wider networks. Intentions of inclusion and collaboration found limitations innate to social relationships. It seemed to me that personal discrepancies, the fear of competition for scarce resources and differences in political stances were the principal obstacles in networking efforts.

There are two relevant situations to highlight from the fieldwork. One, is the result of a mapping exercise lead by one collective called Pluriversos, with the purpose to serve all other collectives in the city. The collection of data for the mapping exercise started before I met them in Manizales, but it was through the conversations leading to the Right to the City Workshop – and the ones that followed - that Pluriversos
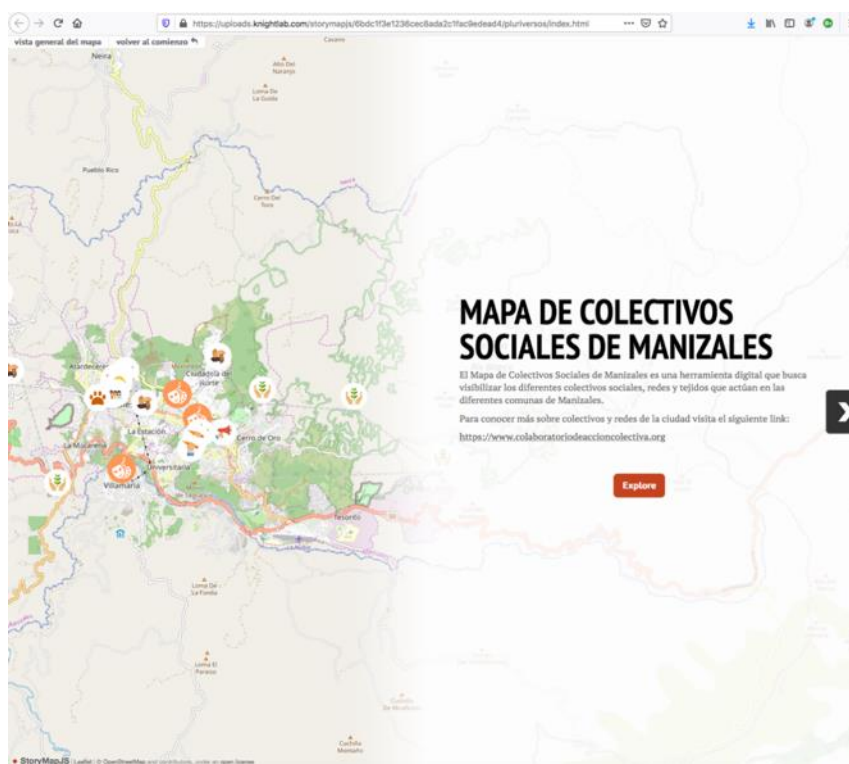
Image 39 Pluriversos' digital map of social collectives in Manizales. (retrieved from: https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/6bdc1f3e1236cec 8ada2c1fac9edead4/pluriversos/index.html)

collected most of the information and put together a digital map in their website (Image 39). The interactive map allows to see not only the location, or action area, of a collective in the city, but also provides information about their interested, supported with images and videos (Image 40).
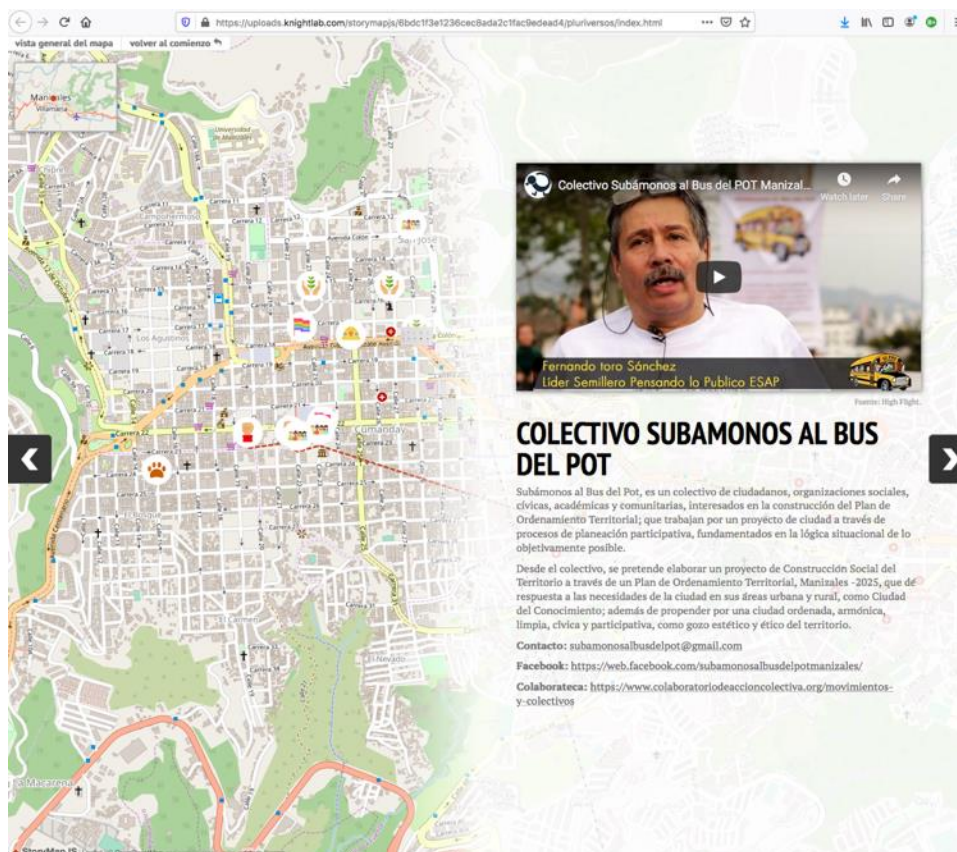
Image 40 Pluriversos' digital map. Visualization of collectives' information. (retrieved from: https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/6bdc1f3e1236cec8ada2c 1fac9edead4/pluriversos/index.html)

In addition to the role proposed by Cruz-Rodriguez (2014) about digital media helping to form collective identities, from the experience in Manizales I argue that it can support in building new spatial meanings to contested territories. The fact that 'Comunativa's Dome' or 'Comunativa's food-garden' is greatly well known and appropriated as a public meeting space in the city, at least among urban collectives, serves as a clear evidence for my point. Soon after the macro-project demolished the houses behind Comunativa's house, all that remained was a void in the urban fabric filled with construction debris, and spared materials from the building of the highway next to it. In less than 8 years of work by members of the San Jose socio-territorial movement, that place became recognised as a park by local communities

and other groups in the city, despite it technically being an informal appropriation of a vacant lot according to planning authorities. Activities in the physical space were at the core of the appropriation and activation of Comunativa's food-garden (Image 41), however the location is somehow hidden to people passing by San Jose or the city centre. Therefore, photographs, invitations to activities and event's reports shared on social media have helped in making the food-garden known to others in the city, while building a new spatial meaning of community meeting and recreational public space for such place.

Image 41 Comunativa's dome on a Sunday of 'Minga' (community organising, and recreational activities). This place is also known as San Jose's dome, or as Comunativa's food-garden.

6.4.2 Reaching out to promissory allies

Social media facilitates exchanges with individuals and organizations beyond geographical boundaries, a well-known attribute of digital communications that did not come as a surprise in the case of Manizales. However, through the research I gained insight to the ways in which such connections could become strategic in socio-territorial movement's agendas, particularly in the cases of Rio Blanco and San Jose. Rio Blanco was a movement that evolved quickly, gaining supporters in various sections of society in the city. In about a year, they managed to take concerns about the Rio Blanco reservoir outside Manizales to various political and

academic scenarios. Arguably, two of the most crucial events were their participation in an international forum about natural environment in Bogota[24], and the continuous exchange of communications that they had with the Regional and the National Attorneys. During the international forum, members of the Rio Blanco movement presented their case and used the chance to make their struggle visible to potential allies, some of whom could influence local authorities in Manizales. Additionally, they contacted recognized public figures (among them a Grammy award winning artist and a gold-medal winner racing cyclist) to share information about Rio Blanco with them, asking them to pose for photographs and shot videos with flyers of the movement. Furthermore, the support from the Regional and the National Attorneys manifested in communications commanding a formal response from the city government about citizens' demands, that asked planning authorities to cancel building permits of the housing project next to the reservoir. My argument is not to suggest that such influential contacts were only possible because of digital and social media, instead I acknowledge that personal contacts and the participation of academia played a key role. However, the frequency and quality of audio-visual content created by amateur members, and shared on social media, were crucial for this very local movement that quickly became visible in Manizales society but also outside the region, going beyond merely transmitting a message to gain attention for the alliance in an overloaded information sphere.

6.4.3 Stimulating creative surplus for contestation

This section draws from literature about people altruistically producing and sharing content online (Shirky, 2010; Zegada Claure & Guardia Crespo, 2018; Denisova, 2019) and the fieldwork experience. In Manizales, it was common to see collectives co-designing a piece of information, thinking that it needed to be clear and attractive so it could stand out from the amount of content shared in social media every day. In all three sub-cases, I experienced conversations around the creation of an informative piece that could be easily shared through social media. A digital invitation, a meme or a short video might seem a banality in the wider scale of the agenda of a socio-territorial movement. However, decisions taken behind the design

---

[24] Pacto Mundial por el Medio Ambiente. Bogota, 2018. Organized by the General National Attorney, Bogota's Chamber of Commerce, Center for Sustainable Investment of Columbia University and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

and production of such pieces say much about the aims and organisation of the collectives, as well as the possibilities or constrains that digital means can represent for their causes.

A common feature I found in collective action in Manizales is the creativity involved in most of their endeavours, which is displayed in between the offline and online spaces. This was also reflected in the capacity and willingness of people to quickly create and share something with others. Here I am specifically talking about people producing audio-visual content, memes, posters and invitations among other things, and in such events, digital media clearly magnified that capacity. Digital platforms allow people to access a rising amount of information in many formats, audio, video, images, text, or a multi-format piece, and the tools to easily edit those formats are increasingly accessible and easy to use. It seems the perfect scenario for creative minds willing to use their spare time for creative purposes.

Image 42 Both are digital material produced by Rio Blanco members. Left: Invitation to an event. Right: WhatsApp meme to share on the International Day of the Water

This is not to say that before digital tools people were not using creative pieces to criticize authorities. Posters, cartoons, flyers, and all sorts of visual and performing

arts have been used in history for activism and demonstrations. However, social media and the increasingly easy access to mobile devices makes it easier not only to produce an original and tailored piece, but also to do it in a faster way. For example, memes can be created and shared only minutes after an event takes place. I see these instances as reactive and creative ways for the city to speak back, in response to the work of Sassen (2013), part of what the citizenship are saying back today certainly has the form of a meme. A meme with a local political message, judging an action or behaviour from governmental institutions, that gets spread quickly is likely carrying an important message.
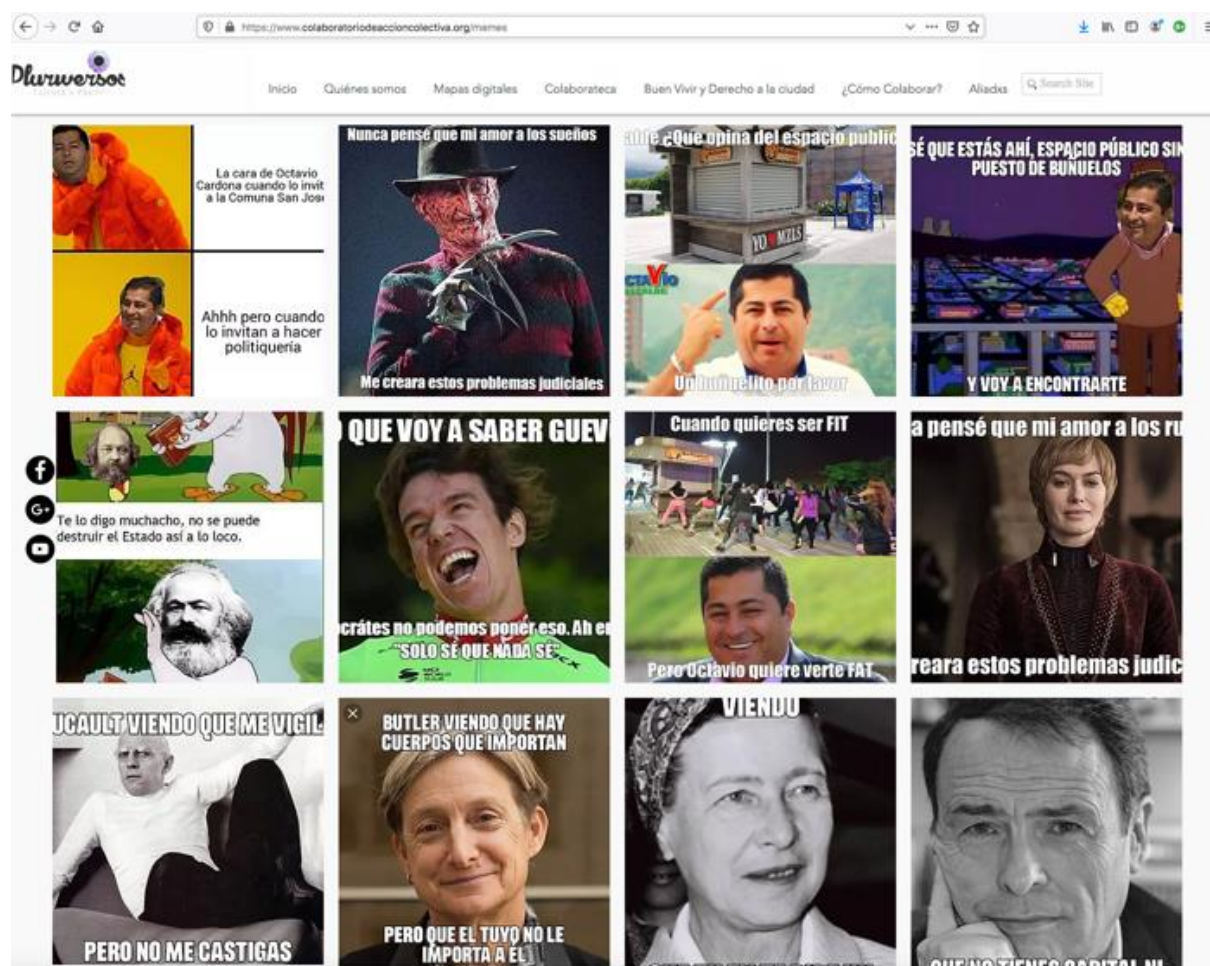
Image 43 Pluriversos 'memoteca'. Library of memes about Manizales, politics, philosophy and collective action. Four memes in this selection were addressed at the mayor in turn.

A Manizales' collective called Pluriversos, worked around exploring ways to make the most of digital tools in support of the network of collective action in the city. In

doing so, they constructed a website linked to their Facebook page, where they share documents, contacts, a map of collectives in the city, and a meme-library, among other resources for collective action. This example supported my perception about the relevance behind self-producing of information for the sake of a common open use.

With this section I am arguing that digital media is facilitating, stimulating and amplifying what seems to be an innate potential of people involved in social movements or larger networks to create sharp pieces of information than can compete successfully for attention in a sea of digital information. Furthermore, when addressing how this changes collective action, it is important to look at various scales where that creative surplus is making an impact. One scale is on the everyday communication where a humorous meme about a trendy local topic can be quickly spread among WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Messenger and Twitter. Depending on the message it is carrying it could be beneficial for building identity and making others aware of a particular struggle from a movement or a collective in the city. Another scale, probably on the other extreme, is when the creative and cognitive surplus of people involved in a movement, either as members or supporters from academia or the private sector, which is a common scenario in Manizales, is aimed at the design and development of a product requiring more time and work than doing a meme. Some examples from the fieldwork included, people from various collectives working on a series of podcasts, videos or articles about local topics, the mapping exercise done by Pluriversos (Images 39 and 40), which needed time, several conversations with collectives and many hours of work. I would argue that in the case of Manizales, the creativity and altruistic act of producing information to share it with others was being magnified by the access to digital media, producing results in faster ways and increasing the potential of remote co-production by multiple members, in comparison with the times before digital tools had penetrated the everyday life.

6.4.4 Adding a layer in the search for legitimacy

In comparison to the previous points presented, this transformational potential of digital media for collective action surfaced unexpectedly from Manizales' case. It seems that having more tools to access information and create content plays a part

in the pursuit for legitimacy in collective action. The integration of digital media into daily routines allows not only the visualization of locally curated content to support citizens' demands, but also to reach scientific and technical information that supports their petitions or proposals. This in turn can empower civic groups to defend their demands with more confidence during public debates with authorities. However, the extent to which this situation influences social movements in positive or negative ways needs to be studied locally, considering existing relationships of power around decision making in the city. In the case of the socio-territorial movements in Manizales, the research showed high levels of commitment from the collectives to back claims with policies, regulations, socio-economic surveys, and academic and technical studies, mostly facilitated by local students and academics. Despite these notable efforts, in two interviews with municipal officers, and one with a representative from the third sector, interviewees perceived processes of contestation in the city as generally weak and argued that an informed type of participation could strengthen it. It seemed to me that highlighting a social or spatial injustice was not enough to start a serious conversation with authorities in Manizales. Now that 'everybody' had the tools to do more, citizens were indeed expected to present more and stronger evidence to back up their demands and to increase levels of legitimacy. Thus, I wonder whether having more access to information empowers social movements or diminishes the importance of citizen claim as the basis for contestation.

The quality of the material produced and gathered in support of the socio-territorial movements in Manizales was an effort applauded by national and international prominent figures advocating for citizens' rights. Some of whom became crucial allies to put pressure on the local government, as explained in the earlier section.

6.4.5 'Knocking down technology from its pedestal'

While efforts around digital innovation from the municipality were described by numerous participants during fieldwork as intended for privileged sections of society such as academia, local industry and external investment; I found but a few promising cases of young independent collectives encouraged to 'knock down technology from its pedestal', as one participant described the objective of her collective. What they meant by this was to place digital technology closer to people's

needs and according to their capacities. In other words, they worked with people in marginal communities, sharing with them how to use audio-visual techniques, which seemed high-tech and complex to many, in simpler and affordable ways. This in turn supports social movements. Some of their projects included tools such as video mapping and digital interactive installations. During workshops using these tools, a common obstacle appeared to be that levels of digital literacy and access to digital devices was poorer than expected in low-income groups. Limitations of this nature made it clear to me, in agreement with some of the participants' views, that the critical need of digital innovation projects today, ideally from the government but effectively from independent collectives, is to be aimed at and developed with marginal communities. Only in this way, can new technologies transcend the mediatic hype and become a resource in closing social and spatial justice gaps in the city.

6.5 Missing opportunities

Section 6.4 introduced some ideas from the literature about the roles of digital media in collective action (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014). Additionally, when looking at the problems or things that digital media is not necessarily addressing, Cruz-Rodriguez (2014) notes three main points. The first is that despite the potential capacities of digital media, the Internet itself is not solving the unequal access to digital technology nor the inequality in the digital spaces. The second point has to do with the construction of commitment with collective action. The fact that a social movement is present and active in digital arenas, constantly gaining followers and daily interactions, does not necessarily mean that more people and collectives are suddenly committed to the movement in the form of active members (Tufekci, 2017). I saw it on the field, where digital interactions and 'likes' on a communication (i.e., about an event organised by a collective) had no direct correspondence with the number of new attendees. However, I also experienced cases where people knew about events only through Facebook or because someone else shared an invitation on WhatsApp. I was one of these people before and during my fieldwork, indeed, that is how I initially got in touch with some of my participants; but what this is suggesting, is that online visibility and interaction (with this I mean people giving 'likes' or adding comments) does not necessarily imply a commitment. For that to

happen there must be a pre-existent interest from the person receiving the information about similar matters represented in the collective or the event they are promoting. Finally, the third point made by Cruz-Rodriguez (2014) is that digital media is facing more and more efficient mechanisms of control, which could in turn affect privacy and autonomy in online modes of engagement for collective action.

From the experience in Manizales, I add four other points to the ones raised by Cruz-Rodriguez (2014). These should not be understood as failures of digital media, but as missing opportunities that have local potential, but are not affecting yet the dynamics of collective action in the city.

6.5.1 Improving internal organisation.

The potential of digital media to improve internal organisation is a debatable point, and it will vary in other contexts and in different times. However, the experience in Manizales showed me that collectives had a common concern, among many others, regarding the organisation of their information and improving ways to keep a good and clear record of their history and progress. Some of them shared the same belief that the use of digital media is not itself solving the organisational problem that concerns them. That is why I defined this as a missing role. Apparently, people think digital tools are making them more organised, but below the surface, I found that there is not a necessary correlation in that respect. Using social media for collective purposes needs orchestrating, especially as multiple tools are available. Moreover, digital media used in a non-systemic way can even exacerbate the problem. The uses of digital social media allow multiple ways to record processes, events, news and to give an account to the history of collectives, but does not necessarily mean social media is helping to manage the chaos that by nature surrounds social organisations. Sometimes the uses given to such digital platforms replicate and multiply chaos, and this case was exemplified by several situations I experienced in Manizales.

Some highly common examples included individuals and collectives having several accounts in the same social media platform, collectives with various accounts for online cloud storage with no specific purpose for each, other than backing up files, or people using Facebook or WhatsApp as a way to storage or keep record of content

shared. In all the former cases, finding a document shared, an image, an important part of a conversation or a contact - who had not been saved yet, was never a straightforward task for participants.

For instance, Gustavo (see vignette in Section 4.6.1) had multiple Facebook pages and accounts, at the point that he could not recall how many he had created. Some of these were still in use, and some he had not used for years. Each was created around a campaign linked to the numerous civic causes he had supported. Despite some of those initiatives being connected to larger common issues, such as democratic inclusion and participation, or to recognised socio-territorial movements, like San Jose for example, each initiative led by Gustavo had its own Facebook page or account. Moreover, he, and his possible collaborators, kept the new accounts fed and updated as long as possible, but eventually these were forgotten when new initiatives competed for their attention. People who had worked with Gustavo for years seemed confused and struggled to find an exact Facebook page in the search for crucial pictures, contacts or information. They appeared to have lost track of the numerous Facebook sites in relation to the various initiatives. During my year of digital ethnography, I noticed that one of Gustavo's Facebook accounts was increasingly gaining interest and followers. It was an account he run structured in the style of an online newspaper. In fact, the name of it '*La Matria*' was a word game in response to the name of the most popular newspaper in Manizales called '*La Patria*'.[25] Gustavo and a couple of supporters managed the page, which shared events and news from other organisations, political posts in response to current news, but also regularly published original notes (which was not a common use of Facebook found in other accounts in Manizales, during my fieldwork). Initially, I understood the efforts behind La Matria as a milestone in Gustavo's journey of experimenting with Facebook to get the most of it in support of local collective action. However, during the last month of my fieldwork Gustavo decided to change the name of his personal Facebook account to La Matria as well, which added another level of confusion to my reading of the experience.

---

[25] Patria in Spanish means nation, the country where someone was born. But it is a word closely linked to 'padre' (father). Thus Matria, despite it not being an existing word, is challenging the word Patria from a non-patriarchal feminist discourse. It also reflects on indigenous belief systems, where the earth and the nature are often represented with figure of mother, and it is hierarchal in the political structure of society.

6.5.2 Making the most of co-production by multiple parallel sources

In relation to the chaos innate to social organisation, I believe that there is also a missing opportunity in the apparent chaotic way of collaboration. This is not to say that I can point out the solution, but there are digital communities, working online, from which many lessons can be learnt in terms of making the most of multiple, parallel, and even remotely located collaborators. Shirky (2012) states both in a critical and optimistic way, that the most interesting thing that is happening on the Internet right now, which could be used to improve our societies, that is still not explored and commonly underestimated. He is talking about the way in which open-source software programmers found a system to collaborate with each other in order to build a product that collects all kind of inputs from hundreds of participants, in a horizontal structure of power, with records of when and by whom sections of coding were replaced or modified. With this observation, I am not implying that it is up to individuals in urban collectives to adopt a similar system of co-production from multiple sources and inputs, without the technical skills to reproduce that type of system. However, Shirky's observation serves as a reminder that there are many more digital opportunities for collaboration, participation and collective action beyond the uses that social media offers.

Furthermore, experiences from collective action integrating online and offline modes of engagement, such as the digital mapping from Pluriversos, Erika's digital workshops in San Jose (see vignette in section 4.6.4), or the RttC Workshop's planning, count as co-production practices with multiple sources. Moreover, such experiences might inform further development in this area, both, for urban collectives but also for government bodies interested in innovation around digital citizen participation.

6.5.3 Integrating the personal aspect into activism

Based on situations I found in the field, this reflection refers to the mix of interests – from very personal to strategic and organisational – that can be perceived in some of the Facebook accounts of collective members. From that, I want to highlight the potential of attaching personal dimensions to the way activist and collective leaders are portraying themselves and being seen by their networks. However, according to conversations with participants presenting such online profiles, in most of the cases

it is a situational result of the everyday use of their social media accounts, and it is not a mindful decision. For only two participants, once they conceived themselves as social leaders they decided to keep their profiles 'clean' from personal matters dedicating most of the space and interactions to matters related to the socio-territorial and struggles represented by their collectives. However, even in those cases the personal life of those participants would occasionally appear in the news feed section of Facebook, perhaps from being tagged in a family picture, or being congratulated by friends because of their birthday or a personal achievement. I imagine this could be the topic of a research project, trying to depict a more complex and human perception of key actors in urban contestation nowadays. However, I wonder whether the noisy atmosphere of social media can allow others to notice and dedicate attention to such situations. Despite this topic being out of the reach of my research scope, it was an important situation to highlight.

The movements' Facebook pages worked differently; the purpose was kept relatively strict to the collective interests avoiding personal or other type of content. Sometimes page organisers shared content from other collectives (i.e, to increase the visibility of an event invitation, or of a new case of injustice in the city) and sometimes also shared humour memes, and culture events, but almost always, these were also related to the movement's or collective's agenda.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter focused on research question RQ3: How do online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in the city? This matter was addressed using data and observations gathered from the numerous individuals and collectives participating in the socio-territorial movements studied in Manizales, while comparing these with elements from the literature.

Prior to providing a direct answer to the question, the chapter first drew attention to empirical evidence regarding digital media tools encountered in Manizales, highlighting common and particular uses, their incidence in the everyday life, the level of requirements for access and use, and common obstacles (Table 7). Moreover, Diagrams 1 to 5 presented supporting media (online and offline) used by the three socio-territorial movements in Manizales, and associated with purposes

around strategic organisation, structuring claims and proposals, communication of agendas, and activity management for collective action. Such diagrams emerged from my qualitative analysis in an effort to visualize how certain uses of media facilitated tasks linked to different purposes of collective action as a first approximation to answering research question RQ3. This analysis served to highlight distinctive features, for example, that Facebook, WhatsApp, email services and printed media were used frequently by the three socio-territorial movements and linked to the four purposes listed. On the other extreme, creating and maintaining websites seemed to be the least used tool by participants; a situation that can be linked with the increasing popularity, accessibility and versatility of Facebook pages.

Section 6.4 answered the research question by proposing five points showing how online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in Manizales. Such points discussed the potential of digital media, in addition to non-digital means, in the capacity of (a) connecting and visualizing citizen initiatives, (b) reaching out to promissory allies, (c) stimulating creative surplus for contestation, (d) adding a layer in collective action' search of legitimacy, and (e) knocking down technology from its pedestal. These points emerged in addition to literature regarding the roles of digital media for social movements (Cruz-Rodriguez, 2014), which stressed how digital media can help forming collective identities, more horizontal organisational structures, amplifying diffusion of actions, making communication more affordable and inclusive, and innovating in repertoires of action and the identification of political opportunities.

In order to complement the analysis about the potential of different modes of engagement encountered in Manizales, it is essential to highlight missing opportunities too. Therefore, in section 6.5, I presented reflections around situations perceived in Manizales, which showed local potential for possible transformation of collective action. These reflections discussed opportunities around improving internal organisation of collectives, making the most of co-production by multiple and parallel sources, and how the personal aspect on digital scenarios is increasingly integrated into forms of activism.

Moreover, the importance of identifying the most accessible and popular uses of digital media at the city scale, as well as the significance of offline media, physical

spaces for encounter and face-to-face meetings as irreplaceable elements by digital media, are crucial reflections that cut across the analysis in this chapter. These observations highlight the relevance of understanding first the potential of digital media in the everyday of heterogeneous citizenship, before idealising notions of digital innovation, which sometimes comes as the result of governmental boosterism in a regional atmosphere of competence based on international standards (as explored in Chapter 5).

Chapter 7. Power, legitimacy and transgressive citizenship for spatial justice

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to bring together crucial findings exposed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, into a discussion around broader and critical aspects regarding participation, collective action and socially just digital innovation. In this way, the chapter answers research question RQ4: What are the implications of the research for local landscapes of collective action and participation to transform debates about data justice and spatial justice? By 'implications' I mean the connotations of the research findings in the landscape of participation and collective action, the uses and potentials of digital media and the relationships between several actors in those scenarios.

To answer this question the discussion is presented in three sections, which respond to the analytical framework I presented in Chapter 2, as the conclusions of the literature review produced for the research. Thus, the first of the following sections looks into the unresolved conflict between power and interest in local democracy, spatial justice and digital innovation. The second section explores the local understandings and limitations of the Right to the City, through the exploration of epistemologies of the South and transgressive citizenship in the case of Manizales. The third section presents the possibilities and obstacles, found in the field, regarding the pursuit of legitimacy and the potential of expanding citizen participation in urban planning. Finally, the chapter ends with a short section presenting concluding thoughts and answering research question RQ4.

The following sections could be interpreted, not only as concluding discussions from this research, but as starting points for new potential research, with perspectives focused on the topics that these sections explore.

7.2 The conflict between power and interests in city planning, spatial justice and digital innovation.

Ideas around the concept of 'power' and its implications in urban and social constructions are widely discussed by recognised authors from a variety of fields in the social sciences like Foucault & Faubion (2002), Lefebvre (1996, 2003, 2014), Arnstein (1969) and Harvey (1973) among others. Moreover, in the work of authors such as Ercan et al. (2019), Castells & Himanen (eds. 2014), Shirky (2012) Castells (2009, 2016), Grewal (2008), Flyvbjerg (2002), and Thompson (2000), the discussions about power conflicts in urban societies take place in the digital media age, making online everyday life an intrinsic element to understand power relations in our society today. The nature of my research questions means this is a central point of debate. I focused on the exploration of power relations in a world where the digital is not a separable aspect, but an intertwined space where social and political life also take place.

The central problem around local democracy, digital innovation and the just development of the city have not been yet addressed by urban policies or the allocation of resources in Manizales. While local governments in Latin America take refuge in the assumption that digitalisation of communication can improve our cities, and the relations between government and citizens, per se, the conflict between power and interest remains unresolved. Following on Shirky's claim (2012), and using the case of Manizales to illustrate his point, people with power to experiment, innovate and transform citizen participation are generally not interested in doing so, and those who are interested and experimenting within their own limitations, have no legislative and political power to produce sustained change. Thus, this section explores this conflict between power and interest in the context of Manizales, regarding the dynamics I observed in local democracy, spatial justice movements and digital innovation.

> [Castells recognises the role of power as] *the key to understanding the primary source of social structuration and dynamics. I consider power relationships as the foundational relationships of society because they construct and shape the institutions and norms that regulate social life. Moreover, those social actors who exercise power construct the dominant*

institutions and organizations in any given society according to their own values and interests, in a configuration that is specific to each society—and which is derived from its history, geography, and culture. I understand power as the relational capacity that enables certain social actors to asymmetrically influence the decisions of other actors in ways that favour the empowered actors' will, interests, and values. (Castells, 2016:2)

Integrating Castells' thoughts into my experience in Manizales, I can say that the power to become and act as a social actor in the city is both, specifically constructed by the local context of history, culture and traditionally dominant institutions, and it is not necessarily fairly distributed. Furthermore, those with power over decision making in the city, consequently, influence the shape and future of it related to their interests and values (Arnstein, 1969). This does not necessarily mean that the interest of those in power cannot be a representation of common public interests that are socially, spatial, environmental and economically just, as it does not mean the opposite undoubtedly. It comes down to political will, among other elements such as governmental capacity, public resources and accountability, as the case of Manizales showed.

As presented in Chapter 4, Manizales has a political tradition of technocrats in power. It seems that attaining technical knowledge is synonymous with someone worthy of holding political power. This vision – rooted six decades ago in Rational Planning ideas (see section 2.2.2) - placed infrastructure, technology and efficiency on top of other crucial elements for urban development. This in turn, played against the improvement of social processes and citizen participation. From my experience in the field, I noticed among municipality employees a generalised preference of efficiency over participation, assuming these two as opposite qualities. Citizen participation is a recurrent element of government programs in Manizales, but it is limited (as explored in Chapter 5), and it seemed that the main motivation behind providing scenarios of participation was to be compliant with existing regulations and standards. Yet, despite the efforts of inclusion, teams of experts in the municipality were ultimately in charge of the most important decisions.

"Four years ago, the municipality called to a meeting with the community to talk about the POT. These were exercises of socialisation, mainly to tell

people things and to sign an attendance sheet, to leave record that the
community was consulted. Participation has turned into that, experts telling us
what they are doing, so we know that's what they are doing anyway."
(Participant interviewed, from a collective in Manizales, male in his 50s, when
describing participation in the city)

This reflects that local authorities had no political interest, or no institutional capacity to engage with the complexities that citizen participation, as a distribution of power, can bring to urban decision-making.

Moreover, the technocratic tradition of governments in the city tended to used technology, both for physical infrastructure and for digital innovation, as a flagship of exemplar public administration. It fits into the model of digital innovation that is transactional (i.e., making existing services available online), rather than relational, using new tools to develop relationships in innovative ways (Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016).The main problem with that situation is that more often than not, decisions were taken on technology for the sake of it, as a novelty addition to existing infrastructures, rather than responding to critical issues in the city. This was something I observed in various instances during my research and was explicitly shared as a concern by a number of participants, some of whom claimed that those decisions of technology investments were tainted by corruption and patronage. Among the most controversial examples, the excessive and millionaire investments in roads and traffic infrastructure that did not seem to solve mobility in the city. Sometimes, as in the case of San Jose, those highways were not finished or simply led back to old narrow streets. Another example was the construction of a section of an aerial cable that led nowhere and was shut down soon after its inauguration, or the attempt to consolidate an electronic card to unify public transport, which included the installation of machines in buses, that was rejected by both, users and transport companies, forcing authorities to remove the system shortly after it was launched. In addition, there were the cases of the call-centres, and the installation of the high-end centre for bio medical research BIOS, mentioned in Chapter 5, which reflected something else. In this case, the projects were not considered a 'failure', but the criticism was around the wrongly aimed efforts towards innovation that had little to do with existing socio-economic problems of Manizales' population. Instead, these were

arguably, a reflection of private economic and political interests from individuals and institutions, from which the public administrations in turn had benefited as well.

Another example can be found in this interview with a participant who is a lecturer in Informatics and Computer Sciences in Manizales:

"It's been said that Manizales is a virtual city, a city of knowledge, a Smart City, and I think it has not moved beyond a connected city. In 1999 the previously called Emtelsa [Public company for telecommunications] built three rings of optical fibre in Manizales [to create a unified system of libraries], but it was like a highway without cars. They struggled encouraging universities to create content and to connect the libraries, but even today, I need a permit letter to take a book from another university. Why? Because it is not all about technology, is about political will. So, yes! We could have had a unified system of libraries, since the technology was in place, but it never happened. In Barcelona it did work because the system was in place already, and technology arrived to strengthening it. That's how it's supposed to work." *(Female participant, PhD and lecturer, in her 50s)*

These examples, in addition to the detailed sub-cases explored in this research, bring the discussion back to the conflict between power (over city-making and local development) and the interests represented in urban development decisions.

When studying spatial justice and the right to a digital life, it is important to question the interests represented in governmental efforts around these two elements of urban life. As presented earlier, in Manizales, governmental efforts around social inclusion, participation and the improvement of the city as a city of knowledge and innovation did not transcend the rhetoric, missing expected goals in socio-economic transformation and, in some cases, increasing the gap between those 'undeserved' of urban development and the traditional groups who had benefited from the city.

7.2.1 Urban planning in whose interest?

In terms of citizen participation, Manizales was in the top 10 of the Colombian cities with best practices (El Tiempo, 2016; Interviews with representative from the Ministery of ICT, the Municipal Office for Online Government, and the Municipal

Press Office) however, the findings in this research demonstrated problems of exclusion, misrepresentation and a generalised disconnect between formalised participation and the very local practices of collective action. National institutions of government were in charge of evaluating and ranking municipalities, regarding citizen participation and other aspects that secure accountability, transparency and inclusion. Similarly, the non-governmental network called Ciudades Como Vamos gave annual results on surveys and analysis of the situations in Colombian municipalities, and among many variables they studied, it seemed that Manizales occupied the top positions in terms of citizen perception, participation and Social Progress (El Tiempo, 2016; RCCV, 2016). It is important to say that the sectors of society conforming the national network, as well as local chapters, were only a partial representation of the city. It usually included allies such as the Chambers of Commerce, private universities, one news agency, some national foundations working on poverty reduction and local development, the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), PNUD (United Nations Development Programme), the Social Progress Imperative (US-based non-profit best known for their multi-indicator Social Progress Index), and Findeter (national development bank for municipal and regional projects) (RCCV, n.a.). Regarding this network and the ways in which they promoted Manizales, some of my participants shared the concern that, from their perspective, it was not an honest representation of the socio-economic situations in Manizales. These participants mentioned that they had benefited from some of the local programs of the MCV (Manizales Como Vamos – the local chapter of the national network), but they believed that the surveys were showing massaged figures, hiding palpable realities while boosting the potential of the city to attract investment and external funding for local development projects. Their concern was beyond - what they referred to as - the questionable sources in which those survey reports were constructed, but stressing the detrimental implications of such exaggerated impression for socio-territorial movements that were contesting local spatial and environmental injustice. The implications could affect collective action inside and outside Manizales. Traditionally, people in Manizales were apathetic to political conflicts and proud to say they lived in one of the best cities in the country. Surveys from MCV only confirmed these views, which in turn could make citizens more indifferent to social and spatial injustice. Moreover, at national and international levels, such rendering of Manizales could make it harder for social movements to

gain external support, particularly when they had to compete for attention with movements from underprivileged regions in the country. It was in the interest of local authorities and some other institutions that Manizales was presented in the best possible way, and the local authorities used efforts around participation as flagships, despite their limited impacts in the city. Exploring ways to improve such impacts, and better connect to crucial struggles in the city, did not seem to be a primary, neither secondary, concern.

Nevertheless, through the building of the POT, the Planning Office in Manizales showed a commitment to participatory mechanisms, despite it being a long process of more than five years, whereby they encountered various obstacles. Some of these were consequences of the previously absent relation between the Planning Office and the broader society in Manizales.

> *[In 2013, we realised] that people didn't have much knowledge, they didn't know what the POT was, that was their first question. Citizens were not ready to respond to that call from the Municipality [about a POT's suggestions box]. Moreover, people mistook the POT with the Development Plan, a common problem even today. […], they assumed that the POT manages budget, and that the POT is to fix broken pavements and streets. That's the common perception. (Interviewee in charge of citizen participation for five years in the POT process. Female, in her 30s).*

After that experience, the Planning Office implemented two series of public meetings, one about thematic forums, and one called "*conversatorios*" (spaces for discussing previously defined topics). Before those, only representatives of key sectors were invited to the initial workshops. Among those invited were the Chamber of Construction, the Multi-sector Regional Committee, Chamber of Commerce, the Societies of Architects and Engineers, the Society of Public Improvements (oldest NGO in Manizales), senior town planners, the rectors from universities with chapters in Manizales, and the deans of faculties of Architecture and Civil Engineering. All the spaces, the workshops with experts and key representatives, as well as the forums and "*conversatorios*" kept being part of the process to design the elements of the POT. According to the participant who led the participatory processes for the POT, several ideas discussed and proposed by the community were taken into account for

the final document of the POT; a statement to which other participants from the collective SABPOT partially agreed. SABPOT representatives were active in the POT forums and "*conversatorios*", and were proud to say that because of their intervention, the section of the POT's vision was modified to integrate their ideas. However, this same collective, SABPOT, was originated alongside the POT design process as a way to contest, in their words, the limitations of the POT in terms of technical language, simplistic views over the territory and lack of commitment with social and cultural conditions, as well as the poor strategies to educate and integrate more citizens into urban planning matters.

This thesis argues that there seemed to be a problematic disconnect between the effort of planners and professionals in integrating citizens into the design of the POT, and those at the top of the decision-making pyramid in the city. On several occasions, those few at the top contradicted what the POT proposed with their actions, or accommodated changes on the document without participatory protocols to individual benefits or political favours. The change on land used in the case of Rio Blanco, from green belt to urban expansion, was a clear example of that. Another example was a last-minute decision to add another vast area outside the city as urban expansion, which was previously determined for low agricultural and recreational use, and in which local urban developers had been interested for years. This disconnect exemplifies my argument between the conflict of power and interest in a different scale; showing that the conflict is not only taking place between extremes in society - the marginal or excluded groups and the local authorities, but rather in the same institutions shaping the future of the city.

7.2.2 Digital innovation in whose interest?

As shown in this research, Manizales also presented problems of accessibility and appropriation of new digital technologies, despite its regional depiction of an innovative city. That is why it is important to question the interests represented in governmental efforts around digital innovation too.

For years, authors like McCullough (2005) and more recently Sassen (2015), and Horelli et al. (2015), have highlighted the social responsibilities of digital media in the construction of the city. Drawing from their work, there is a common call to

contemplate the potential impacts of digital technologies as improvement or detriment of inclusive processes of space-making. In other words, digital media, that is accessible and approachable even by poorest communities can potentially lead to positive innovative transformations, where technology finds its place closer to people's needs, responding to local particular conditions, as McCullough (2005) highlighted. On the other hand, the promotion of digital media as protagonist in the relations between citizens and government, in a city where vast numbers have limited or no-access to digital interactivity in their everyday is an endeavour that can certainly broaden the gap between those traditionally included and excluded. This was one of the central problems encountered during the research process.

From interviews with municipal officers working around digital participation and digital innovation, there was hardly any social responsibility associated to Municipal programmes on such areas. When asked about digital innovative programs oriented towards social or democratic local processes, municipal officers referred to projects concerning economic development, high-end research, academia and tourism. These fields were explicitly stated as primary aims of innovation efforts, according to documents and interviews with the Manizales' ICT Secretary, and Governance Secretary. These eventually could have positive impacts in social and democratic spheres in the city, but were not conceived based on critical urban problems present in socio-political and cultural conditions of Manizales citizenry.

Once again, similarly to the discussion about participation in Manizales, efforts from the municipality around digital innovation were insufficient in improving citizen engagement, as presented in chapter 5. Moreover, the interest of development in this field did not represent citizens' crucial needs of, producing results with limited or no impact in the socio-economic conditions for the vast majority of citizens. Additionally, outcomes and initiatives were used to boost the city's image, competing for external recognition and investment.

In contrast to the situation around citizen participation in urban planning, members of collective action did not seem too concerned about the lack of integration of digital innovation with social struggles in the city. Only a few participants highlighted problems in this area regarding the poor relation of municipal initiatives and the situation of marginal groups in the city (as explored in Chapter 5). Those few

participants, however, showed a potential step forward for urban collectives to challenge structures of power deciding over digital futures in Manizales. Nevertheless, in the meantime, urban struggles - socio-spatial injustice – emerged as the priority in collective action, while concerns about the digital remained secondary. In other words, urban collectives' main concern about the digital was not to claim control over or to participate in decision-making about digital innovation in the city, but rather to maximise the potential of the digital tools they could access, to support their agendas.

7.2.3 Redistribution of power in the interest of the common good

Data and spatial justice (both distributive and procedural justice), can only be achieved by finding a redistribution of power in the interest of the common good, in other words, a balance between power and interests. A better distribution of power that reflects the interests of those traditionally marginalised, can not only produce a just city, but it could also improve the relation between government and citizen groups. Creating a culture, or at least moments, of co-production of space and urban digital futures, opportunely dealing with the difference; with the many diverse conceptions of urban life ideals.

Moreover, if we explore that conflict between power and interest at higher levels where the Internet and popular platforms for social media get shaped, we would find that the results respond to the needs of corporations and governments (MacKinnon, 2012), which may, or may not, be interested in opening technology to support a meaningful transformation in democratic processes. The question about possibilities for citizen initiatives to impact spaces where the Internet is structured was outside the scope of this research. However, it is not a matter far from urban studies; rather it is closely related to the future of socio-territorial movements in the city.

7.3 Seeking the Right to the City through Transgressive Citizenship. Epistemological backgrounds and practices for contesting the city.

The stances of collectives contesting local planning in Manizales varied constantly in the quality of acting in insurgent, collaborative and transgressive ways. This, what seems a chaotic landscape of socio-territorial movements in the city, needs to be explored in order to understand the various meanings behind collective action, and

their possibilities for promoting urban transformation in a city that is supposedly inclusive and participatory.

The ambiguous relationship found in the field between collective action and the formality of participatory city-making, can be explained through Transgressive - rather than Insurgent citizenship (as explained in section 5.3). But, to understand these findings in its context, we first need to discuss issues regarding the RttC and the connection of the concept with the Epistemologies of the South (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Therefore, this section highlights influences in the discourses and everyday practices of citizens dissenting formal protocols and programs for city-making. The grounds to understanding and creating knowledge around active citizenship, in the case of Manizales, seemed to come from various sources such as local academics, and regional academic trends of thought, as well as more internationally known concepts like the Right to the City.

7.3.1 The Right to the City in context.

In Manizales, the concept of the Right to the City (RttC) was a natural part of the discourse in collective action. Urban collectives would commonly refer to ideas about the RttC, and some members mentioned having read Lefebvre and Harvey. This situation made the concept of the RttC as a confluence point linking ideas from the literature and observations from the field. Moreover, the RttC crosscuts discussions of participatory planning, activism and advocacy for spatial justice and Transgressive Citizenship. This context explains why the RttC has a crucial role in analysing the research findings in this thesis.

A common understanding of the RttC, extracted from the conversations I had with several members of those collectives, and that seemed to be in line with Harvey's work (2012, 2015), is that the RttC in their view, was not the right of citizens to make use of the city they live in, but it was rather about the right to change the city for the common good. Moreover, as explained in chapter 4, one of the sub-cases of study was the workshop 'The Right to the City – Manizales', in which several urban collectives concurred with the need of finding a moment of encounter with other collectives, who were acting in defence of the RttC from various perspectives. Thus, making the concept a common ground for possible articulations. Despite ordinary

frictions among some collectives, who had competed for attention or resources, or had different perspectives, spatial injustice in Manizales – understood in relation to land uses, public space, housing rights, neglected marginality, political exclusion and environmental right – proved to have a bonding effect, even if momentary, to share experiences and discuss alternatives for their participation in city-making. Some collectives found this type of encounter very relevant in their agendas and carried the idea beyond the workshop. For example, collectives in San Jose kept programming '*conversas*' in the Market Square, based on the similar principles from the workshop, but aimed at particular topics and with a more familiar language (i.e., "neighbourhood dialogues", "circle of women", "popular school"). In addition, the collective *Pluriversos* started working on the next version of the encounter of collective action in the city, around spatial justice and the RttC, and with that objective in mind, shared several documents and digital resources – academic and non-academic – on their website.

In Colombia, and Manizales, the term is also commonly used by the state. The RttC has suffered corruption and institutional co-opting, as referred in international literature explored in Chapter 2 (de Souza, 2010; Elden, 2014; Acebedo, 2014). In Colombia, as presented in Chapter 4, urban planning regulation frameworks and programs of governance were based on principles from the RttC. This would translate, in principle, into guaranties for a more just city, but in practice cities in Colombia keep struggling with significant problems of urban poverty, political corruption, inadequate management of public resources, housing affordability, etc. Following the discussion on the first section of this chapter about power and interest, it seems that despite good intentions and valuable work of professional teams integrating ideals around the RttC into national regulatory frameworks, it comes down to political will for such ideas to make a positive impact in urban life. Furthermore, the way in which the urban planning model is structured in Colombia responds to a neoliberal model of governance, in which the development of the city depends on the private market. Urban planning regulation states the social and environmental responsibility of the private sector, as well as the responsibility of the state around equal distribution of benefits and burdens, and the prevalence of the common interest over the private (Ley 388 de 1997). However, there is not specific clarification of the application of such responsibilities for the private market. Therefore, this situation represents the main conflict regarding using the concept of

the RttC into governmental frameworks under a neoliberal conception of development that, in practice, gives priority to private market interests over the common, and socially just, interests.

Moreover, another conflict found in the co-opting of the RttC term by government institution and regulatory frameworks, has to do with the possible negligence and discouragement of citizen participation. By which I mean that, eventually, collective action challenging urban planning decisions in the city struggle to use the discourse of the RttC against projects or programs that are a result of regulations, which were supposedly designed on the same principles of the RttC. Needless to say, this situation can also play in favour of social movements claiming that some of those principles are not being implemented or enforced by local authorities (as presented in section 7.3.3 about Transgressive Citizenship). However, given the vagueness in the regulations about practical implementations of social responsibilities of the private sector in building the city, the RttC ideas in such frameworks loose value in supporting civic contestation. Hence the conflictual situation, between collective action for spatial justice in a city, like Manizales, that claims to be acting based on the same principles demanded by citizens.

As exposed earlier, in this and previous chapters, the claim for the digital Right to the City, and the Right to the digital City, in Manizales were generally not as strong as the claim for spatial and environmental justice. However, some participants from academia, the private sector, and members of collectives, highlighted the existing inequality in access to information to support citizen participation, and the poor access to digital innovation opportunities for citizens outside privileged circles of Manizales' society. Moreover, small-scale strategies powered by some collectives in the city (i.e., interactive video mapping installations by Erika, or digital radio workshops in San Jose), demonstrated digital technology re-appropriation (Shaw and Graham, 2017), which could arguably escalate and integrate into other factors of collective action in the near future.

As explored in Chapters 4 and 6, local uses of digital media, in addition to traditional non-digital media, reinforced processes of collective re-appropriation of spaces in the city, installing new meanings in the minds of many, which is a point mentioned by Marcuse (2014) in his examination about the readings of the RttC in processes of

alternative occupation. In the cases of San Jose and Rio Blanco, collective action managed to install new meanings about spaces that previously were not in the map of urban concerns for the majority of people in Manizales. In San Jose, the Market Square and the park/food garden in Comunativa, and in Rio Blanco, the reservoir itself as well as the protection areas around it, were spaces that gained new meanings because of the practices of socio-territorial movements claiming spatial justice for those areas. It can therefore be argued that, digital media, being increasingly included in daily life can inform about local and 'humble' subsystems of significations, mentioned by Lefebvre (1996:152), that construct and modify an idea of city alien to urban ideologies discussed by urban planners and experts on the city.

7.3.2 Reacquiring the Right to the City through endogenous epistemologies.

From the socio-territorial movements studied in Manizales, I concluded that the language of collective action, and presumably its epistemological bases were strongly influenced by the discourse of the Latin American Critical Thinking (or *Pensamiento Critico Latinoamericano,* in Spanish). Recognized Latin American authors such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), Orlando Fals Borda (1984), Maria Cano, Carlos Walter Porto Gonzales, and Arturo Escobar[26] (2016) have proposed for the last decades a non-western approach to understand, and generate knowledge around the social-political and territorial movements in Latin America and the Global South. De Sousa Santos (2014) refers to this new approach as the epistemologies of the South, which is a concept that responds to the global need to find alternatives for approaching postcolonial and endogenous thinking in societies from Latin America and Africa, mainly. In Colombia, Fals Borda (1984), followed by Escobar (2016), talk about the concept of 'thinking-feeling' (*Senti-pensar*), which was frequently used by several members of the collectives in Manizales. Thinking-feeling was born as a reference to the ontology of indigenous and rural communities, in which the identity of a person cannot be understood independently of the others, their territory and the natural environment in their surroundings (Escobar, 2014). This idea has translated from indigenous groups to urban collectives, as seen in the case of Manizales. There, the term was also used as a countermeasure to traditional

---

[26] Arturo Escobar is a recognized anthropologist born in Manizales, now settled and teaching at the University of North Carolina.

western academic knowledge, which in their view, gives all attention to 'thinking' about an issue, disregarding the aspect of 'feeling'; how individuals feel about something - a space, a river, a park or a territory. Therefore, arguing that the two aspects, of thinking and feeling are inseparable to understand the importance of such elements for a community, and for their identity.

Another concept, derived from that relational approach of identity and knowledge building, and inspired by the Zapatist movement, is '*pluriversos*' (Pluriverse in English), "a world where many words fit" (Escobar, 2014:12). This term proposes to acknowledge and integrate the 'different' and the 'other' into the way spaces, situations and territories are understood, explaining that there are several universes of actors, elements, beliefs, cultures and socio-political protocols that need to be considered when approaching socio-territorial struggles in Latin America. Some participants in Manizales also used this term regularly. Moreover, one of the most active collectives in this research was called Pluriversos and it was formed by graduate and postgraduate students of anthropology, sociology, social work, and history in one of Manizales' public universities. On their website, mentioned also in Chapter 6, Pluriversos had a section to share documents, references and contacts. In it, the site for 'Bibliography' (Image 44) gave an example of the variety of interests, as well as cultural, political and academic bases that the collective propose as necessary to understand, and improve collective action in and beyond Manizales.
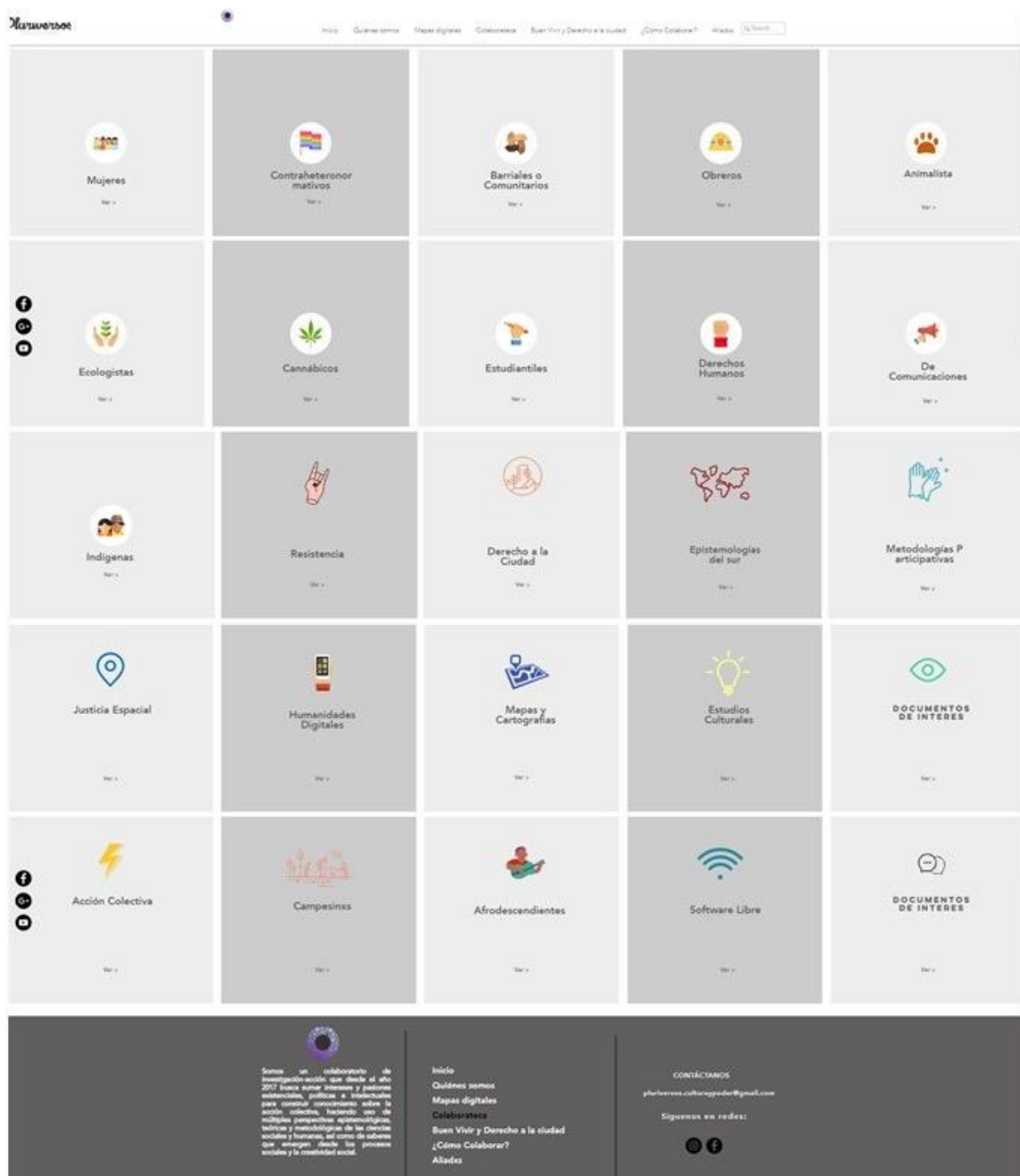
Image 44 Pluriversos' bibliography. Source:
https://www.colaboratoriodeaccioncolectiva.org/bibliografia

All the collectives that participated in this research had either members or close

supporters from academia; students or lecturers at local universities. The influence

of academia in collective action was notable and cannot be taken for granted even

though Manizales is a city of universities, where a high percentage of peoples'

livelihoods may be related to academic practices. As presented in section 5.3.1,

members of collective action carried multiple identities in their will to demonstrate.

Moreover, some were directly affected by the contested planning decisions, some

joined the movements in empathy, and some followed an academic interest. Due to

the variety of individual reasons behind collective action, in Manizales' case, it cannot be assumed that people in academia are implicitly a privileged circle and not affected by spatial justice. Arguably, that close connection – between academia and collective action – is partly responsible for the role that discourses such as the RttC, and the epistemologies of the South, have in the structures of socio-territorial movements in the city. In addition, alternative schemes of popular education, such as the ones promoted by Comunativa, and the international virtual seminars of Unitierra, made that link stronger, particularly to concepts associated with Latin American Critical Thinking and the Zapatista movement.

In the conversations that led to the design and production of the workshop about the RttC in Manizales, some participants would debate about the most appropriate language to use based on a conflict of concepts, which I did not understand at that moment. For example, while most of the participants would refer as the RttC being the main motivation and common ground between collectives in the city to get together, a few others would call for considering a different approach that reflected the 'thinking-feeling' of local territories; something on the lines of the 'right for the good living'. However, when this idea was explained, the rest of participants seemed to think it had the same essence and purpose from the original idea of structuring the event around the RttC. The 'good living' idea was then considered for the design of the second version of the workshop or encounter of collectives[27]. The strongest supporter of the idea about the 'good living', and against using the term the RttC, was an academic; a lecturer and director of an MSc in Education from the Diversity, with a PhD in Social Science. She belonged, both in academia and in practice, to national and international networks of the Latin American Critical Thinking, and participated in the three socio-territorial movements studied in this research. This situation supports and exemplifies my argument about the recurrent influence of academics and academic thinking on collective action dynamics in Manizales.

Furthermore, the ambiguity that characterized the cases of collective action studied in Manizales (presented in Chapter 5), was also reflected in the epistemology behind some of the roles and actions of these groups. For example, the majority did not

---

[27] Such event had not happened by the time I wrote this thesis. However, the idea had been discussed, and initially structured by a number of collectives, who participated in the first workshop and coordinated by Pluriversos.

seem concerned about strictly defining their motivations choosing from one of the earlier mentioned currents of thought (i.e., the Northern born RttC or the epistemologies of the South). Instead, most members used a combination of these and other concepts in their speech. In a similar way, collectives continuously switched stances, or political identities, between considering themselves in open resistance to government decisions and actions, and thinking of themselves as building bridges with authorities to promote change in their territories. It is important to highlight here, that both epistemological references, the RttC and the epistemologies of the South, promote – at various extents – resistance and insurgency in their discourses. However, as explored next, collective action in Manizales was not completely insurgent in practice, despite the ideas and theories that influenced their agendas.

7.3.3 Transgressive citizenship in place.

From my experience in the field, I consider urban contestation in Manizales as an exercise of 'transgressive citizenship' (Earle, 2012, 2017; also explored by Lopes de Souza, 2010 using different terminology) instead of one of complete insurgency.

This means that collective action recognized and used some governmental structures as legitimate means to support their agendas (i.e., urban planning regulation, law for citizen participation, or tools for political control), while also acting in open disagreement with local government programs, and developing alternative proposals in parallel to supply local needs. Lucy Earle (2017) presents the transgressive nature of citizenship, from her research in Sao Paulo, as a response of movements claiming the RttC, supported by the emancipatory potential of national regulations – in that case the City Statute and the 1988 constitution.

As presented in Chapter 2, and particularly in section 2.2.5, there is a tradition in the literature of highlighting the importance of, and advocating for, bottom-up city-making practices beyond the formally limited structures or urban planning (Lefebvre, 1996; Arnstein, 1969, Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Harvey, 2008; Watson, 2009; Soja, 2010; Miessen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2011; Marcuse, 2014; Ferilli et al., 2016; Sassen, 2015; Korn & Voida, 2015; Frediani & Cociña, 2019). In the tensions between collectives and local authorities, this set of literature usually frames insurgency as an

essential and common strategy. Similarly, literature about social movements in Latin America has promoted a generalized perception of insurgency as the main stance for collective action (Fals Borda, 1984; de Sousa Santos, 2014), which is also reflected in the exploration of urban cases, as presented by Holston (2008, 2009).

These examinations have led to critical readings of the roles, potentials and limitations of urban planning and management, especially in the cities of the Global South. Ultimately, such tradition of thinking has served as a perfect setting to recent works depicting a range of approaches in city contestation in between the extremes of law-abiding and pure insurgency. Some of these works have influenced this thesis (Lopes de Souza, 2010; Frediani & Cociña, 2019), and particularly Earle's work (2012, 2017) with her concept of 'Transgressive Citizenship'.

The reason why I consider the integration of this term crucial to understanding the dynamics observed of collective action in Manizales, is that the ambiguity of strategies to claim rights, connect to local authorities, and to make other sectors of society aware of their concerns around spatial justice, was showing something outside of the binary 'law-abiding or insurgent'. The case of Manizales presented a different approach when compared to the literature that considers insurgency as a key element for socio-territorial movements in the city; the ambiguity of approaches presented in chapter 4 meant collective action in Manizales should not be identified as entirely insurgent.

Possibly, due to the socio-political context in the city and the country (exposed in Chapter 4), and the influence of supporters from academia and other sectors, collective action in Manizales showed inconclusive approaches in promoting their agendas, in ways that seemed insurgent at times, but often sought integration and collaboration into decision-making and institutional channels for city-making. Arguably, the scale of action of social movements have an impact on the relationship of citizens with regulations and authorities. For example, as shown earlier, groups in Manizales were inspired by, and in some cases belonged to, larger scale movements or networks of movements (i.e., the connections of San Jose, and Rio Blanco with national movements of ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, or with the international network of Unitierra). Discourses coming from such larger organisations were mostly insurgent, by nature, since they existed to procure fundamental

transformations in power structures at national and international levels. However, on a local – and very local – scale collectives in Manizales demonstrated approaches aiming at producing change in specific urban planning actions, while supporting their claims on existing regulatory structures (as presented in section 5.3). The interest of transforming such structures around urban planning and regulations, was latent in the discourses of the collectives, but the struggles motivating contestation needed fast responses, therefore, the support on existing protocols of urban planning was usually a necessary strategy. Moreover, drawing on existing laws, using formal tools for participation and political control, and reaching out to influential contacts in government proved beneficial for collective action, at specific moments as shown in the sub-cases presented in Chapter 4.

Moreover, as explored in the next section, the urgency of some situations of spatial injustice in Manizales, required more than contestation and lobbying for an official solution; in numerous occasions, urban collectives acted in parallel to formal procedures to improve local situations by their own means. In other words, to fill gaps in the institutional ways of building a socially and spatially just city. Such alternative actions tended to be perceived as informal appropriations by many, for example the use of voids in San Jose to develop community gardening projects, but from Earle's work (2017), these can be understood as a transgressive and needed aspect of social movements claiming the RttC.

Practices of transgressive citizenship, however strategic or situational, materialise in the uses of digital media, in addition to non-digital. According to Gladwell and Shirky, people contesting the city use the Internet 'to play by different rules than incumbents' (2011:154). Social media understood as spaces for deliberation are not bound – yet – to governmental protocols of participation. This allows collective action to appropriate these spaces as much as the platform design admits them allowing them to promote their projects. Moreover, digital media applications designed around urban problems and the relation between citizens and government, might benefit from recognising government action – or regulation about citizen participation, instead of entirely neglecting these, to enable productive dialogues among diverse actors in the city (Korn & Voida, 2015). Manizales case did not show digital

applications of such kind, but the observation is still valuable for the future of the city, or contexts beyond this particular case.

Section 5.3.3 further explored the stances in which citizens from the socio-territorial movements sought the RttC through creative transgressive approaches, which is in dialogue with Earle's ideas (2012, 2017). In doing so, I presented how collectives acted sometimes in insurgent ways, sometimes playing by the rules in strategic moments, and frequently challenging participatory planning mechanisms through moments of creative provocation (see section 5.3.3). These characteristics of collective action, that surely go beyond Manizales and Latin America, have the potential to reframe relationships between local authorities and citizens contesting urban planning decisions. This possibility sets up the ground for the next section, calling for power redistribution in city-making and the recognition of the capacities of citizen groups in transforming the city, and expanding urban planning visions.

To conclude this section, in the everyday practices, collective action for spatial justice in Manizales reflected an exercise of transgressive citizenship, shifting their stance continuously and – arguably – strategically in between, and sometimes outside, the opposites of law-abiding and insurgency. Additionally, the motivations and ideological backgrounds showed a variety of influences and imaginaries about what 'the city' and 'spatial justice' should be, according to different collective interests and in the contexts of Manizales, Colombia and Latin America.

With this, I want to highlight that the case of Manizales showed how relevant the ideas behind the RttC are still today for collective action, challenging official rhetoric about inclusion, participation and social responsibilities of urban development (Lefebvre, 1996). Yet, the quality of citizenship observed in Manizales was transgressive (Earle, 2012, 2017) rather than purely insurgent, as literature from Latin American social movements tend to suggest (Holston 2008, 2009; Harvey, 2012). This argument recognises that the scale of priority actions and the political context in Manizales and Colombia could influence people's attitudes towards urban contestation stances.

7.4 Possibilities in the pursuit of legitimacy and expanding participation

In this section, I present a discussion around matters of the legitimacy of socio-territorial movements, the expanding of citizen participation in urban planning, and the potential of digital media in transforming those scenarios in the search of a more just and democratic production, and reproduction of space, based on Manizales' findings. Throughout this section, I aim to show how improving mechanism to secure the legitimacy of urban movements could lead to the expansion of participation in urban planning. In other words, it could lead to a development of the understanding and practices around citizen participation going beyond the limitations found in the city.

Legitimacy is a complex term that many authors in socio-political literature prefer to unpack or rename given the ambiguity of its possible meanings and connotations (Chi Kwok and Ngai Keung Chan, 2017; Haunss, 2007). With legitimacy, I refer to the sense in which social movements, or urban collectives contesting urban planning decisions to be more precise, are seen as a fitting influence, or actor in the construction of the city. In this sense, I found an alternative understanding of the term in Nancy Fraser work (1995) that closely reflected what I intuitively understood by the legitimacy of social demand, that is, without having an academic background in political studies. She talks about 'redistribution' and 'recognition'; redistribution of the socioeconomic structures as well as the democratic decision-making processes, and recognition of cultural injustice and diversity, particularly in defence of "those versions of the cultural politics of difference than can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality" (Fraser, 1995:69). Fraser explains that the distinction between these two categories is purely for analytical purposes, but in practice, these are inseparable. With this, I found the cases in Manizales could be used as examples of how recognition and redistribution are intertwined in the everyday, especially concerning urban planning struggles. Collective action in Manizales proved to be in need of recognition, as a collaborative counterpart in thinking and producing locally appropriated urban space, and at the same time, issues of redistribution – of resources and innovation, but mainly of power and interest in decision-making – were at the core of their socio-spatial demand.

In addition to the recognition and redistribution proposed by Fraser (1995), I believe 'integration' is another step that is necessary to include when thinking about transformation in citizen participation for urban planning. As explored in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, collective groups in Manizales went beyond demanding justice and showed their potential to co-produce alternative studies and proposals about urban problematics, in alliance with academia, third sector and national or international organisations. Moreover, the uses they gave to digital and social media – to complement non-digital media – reflected a better understanding of the local landscape of mass communication in the city, in comparison to the understanding perceived by local government on the same matters, addressing issues of inequality in access to technology and varied levels of digital literacy. It seems then that the city is in need not only to recognise, but also to integrate into their structures what is being done outside of hegemonic structures of urban managing and city making. Moreover, if the situation in Manizales revealed that the socio-territorial movements were gaining recognition, at some extents, and the national and local regulatory frameworks in place supported citizen participation, then the most logical question to explore is what is the problem with legitimacy in Manizales? More specifically, what are the obstacles in those much-needed processes of recognition, redistribution and integration in Manizales?

In the following subsections, I explore findings concerning recognition, and integration and redistribution. Finally, I present some concluding thoughts on the questions posed above.

7.4.1 Recognition

From Manizales' case, there are two crucial aspects coming from civic initiatives that need the recognition by city authorities, or bodies with power and interest in local transformation. One of these aspects deals with the recognition of mechanisms of collaboration and collective co-production. This also refers to recognising new or changing patterns in the ways collective action fights for spatial justice. Following the discussion presented in section 7.3, collective action in Manizales proved not to be purely insurgent, and falling out of the stereotypical activism – and its locally negative connotations, while showing an increasing awareness and appropriation of participatory and planning regulations to support their claims and proposals.

Moreover, this aspect relates as well to the productive connections seen in the field between socio-territorial movements with academia, and other external supporters including the third and private sector. The need for recognition about this aspect is linked with the findings presented in Chapter 5, about the relationship of limited interest between government initiatives and the everyday life of socio-territorial movements. One of the explanations proposed for such restricted relationships pointed out the different meanings around civic participation in the city, and how for the local government, 'citizen participation' implies a controlled exercise; initiated and managed by a body of authority in the city. Therefore, acknowledging that urban collectives are not only demanding and complaining against local authorities, but are also proposing alternatives and co-producing relevant information about local territories, with the support of academia and other sectors inside and outside Manizales, can be a first necessary step in opening possibilities for expanding awareness about the multiple forms of citizen participation.

The second aspect, in need of crucial recognition, deals with the gaps collective action is filling from government and planning limitations, which take place in the daily exchange between online and offline scenarios. The main contributions of collective action addressing the shortcomings of the municipality were found in two areas. One, towards building networks of collaboration among urban collectives and external organisations, and the second, towards educating citizens in marginal communities on issues such as urban planning, regulations for participation and the possibilities of digital media.

In this document, I had presented several examples about initiatives from the socio-territorial movements in Manizales, and many of those relate to either one or two of the functions mentioned above. A few examples dealing with the aim of building networks of civic collaboration include, among others, the initiative about mapping collective action in Manizales, comprising the building of a digital map (see section 6.4.1) as well as the process itself or regular meetings and exchanges of experience among different groups. This was a process also known as "*tejiendo colectivos*" (knitting collectives) in the words of several participants in Manizales, and made part of numerous activities and projects that had as a main or secondary goal, the purpose of finding common grounds between urban collectives contesting local

authorities – claiming the Right to the City in many forms. Additionally, the aim about educating communities on local democratic matters and digital technology in the everyday was seen in all the three socio-territorial movements. In the case of Luis and Raul in San Jose, for example, alternative education was one of their principles of action. They regularly made film-making seminars with local teenagers, a couple of digital radio workshops, and also had one experience of participatory video mapping coordinated by Erika's company. In all of those scenarios, participants had the chance to learn, experiment and develop creative skills that were not offered by public institutions in the city, with the facility of being developed locally and around topics rising from the particular situation of struggle in San Jose, after the macro-project. Additionally, other less digital but very educational exercises around theatre, music making, gardening and storytelling, were common practices in Comunativa and other collectives in San Jose.

Moreover, the constant efforts of the collective SABPOT, mainly encouraged by Gustavo, around educating Manizales' citizens on elements of urban and regional planning, were clear examples of how collective action was filling a gap in what should be an expected duty of public authorities in a supposedly participatory city. In other words, it is problematic and contradictory that a city like Manizales, claiming to be socially inclusive and participatory, did not have a program in place, not even an employee, in charge of explaining urban planning and instances of public participation in simple terms to larger audiences with various levels of education. These, in my view, should be the first logical steps in preparing and encouraging citizenships to take an active role in participating in urban planning discussions. Furthermore, in two interviews with participants working in the Planning and Press offices of the municipality, a common complaint about 'activists' or social movements in Manizales, was the lack of information those groups or individuals could have about how urban planning regulations 'really' work. This only reinforces the critical need for general education about urban planning matters, but also the need for recognising the labour that collectives like SABPOT are doing not only in favour of collective action, or 'activism' as commonly referred by public authorities, but to the benefit of a better informed citizen participation. The activities developed by SABPOT did not include many digital resources, mainly because their members were not that confident using digital media in their own daily routines. Also, they

stated that they find it much easier to work on large formats of printed maps, whiteboards, paper and markers during the activities where they explored issues about local and regional planning with various audiences. One of their target audience groups was secondary public school students (between 11 and 16 years old), and there was one school in San Jose, in which SABPOT members were already recognised and welcomed, after more than two years of working with students on extracurricular workshops about planning and mapping.

As mentioned earlier, in this example from SABPOT's initiative to educate people about urban planning, the digital component was not relevant mainly due to the personal preferences, available resources, digital skills of the members, and audience's preferences too. However, during the conversations and time I spent with them I noticed they were pleased when younger people – from schools with whom they were working, or from other collectives – proposed activities that included digital technologies, such as using open street maps or videos, interactive projections, etc. With this, I want to highlight that the recognition of educative efforts, like those observed from SABPOT, can easily develop as well into digital – and perhaps into more interactive – experiences, with the right support and advice. The crucial aspect here is not the technology, but the process of expanding the interest around urban planning matters into broader sections of the society, and digital inputs can come afterwards.

7.4.2 Integration and redistribution

Looking at the socio-territorial movements in Manizales, there was some level of recognition from different individuals or departments in the local government. For example, the *Personeria de Manizales*[28], recognised the value behind several activities and documents presented by the collectives in San Jose and Rio Blanco, and according to some participants, the *Personeria* was usually willing to lobby and open the dialogue with local authorities. Furthermore, in the case of Rio Blanco – more so than in San Jose, some public officers, and institutions of government outside Manizales, recognised the quality and relevance of the documents presented to support the negative effects that the housing project could bring to the natural

---

[28] A City's Personeria in Colombia, is a government body in charge of saving and promoting human rights, protecting public interest, and supervising the official conduct of public office holders.

reservoir. Additionally, in the case of San Jose, some of the collectives and leading members were presented – in different occasions – with local awards for civic and social contributions to their territories. All these levels of recognition can be seen to empower the legitimacy of collective civic claim, at various extents. However, despite the existence of such acknowledgment, there was no evidence of change in the protocols through which local authorities dealt with socio-spatial problems in the city. In other words, there was no reflective response to the acknowledged value of collective action. There was no evidence of governmental processes of redistribution or integration of good practices, from the various socio-territorial movements in the city.

This research leads to the question, who is in charge of integrating and structuring redistribution? In my view, the integration ultimately depends on local authorities, so that something new can be adopted in the institutionalised processes of thinking and developing the city. Because of the nature of this research, when talking about integration's responsibilities, I picture places like the Press office, the Urban Planning Department and the ICT Secretary of Manizales, in the first instances, in addition to the early mentioned *Personeria*. However, as presented in the following section, this change entails a transformation in the way to understand planning, not as a field in which participation can or cannot have a role, but as a city-making process made through participatory processes happening in the city, regardless of these being perceived as citizen generated or institutional initiatives (Frediani & Cociña, 2019). In that sense, academia and other supporters of collective action (i.e., private and third sector), could lobby for a change in the culture and practices associated with citizen participation.

In essence, the objectives behind the aspects in need of 'recognition', described in the previous section, fit perfectly with the objectives portrayed by Manizales municipality and their Government Plan 2016-2019, visioning Manizales as a socially inclusive, open, participative and digital innovative society, among other principles (Cardona, 2016). To that end, there appears to be no reason why beneficial aspects developed by collective action cannot be recognised and integrated into government practices in the city, other than conflicts of political and private interests that

counteract with the proposed Government Plan. This problem links back to the discussion of power and interest in section 7.2.

Socio-territorial movements in Manizales, as explored in Chapters 4 and 5, and in section 7.3, acted in response to spatial injustice, therefore contesting government decisions on urban development, but at the same time, these groups sought to participate in shaping the urban forms and imaginaries. Hence, they do not seem to be strictly interested in being politically recognised as opposition, and might welcome opportunities to collaborate with local institutions, if doing so represented an improvement of the injustice which they are fighting. This means that neither recognition alone, nor redistribution alone can satisfy the movements' struggles. They require both, recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1995:78), as well as integration in decision-making for urban planning.

7.4.3 Obstacles in the legitimacy of collective action

The findings in this research showed that collective action in Manizales developed and sustained productive links with academia, with international networks and national authorities as well. Through such connections, in conjunction with the creativity, organisational and communicative strategies associated with collective action in Manizales, the socio-territorial movements gained support from institutions that, in some cases, exerted political pressure over local government in support of civic claims. The case of Rio Blanco helped to demonstrate this point. Then, if these findings are a representation of certain possibilities for collective action to promote their claims and proposals, what is the problem with legitimacy in Manizales? What are the obstacles in those much-needed processes of recognition, redistribution and integration in the city? From my observations in Manizales, it seems that the problem lies in the way in which local authorities consider participation, and public opinion, as obstacles for governance. Perhaps in urban regulatory frameworks in place, like the POTs and the Territorial Development Law (Ley 388 de 1997), citizen participation is rated as valuable and indispensable for urban planning and regional development. However, from my experience of the fieldwork, it seemed that participatory scenarios were mostly assumed as a burden to local authorities. As explored in Chapter 5, there were interesting instances of invited participation

promoted by the Municipality and the Planning Office. Yet, those events were controlled and exceptional moments of limited participation.

Structures of urban administration and planning, in Manizales, have been established for decades under the premises of consensus around private and political interests. In such tradition of governance there seems to be no space for difference, particularly adding this to a traditionally conservative culture that denigrate contestation. The reluctance of the city to take place in, and reflect upon, open discussions about socio-spatial problems, is giving the message that there is no time to waste in public debates about matters that should be decided internally, by experts. Thus, it is showing the inability to co-produce development integrating conflicting views.

In an attempt to unpack probable reasons behind that inability of local government (that arguably, is not only affecting spatial justice in Manizales, but in many other cities in and out of Latin America), I present below, two elements found in my experience of the case study. Unsurprisingly, these elements are vastly studied in literature about citizen participation and spatial justice as principal obstacles.

The first element is the lack of institutional capacity within local government in Manizales, added to an external pressure for results that comply with international standards, for participation and innovation in this case, but broadly related to expected standards around Smart Cities and Social Progress Indexes. In a medium-sized city of the Global South, like Manizales, with limited resources for public administration, reaching national and international standards can imply attaining basic levels of commitment, particularly in terms of citizen participation, given that participation can be understood and employed in many different forms (as explored in Chapters 2 and 5). Therefore, despite an overused rhetoric around participation, and the possible good intentions of individuals and offices from the municipality, a transformation in existing protocols, and perceptions, of citizen participation runs counter existing limitations posed by resources, availability and capacity of employees, and time to comply with expected goals from established standards.

The second element is the historical prominence of private interests in the political decision-making systems in Manizales, which were unsubtly present in numerous

situations studied in the fieldwork. These examples were particularly visible around urban land uses and management (i.e., land use change, from green buffer to urban expansion, that started civic protests in Rio Blanco's movement), and around municipal decisions, offering economic benefits to particular industry sectors to promote investment in the city. An outcome of such municipal decisions to favour private interests, as presented in Chapter 5, was the sudden explosion of new call centres installed in Manizales, under a controversial city-model of knowledge and innovation. A local government with strong links to private companies, interested in promoting individual profit-oriented projects in the city, does not pay the necessary attention, or give enough space for considering citizens' opinions opposing the project in question. There could be spaces provided for 'expressing' contrapositions, and such spaces could be initiated either by government initiative or by civic demand. However, nothing else usually happens beyond the act of acknowledging a space for expressing opinions. The other two functions of the communicative deliberative systems, the functions of listening and reflecting, in which democracy is supposedly based, are not in place (Ercan et al., 2019). Therefore, neither the process of listening to new information and diverse perspectives, nor the adaptation of decision-making mechanisms that reflect upon the two previous functions, were in place in Manizales' municipality. Moreover, such functions, or spaces for transformation, will not be in place unless the local government assume a sincere mediating role, where the wellbeing of its citizenry, or the common good, takes precedence over private and individual interests (Watson, 2009; Harvey, 2012; de Sousa, 2006; Acebedo, 2014).

7.4.4 Expanding participation in city-making

The findings analysed from the case of Manizales, both, in terms of the landscape of digital media uses and the relations between collective action for spatial justice and local authorities, are added up to form a call for transformation. This implies, as explored before, the need for recognition, redistribution (Fraser, 1995) and integration of diverse collective processes of communication, organisation, co-production and innovation into the urban development; in ways that are culturally and politically accepted, if not institutionally supported - without co-opting, which could be the ideal scenario for a time-sustained transformation.

The local Planning Office seemed pleased in the ways they integrated citizen participation in their projects, similarly, the Government Secretary and the Press office appeared proud of the acknowledgements that the city received regarding participatory initiatives, as well as their good practices in social media opening up channels of communication with more citizens. Yet, citizen participation in Manizales – as an institutional initiative – remained momentary, restricted and controlled. Moreover, anything else outside institutional enterprise was mostly overlooked as activism, and in the best scenario, it was regarded as models of independent civic services, when urban collectives were filling a gap in aiding vulnerable groups in the city (i.e., the social work done by Luis and Ramon with the kids and teenagers from San Jose). Those efforts 'outside institutional initiatives' – despite having flaws in issues of representation, internal conflicts of power and interests, and levels of exclusion, tended to happen more frequently, in less restricted and controlled ways, and in forms that were closer related to the everyday of citizens traditionally secluded from decision-making processes in the city.

City-making is a fractured and conflicting process. This research found various different understandings and representations of citizen participation that hardly collaborate with each other's efforts. Furthermore, while the city's attention remained on aiming innovation towards elite clusters, the digital concerns of the city left unrecognised the innate capabilities of citizen collectives working within limited resources and skills. In other words, citizen resourcefulness and creativity were undermined. Therefore, citizen participation in city-making needs to expand to overcome such conflicting processes that could rather be based on similar principles, of social inclusion and local development, for example.

The link between digital innovation and collective action around socio-spatial justice is crucial when thinking of the expansion of participation in city-making, particularly, if digital innovation is reflecting upon local uses of digital media that is free and accessible, as well as the ways in which people are communicating, co-producing and self-organising using digital and non-digital strategies. Thinking on ways to improve that connection is beyond the scope of this research, however, earlier sections outlined key elements that can be critical for making a tailored solution for Manizales, but that could also relate to similar urban contexts. Furthermore, I believe

that there is serious potential to be discovered in embracing and valuing the chaos, both from participation and from the increasingly digitalised world today, while counteracting data commodification and claiming the Internet as a common good (Juris, 2012; Han, 2017; Robles & Cordona-Hernandez, 2018. See section 2.4.2). As Shirky (2012) suggests, exploring the potential of the chaotic collaboration, and translating that into other aspects of society that require transparency and coordination, is something that we still need to learn from the Internet, specifically from people working in open-source computer programming platforms such as GitHub[29], coordinating multiple and remote collaboration, in a supposedly inclusive and horizontal way. The idea is not to focus on the enterprise of GitHub itself, because as with other US based companies, there are allegations against this company regarding censorship and blocking developers from certain countries, following USA trade control laws (Hamed, 2019). What can be interesting to translate into urban planning, and the idea of expanding participation, is the way in which these systems operate among an apparent chaos of opinions, with little hierarchical controls and accepted rules on co-production respecting each-other's efforts. However, one thing is to coordinate a large group of programmers around a common goal of designing and improving the services of a software project – despite how complex it can be, and another, very different situation is to have an even larger group of people thinking about the best version of 'their' city, which implies a blurry common goal. I am not claiming that the solution, to a more representative and coordinated version of participatory planning, can be as simple as translating the way that platforms like GitHub operates (Image 45). Instead, I am arguing that expanding citizen participation needs to explore new protocols for welcoming co-production of urban forms and imaginaries, embracing the chaos of cities. Furthermore, suggestions for the design of such protocols might come from open-source collaborative systems already used for digital developers' communities.

---
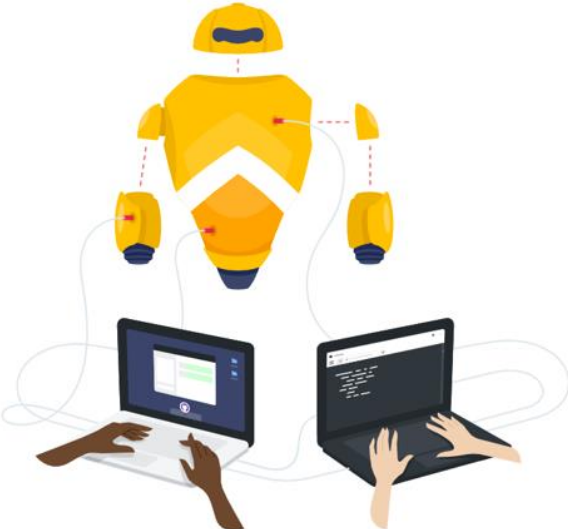
[29] GitHub is an open-source version control system, used for developers to download, modify and upload versions of specific software in an effective and coordinated manner. What makes it special for users is its capacity to keep versions stored and organised, welcoming volunteer's inputs in a coordinated manner, to improve the product. "Project revisions can be discussed publicly, so a mass of experts can contribute knowledge and collaborate to advance a project forward. Before the advent of GitHub, developers interested in contributing to a project would usually need to find some means of contacting the authors—probably by email—and then convince them that they can be trusted and their contribution is legit." (Brown, 2019)

Image 45 GitHub website. A better way to work together "through problems, move ideas forward, and learn from each other along the way" (source: github.com)

To conclude, I want to stress that the recognition of city-making by collective action needs to go beyond a reaffirmation of the value of independent forms of spatial appropriation, and to destabilise settled binary approaches towards urban transformations as formal or informal, planned or spontaneous, controlled or chaotic, digital or physical. Thus, to give space for the expansion of urban planning as a field aiming at restoring the balance between power and interest in decision-making over urban life, while dealing with and taking the most of the heterogeneity of factors and actors keen to participate in moulding the city.

> *"Who would not hope that the city becomes again what it was: the act and oeuvre of a complex thought? But one remains at the level of wish and aspiration if one does not determine an urban strategy." (Lefebvre, 1996:154)*

The urban strategy for our cities today needs to expand its understanding of participation in city-making, acknowledging and working from the complexity entailed by the diversity of interests, skills, technologies, social and political forces motivated by the common good.

7.5 Concluding thoughts

Looking at the research question RQ4: What are the research implications for local landscapes of collective action and participation to transform debates about data justice and spatial justice?, it is important to clarify that the aim of the question was to understand the possible impacts of what I found in the field in promoting transformations towards a more just, innovative and inclusive city.

The discussions presented in this chapter grouped implications in three categories, on the basis of the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2. The first section indicated that the situations studied in Manizales were manifestations of a long-existing conflict between power and interest around city-making, at various levels of civic and political society. The reason why this is important for the research is that it brings the attention back to the local socio-political contexts, which is essential to understand the possibilities and obstacles of digital innovation for citizen participation and collective action. Outcomes from urban projects in those areas are deeply dependent on local situations of political will and the distribution of power in city-making (Castells, 2016; Castells & Himanen, 2014; Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016).

Despite the insurgent essence present in the trends of thought and epistemologies identified behind collective action in Manizales, the citizenship exercised in the city demonstrated different approaches moving in and out of insurgency, and supporting their agendas in existing laws and formal structures of political control when required. Recognising processes of urban contestation in Manizales as more than insurgency and as an exercise of 'creative transgressive citizenship', as explored in the second section of this chapter, can develop new relationships between urban collectives and formal structures of planning the city. If explored in more detail, it could arguably demonstrate that improving the quality and delivery of regulatory frameworks for urban development and citizen participation, can empower positive participation of collective action in urban transformation. Moreover, collective action and urban activism needs to be understood within the possible epistemologies and trends of thinking influencing local socio-territorial movements (de Sousa Santos, 2014; Fals Borda, 1984; Escobar, 2014, 2016). In the case of Manizales, this showed an important influence from academics as members or supporters of collective action, both in terms of using the concept of the Right to the City, and in

adopting ideas and language from the epistemologies of the South (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Therefore, another implication from those relations explored in the research question RQ4 indicates a need for re-evaluating the traditional approach towards collective action in the city. Understanding such phenomenon through the lenses of 'transgressive citizenship', regional epistemologies and local political and cultural backgrounds should enrich and expand current debates about the Right to the City (Earle, 2012, 2017), as well as practical approaches towards data and spatial justice.

The third section was framed under a call to recognise what is outside of the hegemonic structures of power in urban society (Frediani & Cociña, 2019; Earle, 2012, 2017), understanding that what happens at the margins of urban development tells a story about what is going wrong with normative protocols in the city (I.e. urban regulation, formal participation, and digital innovation). The findings discussed in this section highlighted the need for recognition, redistribution and integration of practices and approaches found in collective action, into 'legitimate' ways of city-making. The heterogeneous nature, interests and actions from urban collectives, and the collaborative, creative and educative opportunities that digital media suggests, demonstrated the extents in which collective action is filling gaps in what the local government is failing to deliver. This section discussed elements required for thinking about the future of urban planning and citizen participation. The way to approach an expansion of urban planning, as a practice that embraces and makes the most of the chaos of participation – online and offline, requires recognition, redistribution and integration, as well as experimenting with systems of multiple collaboration and co-production of knowledge, that are locally appropriated and inclusive.

Chapter 8. Towards an online/offline understanding of urban collective action

8.1 Introduction

This thesis confirms the necessity of exploring online and offline worlds together when researching city futures, through looking at the connections between digital media uses in citizen participation and collective action. Using an ethnographic approach to the case of Manizales and three socio-territorial movements in the city, this thesis explored the possibilities and limitations of collective action and participation for spatial justice across both online and offline. The multiplicity of actors involved in the research, their roles and different perceptions about the topics studied gave this research a rich ground for analysis. Moreover, chapters 5, 6 and 7 discussed findings from Manizales in connection with international literature, taking the analysis beyond the case study and making it relatable to other contexts, particularly in the Global South.

Four research questions structured the design and analysis of this thesis:

Table 8 Research questions and chapters

Research Questions		Chapters
RQ1	How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to the everyday lives of social organisations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city?	5
RQ2	How do citizens mobilise - online and offline - towards spatial justice in a city self-proclaimed as democratic, inclusive, and innovative?	
RQ3	How do online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in the city?	6
RQ4	What are the implications of the research for local landscapes of collective action and participation to transform debates about data justice and spatial justice?	7

Section 8.2 shows the summary of findings presented in these chapters and the main arguments. Section 8.3 focuses on what I hope the future brings in the fields of

citizen participation and digital innovation regarding urban planning and spatial justice. Section 8.4 is a reflection on the research methodology and my participant observation experience in the online and offline of Manizales. Section 8.5 highlights this thesis' contribution to knowledge, and finally, section 8.6 presents possible new research directions.

8.2 Summary of findings and key arguments

Below are the research questions and the summary of the answers proposed as a way to present crucial findings and arguments.

RQ 1:

> How do governmental initiatives around citizen participation and digital innovation relate to the everyday lives of social organisations seeking a more inclusive way of planning and building the city?

As explored in the first section of Chapter 5, I argue that governmental initiatives in Manizales relate to matters around citizen participation and socially inclusive digital innovation reflecting 'limited interest'. The initiatives from the local authorities in Manizales concerning citizen participation and the integration of digital media in such processes are responding to national regulations, the urge to stand out nationally as a top city, and the private interests associated with such status - however they largely fail to connect with the everyday lives of citizens.

Moreover, initiatives on participation are restricted to specific moments and purposes which are always defined and controlled by the planning authorities. Thus, these can be determined as privileged moments of consensus-seeking deliberation, following Korn and Voida (2015) paradigms of political participation. Alternative views about the city that scrutinise current plans are generally taken as political opposition, and therefore hardly taken into account. Furthermore, digital innovation in Manizales, is primarily aimed at private business development, software assembly plants, high-end research and recently to tourism. The Municipality's most noticeable effort regarding digital media uses is the increasing and active presence in social media platforms, mainly in Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. However, the Municipality lacks institutional capacity in terms of qualified staff with exclusive dedication to deal

with the amount of information and new implicit challenges of social media platforms as participatory spaces (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014; Bryer, 2011).

There is a disconnect between the Municipality's initiatives to improve participation and everyday dynamics of social organisations seeking more inclusive ways to transform the city. The socio-territorial movements studied commonly recognised and used formal instances of citizen participation. However, they described participatory events run by the Municipality as merely informative, or for the purposes of socialising and gaining supporters for a specific project, rather than an open space for debate and collaborative creation.

This conflict between a city government praising citizen participation and the everyday evidence of their limited uses of citizen engagement and restricting views on participation can be explained as a legacy of Rational Planning in the institutional roots of planning in Colombia (as presented in section 2.2.2). Comprehensive Planning theory was behind the shaping of urban planning practice as a national governmental effort six decades ago. Despite the sector of planning evolving over time in Colombia, creating regulations and re-shaping its institutions to respond to local environmental and socio-economic challenges of the different regions in the country, technocracy – as a legacy of Comprehensive Planning – is still evident in the development plans and participatory approaches of governments in cities like Manizales. In such a view of the city, citizen participation can only play the role of a temporary requested situation, controlled by the municipality and with limited capacity to shape urban decision-making.

Additionally, local government and city planning seemed to perceive collective action mostly as activism, or as an antagonistic group, that uses spatial justice as an excuse for disguising party-political interests. However, such a claim about party-political interests was not reflected in what I experienced in Manizales. Most of the collectives seemed to act independently from existing political parties, even when sharing some political stances.

Some of the best examples of experimentation on digital innovation and participation in Manizales seem to be happening in scenarios around art collectives and digital technology labs, usually promoted by young professionals like Erika (Chapter 4),

who are concerned about placing the possibilities of digital technology for the use of local social issues in the city. On the other hand, universities and local authorities seem to operate under long-established institutional structures, restricting the sharing of spaces, knowledge and ideas under their institutional rules. Although these institutions profess to be socially concerned and call for inclusion and equality, their operation procedures tend to hamper such ideals, constraining innovation and collaboration around elite circles who are already benefitting from their service (i.e., students and local industries). University students and academics, however, play an influential role as supporters, collaborators and sometimes as members of collective action in Manizales (as shown in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

RQ 2:

> How do citizens mobilise - online and offline - towards spatial justice in a city self-proclaimed as democratic, inclusive, and innovative?

The practices of collective action studied in Manizales showed an ambiguous relationship with formal mechanisms of citizen participation; recognising and using some of them while dissenting from traditional protocols of city-making. Collective action, in this case, was not entirely insurgent, which was a finding that contradicted my initial assumption based on the literature on Latin American social movement's (O'Donnell, 1999; Holston, 2008). Thus, my argument is that collective action for spatial justice in Manizales exemplifies what Earle (2012, 2017) refers to as 'transgressive citizenship'.

In "Transgressive Citizenship', social movements contesting Rational Planning practices support their projects and requests on existing regulation, whilst acting in informal or insubordinate ways too, in the name of spatial justice. In the case studied by Earle (2012, 2017) in Brazil, as well in the Colombian case, land-use regulations were designed reflecting principles from the RttC, and social movements in the city recognise this fact to make their requests more forceful, while making use of formal mechanisms and spaces of participation and political control.

Transgressive Citizenship is better understood as situated within literature exploring different approaches of citizen contestation with and beyond insurgent strategies, recognising the complexities of social networks and the possibilities of social capital

around healthier distribution of power in participatory processes in the city (Arnstein, 1969; Hillier, 2000), as presented in Chapter 2.

Moreover, the Manizales case adds an element of creativity to Earle's concept, which is why I presented it as 'creative transgressive citizenship'. I defined creative transgressive citizenship as having three stances, between insurgency and collaboration, with examples from the field. I called these stances as (a) insurgent stances, (b) playing by the rules, and (c) creative provocation.

The study of the local socio-political context was crucial to answering this research question. The findings exposed how the recent history of violence and conflict in Colombia still have impacts on political participation and on the stances behind citizen participation and collective action. Moreover, the close connection between academia and the socio-territorial movements in Manizales showed the influence of Latin American Critical Thinking in shaping discourses and agendas of contestation. Such influence, which I could appreciate in the everyday life of collectives, seemed to be reinforced not only by members from academia but also by national and Latin American links with other forms of collective action.

The case of Manizales, and particularly the workshop 'the Right to the City – Manizales' served to illustrate how 'the city' (as a concern) became a common ground for collective action (Soja, 2010); a topic in which several groups representing several identities and struggles in the city could coincide.

RQ 3:

> How do online and offline modes of engagement structure and transform opportunities of collective action in the city?

This research showed that specific uses of digital media were transforming practices of collective action in the city while also drawing attention to limitations and local possibilities too. The findings analysed in Chapter 6 demonstrated that digital media was used to (1) enhance the mapping and visualising of collective action in the city, (2) gain attention and support from strategic allies, (3) stimulate creativity in producing content, (4) potentially add a layer in the pursuit of legitimacy, and (5) place technology closer to the needs of marginal communities. Alongside answering

the research question, the findings also highlighted missing opportunities for digital media uses in improving the internal organisation of collective action, taking advantage of the presumed chaos of online co-production, and integrating new personal dimensions into activism.

Moreover, as a general premise regarding RQ3, digital media impacts in collective action need to be critical examined regarding their implications in improving or hindering collective action, as alternative forms of organisation for city-making. For years, authors working around Civic Media such as McCullough (2005), Milan (2013) Rodriguez et. Al (2014), Sassen (2015), Horelli et al. (2015), Vlachokyriakos et al. (2016), Gordon and Mihailidis (2016), Tufekci (2017), Mihailidis (2019) have highlighted the social responsibilities of digital media in the construction of the city. Drawing from their work, there is a call to contemplate the potential impacts of digital technologies as either improving or detrimental to inclusive processes of city-making. In other words, digital media that is accessible and approachable even by the most impoverished communities can potentially lead to positive, innovative transformations, where technology finds its place closer to people's needs and is responsive to particular local conditions (McCullough, 2005). It is also important to acknowledge the significance of simple non-digital media in collective action at neighbourhood and city scales - such as megaphone, printed leaflets and posters, as the Manizales' case showed. The promotion of digital media as a protagonist in the relations between citizens and government, in a city where vast numbers have limited or no access to digital interactivity in their every day, is an endeavour that can undoubtedly broaden the gap between those traditionally included and excluded (Pinzon Cardona, 2021).

RQ 4:

> What are the implications of the research for local landscapes of collective action and participation to transform debates about data justice and spatial justice?

Following the analytical framework categories established in Chapter 2, Chapter 7 presented the implications of the research divided into three groups, discussing

findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 with broader aspects of the literature around citizen participation, collective action and civic media.

The first implication comes from discussing the conflict between power and interests around city-making actors, highlighting that understanding local socio-political contexts is essential to appreciate limitations and possibilities of digital innovation for citizen participation and collective action. The case of Manizales helped to exemplify how spatial justice and digital rights in the city ultimately depend on political will and distribution of power in city-making.

The second group of implications value the recognition of contestation strategies beyond insurgency in collective action, in this particular case as Transgressive Citizenship (Earle 2012, 2017). Opening the spectrum to in-between and beyond the binary of law-abiding and insurgency, should serve to transform relationships between groups contesting the city and planning authorities. Doing so would also enrich academic and practical approaches around the Right to the City and citizens' digital rights. Influential local and regional epistemologies and the roles of academia are key in understanding local socio-political dynamics and re-evaluating traditional approaches to collective action.

The findings discussed in the last section of Chapter 7, stressed the need for recognition, redistribution and integration of city-making practices promoted by collective action. Consequently, when thinking about the evolution and expansion of urban planning, there is a need to discuss collective action in the city as a legitimate process of city-making. As the Manizales case demonstrated, socio-territorial movements in the city went beyond demonstrating. In an exercise of Transgressive Citizenship, socio territorial movements also fulfilled gaps of services expected from the government such as providing public recreational space and educating publics about urban planning instruments. Moreover, the expansion of urban planning needs to find mechanisms to embrace the chaos of participation – online and offline – to make the most of the collaborative and co-productive potential inherent to the numerous ways in which people daily discuss and transform their cities.

8.3 Hopes for the future of participation and digital innovation for the city.

Citizen participation and digital innovation in cities are fields in development, receiving increasing attention from the public sector, academia and the third and private sector too. It is essential to imagine situations in which these two fields can work together to benefit the city; appropriating technology in realistic ways and considering marginal conditions of access and digital literacy at city scales (Gordon & Mihailidis, 2016; Shaw & Graham, 2017; Foth et al., 2015). In that scenario, innovation needs to be understood beyond city branding and boosterism, aiming towards solving internal conflicts around citizen participation, spatial justice and the communication among collective action with institutions supporting participation and the government.

Small and medium cities in the Global South need to secure funds and institutional resources to utilise the collaborative opportunity inherent to social media, aside from procuring a strong presence on social media platforms. Manizales' experience suggested that social media activity from the local government was encouraged to increase competitiveness and gain recognition among municipal administrations in the country. Additionally, local governments at the city scale should improve institutional capacity to have positions that exclusively deal with communication through digital media. Ideally, this would allow opportunities for experimenting and innovating towards local appropriations of accessible new media technologies in order to improve citizen participation.

As highlighted by interviews with public officers in Manizales, a perceived limitation to participation is associated with the lack of information and technical knowledge about urban planning instruments. Bearing in mind that this situation is common in other contexts beyond Manizales and Latin America, local governments should assume the role of educating citizens about urban planning and participatory mechanisms at school. This is something that the Manizales' collective SABPOT was doing on their own account, at the extent of their capacities, working mostly with two grades of primary and secondary in a school in San Jose. Collective endeavours like these serve as examples for municipalities of explaining urban planning and participation in simple and affordable ways.

Ideally, the cities of the future would be built upon citizen participation that encompasses much more meanings and forms than what is currently understood as formal types of participation. Participation in practice needs to move beyond the restrictions of established formal protocols and instances that are initiated and controlled by authorities (De Souza, 2006; Watson, 2009; Korn & Voida, 2015; Frediani & Cociña, 2019).

8.4 Reflections on research methods

This thesis shows the relevance of studying a city that is not a role model nor the opposite, rather a case like Manizales; a medium-size city in the Global South, competing for attention and recognition in national and regional spheres of neoliberal and democratic governance (Watson, 2006). Manizales is a city that seemed to be performing well and making efforts to keep up with standards of citizen participation and digital progress. However, it was also a city with significant limitations in the deployment of governmental initiatives, while also showing the potential of collective action and communicative strategies to impact planning and decision-making structures shaping the city. Particular situations in the case of Manizales responded to local contexts – with political, environmental, cultural, socio-economic, and epistemological influences. Nevertheless, the possibilities encountered in the case, as well as the struggles and alternative responses of collective action, are potentially similar to those in many other medium-sized cities in Latin America, the Global South and beyond.

The importance of studying local situations from various perspectives and the links among them were crucial aspects that encouraged this research design. Such perspectives included those from government programmes, citizens initiatives, academic influences on participation, collective action and innovative digital exercises in Manizales. In that sense, participant observation became critical to get an approximation to everyday life around citizen participation and spatial justice in Manizales. Interviews were a key source of information too and a way to approach new contacts, particularly in the Municipality, MinTIC and academia. The analysis presented in this thesis would not have been possible, however, without an ethnographic approach in between the offline and online which allowed me to get closer to collective action and inside crucial processes and conversations exposing

the information needed to answer the research questions. Thus, the inductive and immersive ethnographic exercise was essential to generate knowledge from the field and to discuss and contribute to debates on citizen participation, advocacy, collective action and civic media for spatial justice.

The ethnographic approach came with some challenges too. Building rapport came easier than I had imagined, despite being a delicate process that required good communication and openness. However, knowing when to stop chasing information, and how much to get involved in the situations during fieldwork were two of the most challenging aspects of my ethnographic experience. Gladly, both of these issues were timely managed through self-reflecting and evaluating progress during fieldwork (Pink, 2016; Postill & Pink, 2012; Rose, 1990; Kellett, 2011). Regular communication with my supervisors during this period also helped me in making important decisions about such fieldwork challenges.

Finding a balance between collecting valuable data and collaborating with the collectives in the field was a persisting challenge during fieldwork. Participants in San Jose had a common complaint about university students using San Jose's situation for academic purposes without offering something in return (i.e., supporting or participating in community-led activities). They referred to those cases as 'academic vampires'. Fearing to be seen as an academic vampire, I made an effort to collaborate with the collectives I contacted, within ethical and practical boundaries suggested by my position as a PhD researcher. However, such limits were not always clear. A couple of times, I felt overwhelmed by many scheduled commitments, doubting how meaningful some of these could be for my research. Ultimately, I had to kindly pull myself out of some commitments to give priority to other more relevant ones, such as my participation in the design and delivery of the RttC Workshop in Manizales. This was also a situation in which my participation was not initially intended, but subsequently turned into an essential element for my research. As presented in section 3.3.3, the preparation of the RttC Workshop was a research opportunity guided by Action Research (AR) elements adjusted to the normal limitations of time and resources in doctoral research. Such AR elements were reflected in three conditions of this research: (a) a commitment within complex social and cultural contexts to find opportunities for transformation, (b) the need for

localised explorations having Manizales and the socio-territorial movements as context, and (c) the aim for the design and production of the Workshop to be an equitable, democratic, liberating and enhancing experience for all participants involved. In the end, taking an active role in the production of the Workshop was a memorable experience and an approximation to the prospects, challenges and opportunities of conducting AR in the future.

Regarding digital media as a topic and a method in this research, it was crucial to keep the focus on the relational aspects that the uses of digital media bring to light (Vlachokyriakos et al., 2016). Therefore, the attention was placed first in the political, social and cultural phenomena observed and not in the technology itself (i.e. social media platforms). Moreover, researchers studying or using digital media need to be aware that it can become another layer of exclusion, particularly in societies with issues around digital access and illiteracy. After considering possible methodological problems associated with digital media, it is important to highlight that in this case, it demonstrated to be a broad scene to complement the experiences of everyday life in Manizales. Conversations and plans from the socio-territorial movements evolved between the online and offline spaces of collective action, sometimes without much strategic thinking behind them. As explored in Chapter 5 and 6, there are specific differences in the nature of communication and co-production of information when collectives are working online or offline. However, those constructions move daily and even unpredictably between real-life meetings and online channels, which makes it unnatural to study collective action in one scenario independently from the other, since they are shown to be intertwined in everyday life. Therefore, we as researchers need to re-evaluate the supposed separation of online and offline as scenarios for social exchange and co-production of knowledge.

Doing participant observation, including online spaces, comes with challenges about the organisation of information and the amount of data collected. The use of online platforms for collecting data, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, in addition to blogs, websites, online newspapers and email exchanges, increases the amount of information researchers can access. Therefore, it demands clear categories for discerning between the data that is indispensable from the one that is supplementary. Early in my research, these categories were not as straightforward

as they later became. Consequently, I took more screenshots and notes from online resources than I ended up using for my analysis.

Moreover, it is hard for the researcher to take distance from the field when the field is one click away, instead of miles away (Pink et al., 2016). Leaving Manizales, to return to Newcastle did not put an end to my fieldwork. Several conversations and events remained to produce relevant information for months to come afterwards. Moreover, I kept being a member of the WhatsApp chat groups, and the Facebook page for the RttC Workshop even after I stopped collecting data, although assuming mostly a passive role. Months afterwards, I left three of the groups. However, I remained in the WhatsApp and Facebook groups about the RttC Workshop, following a personal interest in the initiatives discussed in these groups.

When it comes to working with social media, it is crucial to remind ourselves that it rapidly evolves and the ethics behind the most popular platforms are frequently under scrutiny, which are issues that can result in unexpected challenges for a researcher. Data commodification is inherent to the use of social media, thus it is important to keep this in mind when using it as a research tool, particularly with participants from vulnerable groups. As a way to counteract this, I only used social media that was already highly used by participants in the field, and did not ask people to create accounts or use platforms that were new to them. Moreover, I shared my concerns about data commodification and corporations mining and labelling participants' data from social media. However, they seemed resigned – rather than happy – with their choices, feeling that social media corporations and their policies was a problem far beyond their possible battles.

Furthermore, using social media in research can impact how researchers use their personal accounts too. In my case, I changed the use of my social media profiles during and after the research. My profiles on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as my WhatsApp account, became visible for several people in various collectives and institutions in Manizales. Using social media in research opens a double-side display, not only the participants became visible to me as the researcher, letting me see what they shared from their personal life and opinions online, but I also became visible for them. That made me feel increasingly conscious

over the research period about the type of content I decided to share, or not, in my online profiles.

Consequently, this exercise changed my online persona to be more reserved and discerning about the content shared. However, I do not regret the ethical choice of using my personal profiles in Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, instead of new profiles tailored for doing the research, as I did in the case of Twitter. Letting participants see me too allowed for a prompt trust-building experience, which was needed for the purposes and time restrictions of my fieldwork. Moreover, the experience of having a new Twitter account for the research did not prove as beneficial as I intended it to be, since I ended up using my personal account to re-tweet content from the research account to increase reach and impact of posts.

There is a lack of literature and examples about visualisation of qualitative data analysis from digital media. Bearing that in mind, I produced the diagrams presented in chapters 4 and 6 as visual devices to summarise my observations. Usually diagrams of this type, such as bubble diagrams and fluvial diagrams, tend to be used in quantitative analysis. However, I found these helpful to support my analysis, understanding its limitations and explaining to the reader what the diagrams were showing.

Finally, it is essential to maintain a critical approach to social media to avoid romanticising it as an archetype of freedom and autonomy. Findings in this research showed the potential of using social and digital media to improve communicative and organisational structures of collective action. While the expressive function proper to deliberative communication systems (Ercan et al., 2019) can be amplified in social media, functions of listening and reflecting are rarely encountered and challenging to evaluate in social media. In other words, local collective action causes can express their needs and proposals in multiple ways, broadcasting and gaining allies in influential circles, despite having hardly any impact on their communication with local authorities. The many voices and messages published in social media, still need a receiver end with the will to listen and reflect, therefore taking such messages into account in decision-making processes.

8.5 Contribution to knowledge

Authors such as Foth et al. (2015, 2011), Hemmersam et al. (2015), Bugs (2014), Horelli et al. (2015), Messeter (2015) and Bonson et al. (2012) agree on the need for more empirical research about impacts of new digital media in democracy and participation at city scale. Therefore, the empirical work presented in this thesis, bounded by the specific time, political and geographical context of my research, is in itself a contribution to the studies of participation and collective action at a city scale. My thesis provided a unique analysis using Manizales as a case study, three socio-territorial movements in the city as sub-cases of study, and the links among formalised citizen participation, collective action and digital media uses. Situations in Manizales were analysed looking for limitations and opportunities of city-making in collaborative, socially inclusive and spatially just ways. Furthermore, the case of Manizales presented circumstances that makes it relatable to contexts beyond Latin America and the Global South. For example, Manizales is a medium-sized city, regionally competitive, with what appears as a promising socio-political landscape for citizen participation and digital innovation, which clashes daily with the legacy of Rational Planning still tangible in institutional structures of planning, the strength of representative democracy, and in the technocratic view associated with progress and development in the city.

Additionally, this thesis provided two specific contributions to theoretical discussions, and one to methodological approaches. The following points present an overview of such contributions.

The first is a contribution that adds to the work of Earle (2012, 2017), providing a case analysis that exemplifies her argument of social movements approaching the RttC through 'transgressive citizenship', rather than insurgent citizenship (Holston, 2008). Adding to the tradition of debates in the literature that contest the limited or missing role of participation in Rational Planning practices (Lefebvre, 1996; Arnstein, 1969, Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Harvey, 2008; Watson, 2009; Soja, 2010; Miessen, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2011; Marcuse, 2014; Ferilli et al., 2016; Sassen, 2015), and recognising the complexity of strategies mobilised by socio-territorial movements claiming the RttC. Earle (2012, 2017) proposes that social movements in the city can make use of existing regulation as part of their strategy, whilst maintaining a

challenging and sometimes insurgent approach. That mix of stances is representative of 'transgressive citizenship' (Earle 2012, 2017), sometimes neglecting the State – through transgressive acts – and sometimes recognising the political structures of power by demanding the accomplishment of rights stated by laws.

Citizenship in the case of Manizales illustrates an alternative to the traditionally associated view of collective action in Latin America rooted in insurgency, such as the one proposed by Holston (2008) and O'Donnell (1999). This is why Earle's work related more closely to the findings from the field. The analysis of collective action in Manizales provided an example of transgressive, instead of purely insurgent citizenship. Moreover, collective action in Manizales highlights the importance of creativity for contestation through the uses of various media platforms and strategies, shifting between formal and informal protocols, while integrating artistic expressions to their projects, activities and communications, sometimes as a more welcoming format to people avoiding political confrontations, but sometimes as a mechanism to challenge formal spaces and language in city participation for planning. Contributing to the work of Earle (2012, 2017) I analysed such observations under the name of 'Creative Transgressive Citizenship' (as presented in section 5.3.3). Reflections from these experiences were gathered in three points described as (a) insurgent stances, (b) playing by the rules, and (c) creative provocation. Thus, the analysis in these points draw and build on Earle's concept of 'transgressive citizenship'.

The second is a contribution to current discussions about collective action, and particularly to the framing of research in that field. Throughout chapters 3 to 7 I stressed the importance of addressing social interactions in collective action as continuum processes shifting between online and offline spaces. Identifying and acknowledging differences in habits and limitations of both online and offline spaces was necessary for my analysis. However, fieldwork experiences allowed me to understand roles of digital media as complements of offline media and spaces for collective action. I consider that such reflection contributes to framing new research in the field of collective action, so that the core remains at the social interactions and not at the new media platforms just for the sake of it. Moreover, this research

encountered particular relations between online and offline modes of engagement in Manizales, in which the relevance of the physical face-to-face encounters remained crucial for the movements and were considered irreplaceable by digital means. Nevertheless, research exploring local contexts beyond Manizales might find different balances and particularities in the relations between online and offline modes of engagement for collective action. This highlights the need for understanding possibilities of digital media – in addition to offline traditional media – for collective action at city scales while avoiding generalisations of its transformative potential.

The third contribution adds to methodological approaches about conducting ethnography using online resources and social media. Despite literature from the last decade regarding digital ethnography, such as the work of Pink et al. (2016), Postill and Pink (2012), Kozinets (2015), and Miller (2011, 2020), there is still a need for literature about methodology and empirical studies using ethnographic approaches online. In that sense, some reflections from my methodology contribute to the field of digital ethnography for urban studies. For example, my experience showed that gaining early access to social media groups can be essential to practice participant observation even after leaving the field (the city in this case). In my case, being part of key WhatsApp groups and helping to manage a Facebook page became vital spaces to conduct digital ethnography as a prolonged exercise of over a year, despite my fieldwork in Manizales lasting five months. Also, my reflections highlighted possibilities and challenges associated with using personal or new social media profiles while conducting digital ethnography. Although such reflections responded to an individual exercise bounded by contextual circumstances, I see these as relevant contributions for Urban Studies and Social Sciences today, in times when social interactions can get periodically restricted to online scenarios.[30]

---

[30] This thesis was completed and submitted during the global Covid-19 pandemic. This was a period in which governments around the world pushed for social distancing, teleworking and studying from home, among other measures, as ways to control the virus infection rates. As a result, online tools for communication, working and socialising became even more popular, varied and ubiquitous.

8.6 New research directions

Many conversations I had during fieldwork could lead to new paths for research projects. Additionally, similar research questions could be used within other contexts to compare or complement the findings of this thesis, understanding the subjectivity which is inherent to qualitative ethnographic approaches. However, going beyond these scenarios, I want to highlight three topics that could produce stimulating discussions in the relationship between accessible digital media and collective action in the city.

One direction is the study of small-scale innovation in collective action supported by digital technology, framed by an interdisciplinary approach including – but not exclusively referring to - Civic Media studies, Global South urban studies, social movements and advocacy for spatial justice. By small-scale I refer to the neighbourhood, or the community around an initiative like Comunativa (see Luis & Ramon pen portrait, or San Jose's sub-case), providing a social service such as a cultural centre or a community garden for children and teenagers in marginal areas. The kind of innovative projects could refer to the use of interactive installations, such as the ones that Erika's company developed for organisations like Comunativa. It could also refer to spaces for learning and experimenting with digital media. This idea came from a conversation with people from two collectives and the representatives of the *Centro Cultural del Banco de la Republica* (where we held the Right to the City Workshop). We contemplated then the idea of having regular workshops to bring together local and regional experts in digital innovation, with young participants from neighbourhoods like San Jose, as a way to reconnect digital innovation with the needs, capacities and possibilities of marginalised communities in the city. It would need to go beyond the academic experience, placing high-end knowledge and technology closer to critical urban scenarios in order to build capability, while provoking experts' interest in thinking about innovation over and above commercial and academic interests.

Another possible direction is inspired by this particular moment in the history of collective action, in which 'digital natives' and older generations often work together for a common social cause while showing different approaches and strategies for collective action. This interest came as an unexpected result from my experience in

Manizales. Old and young leaders met and differed regarding the when, the how, the message and the media to organise and take action for their collectives. Moreover, that intergenerational aspect can be one among many others to study new strategies for urban contestation, under the concept of intersectionality (Hopkins, 2019). Ethnicity, gender, class, urban and rural identities, among other factors, could help to understand collective action practices in the city in a richer way.

The third direction I want to highlight as a result of this research, comes from Shirky's (2012) claim that the best lesson from the digital age is yet to be learned. He is talking about the coordination and collaboration systems used by open-source computer programmers. In section 7.4.4, about expanding participation in city-planning, I presented a reflection on Shirky's idea (2012), wondering how such ways to work collectively and horizontally from apparent chaos could be translated into planning. A research project could explore the state of the art of such systems from computer programming, and the potential for appropriation – of the system's structures – into citizen participation and collective action.

8.7 Final comments

This research allowed me to find valuable connections between my background in urban studies and unfamiliar fields. With these, I refer to the field of digital media and its possibilities for socially inclusive city-making and the experiences of collective action in Manizales. Besides expanding my area of academic interest, this experience enabled me to get an inside look at significant processes of collective action in a city perceived as participatory, just and innovative. After this, I feel even more convinced of the urgency of understanding overused terms such as innovation and participation in marginal communities' everyday lives in the city.

This thesis is an invitation to academics and professionals interested in participatory processes and the uses of digital media to move beyond the hype of technology, recognizing that the digital is only a part of the question, or a part of the solution, which requires critical exploration in trends of communication and social organization. Studying from the 'ground-up' would advise us about power imbalances, illusions and obstacles in local democracy and innovation while

reflecting the significance of existing socio-political relationships, local history, and culture (Pinzon Cardona, 2021).

References

Abdelsalam, H.M., Reddick, C.R., Abdulrahamn Al-shaar, S.G. (2013). Social media in Egyptian government websites: Presence, usage, and effectiveness. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), 406-416.

Acebedo, L.F. (2014). Del derecho a la ciudad a la justicia espacial. Indignación y Resistencia contra los macro-proyectos urbanos como negación de la función social del urbanismo. In *V Congreso Internacional Derecho y Sociedad. Por un pensamiento latinoamericano.* Universidad de Manizales. 22-24 August 2013.

Alcantara Saez, M. (1999). *Sistemas Políticos de América Latina*. Vol. I, Vol. I. Madrid: Tecnos.

Alsop, C. K. (2002). Home and away: Self-reflexive auto-/ethnography. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 3, No. 3).

Aminzade, R., Goldstone, J., McAdam, D., Perry, E., Sewell, W., Tarrow, S., & Tilley, C. (2001). *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aral. S. and Eckles. D. (2019). Protecting elections from social media manipulation, in *Science,* 30 Aug 2019*:* 858-861

Archila, M., and Pardo, M. (Ed.) (2001). *Movimientos sociales, Estado y democracia en Colombia*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Centro de Estudios Sociales.

Arnstein, S.R. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), pp. 216-224.

Atkinson, P. (Ed.). (2001). *Handbook of ethnography*. Sage.

Bayat, A. (2004). Globalization and the politics of the informals in the Global South. In: Roy, A., & AlSayyad, N. (2004 Ed.). *Urban informality: Transnational perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia (Transnational perspectives on space and place).* Lanham, Md.: Berkeley, Calif.: Lexington Books; Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

Bennett, W. (2003). Communicating Global Activism. *Information, Communication & Society*, 6:2, 143-168

Bishop, J. (2015). *The craft of collaborative planning: people working together to shape creative and sustainable places*. Routledge.

Björgvinsson, E., Ehn, P., and Hillgren, P. A. (2010). Participatory design and democratizing innovation. In *Proceedings of the 11th Biennial participatory design conference*, pp. 41-50

BogotaAbierta, (n.a.). *Plataforma de co-creación ciudadana en Colombia* (civic co-creation platform in Colombia). Accessed 15 May 2017 <https://bogotaabierta.co>

Bolivar, I.J. (2001). Estado y participación: La centralidad de lo político? In: Archila, M. and Pardo M. (ed) (2001) *Movimientos sociales, estado y democracia en Colombia.* Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History. Nacional University of Colombia.

Bond, S., (2011). Negotiating a 'democratic ethos': moving beyond the agonistic – communicative divide, *Planning Theory,* 10(2) 161–186.

Bonsón, E., Torres, L., Royo, S., & Flores, F. (2012). Local e-government 2.0: Social media and corporate transparency in municipalities. *Government Information Quarterly*, 29(2), 123–132.

Boonstra, B., & Boelens, L. (2011). Self-organization in urban development: towards a new perspective on spatial planning, *Urban Research & Practice*, 4:2, 99-122

Botero-Gómez, P. (2015). Pedagogía de los movimientos sociales como prácticas de paz en contextos de guerra/ Pedagogy of social movements as practices of peace in contexts of war. *Revista Latinoamericana De Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud, 13*(2), 1191-1206.

Bowker, Geoffrey C. (2007). Information ecology: open system environment for data, memories, and knowing. *Journal of Intelligent Information Systems*, vol. 29, no. 1, 127–144.

Bradbury-Huang, H. (2010). 'What is good action research', *Action Research*, 8(1), pp. 93-109.

Braun, V. and Clarke, C. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77-101.

Brown, K. (2019). What is GitHub, and what is it used for? In: How-to-geek (website). Retrieved from https://www.howtogeek.com/180167/htg-explains-what-is-github-and-what-do-geeks-use-it-for/

Brownill, S. and Parker, G. (2010). Why bother with good works? The relevance of public participation(s) in planning in a post-collaborative era. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), pp. 275–282.

Bryer, T. A. (2011). The Costs of Democratization. Social media adaptation challenges within government agencies, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 33:3, 341-361.

Bugs, G. (2014). ICTs Encouraging Changes in the Citizen's Relationship with Government and Urban Space: Brazilian Examples. *The Journal of Community Informatics*, 10(3), 111-120.

Calderon, C. (2016). 2 razones por las que Manizales es ejemplo de progreso social en Colombia, in Ciudades Sostenibles [Blog]. BID Mejorando Vidas. Inter-American Development Bank. Accessed 20 January 2018 <https://blogs.iadb.org/ciudadessostenibles/2016/08/08/manizales/>

Caleidoscopios Urbanos. (2016, September 3) Mentiras y realidades de San José. Calidoscopios Urbanos. [Blog]. Accessed 20 May 2018 <http://caleidoscopiosurbanos.com/mentiras-y-realidades-de-san-jose/>

Caleidoscopios Urbanos. (2016b, March 31) Resistencia contra los macro-proyectos VIS y VIP de San Jose (Manizales) y San Antonio (Buenaventura). Caleidoscopios Urbanos. [Blog]. Accessed 20 May 2019 <http://caleidoscopiosurbanos.com/indignacion-y-resistencia-contra-los-macro-proyectos-vis-y-vip-de-san-jose-manizales-y-san-antonio-buenaventura/>

Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse.* Sage.

Cameron, M. A., Hershberg, E., & Sharpe, K. E. (2012). *Nuevas instituciones de democracia participativa en América Latina: la voz y sus consecuencias.* FLACSO Mexico.

Cardona, O. (2016) Plan de Gobierno para Manizales 2016-2019. Alcalde: Octavio Cardona Leon. Retrieved from http://manizalescomovamos.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Plan-de-Gobierno-Octavio-Cardona-Leon.pdf

Carrion, F., and Erazo, J. (2016) *El derecho a la ciudad en América Latina: Visiones desde la política.* Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. International Development Research Centre IDRC. Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. CLACSO

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power.* Oxford: OUP Oxford.

Castells, M. (2009b). *The rise of the network society, with a new preface: The information age - economy, society and culture.* Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Castells, M. (2016). A Sociology of Power: My Intellectual Journey. Annual Review of Sociology, 42(1), 1-19.

Castells, M., & Dawsonera. (2007). *Mobile communication and society : A global perspective : A project of the Annenberg Research Network on international communication (Information revolution & global politics).* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Castells, M., & Himanen, P., (Ed.) (2014). *Reconceptualizing Development in the Global Information Age.* Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press

Chi Kwok and Ngai Keung Chan (2017). Legitimacy and Forced Democratisation in Social Movements, *China Perspectives*, 2017/3, 2017, 7-16.

Chutapruttikorn, R. (2011). Life on the tracks: reconstructing home in informal railway settlements, Bangkok. PhD thesis: Newcastle University.

CIE-Manizales. (2019). *Indicadores Manizales*. Centro de Información y Estadística – CIE Municipio de Manizales. Planeacion Municipal. Alcaldia de Manizales, Accessed 20 May 2019, <http://cie-sigalcmzl.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Clarke, R., Heitlinger, S., Light, A., Forlano, L., Foth, M., & Disalvo, C. (2019). More-than-human participation: Design for sustainable smart city futures. *Interactions*, 26(3), 60-63.

Conroy, M. M., and Evans-Cowley, J. (2006). E-participation in planning: an analysis of cities adopting on-line citizen participation tools. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 24(3), pp. 371-384.

Constitución Política de Colombia 1991 (1991). Repositorio normativo. Archivo general de la Nación. Colombia. Retrieved from https://normativa.archivogeneral.gov.co/constitucion-politica-1991/?pdf=28

Cornwall, A., & Gaventa, J. (2000). From users and choosers to makers and shapers repositioning participation in social policy1. *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4), 50-62.

Cruz-Rodríguez, E. (2014). Los límites de la "ciberpolítica". Internet y movimientos sociales. *Iberoforum. Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Iberoamericana.* 10 (18), pp. 118-143.

DANE (2018). Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2018 – Colombia. DANE – Dirección Nacional de Estadística, Presidencia de la Republica – Colombia. Retrieved from: https://geoportal.dane.gov.co/geovisores/sociedad/cnpv-2018/?lt=5.25548652969724&lg=-74.66219228225116&z=9

DANE. (2019). Empleo informal y seguridad social. DANE – Dirección Nacional de Estadistica, Presidencia de la Republica – Colombia. Accessed 20 May 2019 <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/mercado-laboral/empleo-informal-y-seguridad-social>

Davies, C. (1999). *Reflexive Ethnography. A guide to research selves and others*. Routledge

Dawes, S. S. (2008). The evolution and continuing challenges of e-governance. *Public Administration Review*, 68(s1), S86-S102.

De Carli, B., & Apsan Frediani, A. (2016). Insurgent regeneration: Spatial practices of citizenship in the rehabilitation of inner city São Paulo. *GeoHumanities*, 2 (2), 331-353.

DeMarrais, E., & Earle, T. (2017). Collective Action Theory and the Dynamics of Complex Societies. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 46(1), 183-201.

Denisova, A. (2019). *Internet memes and society. Social, cultural and political contexts.* 1st edition. Routledge. NY

De Souza, M. L. (2006). Social movements as 'critical urban planning' agents. In *City*, 10(3), pp. 327-342.

De Souza, M. L. (2010). Which right to which city? In defence of political-strategic clarity. *Interface*, 2(1), pp. 315-333.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide.* Boulder; Paradigm Publishers.

De Sousa Santos B. (2015). Introducción: las epistemologías del sur, Transcripción de la ponencia : Jesús Gutierrez Amparán y Natalia Biffi. Titulo original: Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Un epistemología del sur: la reinvención del conocimiento y la emancipación, Ed.Siglo XXI, CLACSO

De Sousa Santos, B. (2018). Epistemología del Sur. *Geograficando*, 14(1), e032. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.24215/2346898Xe032

DiSalvo, C. (2010). Proceedings of the Design Research Society conference. 2010

DiSalvo, C. (2011). Community and conflict. Interactions, 18(6), pp. 24-26

DiSalvo, C., and Vertesi, J. (2007). Imaging the city: exploring the practices and technologies of representing the urban environment in HCI. In *CHI'07 extended abstracts on Human factors in computing systems*, pp. 2829-2832

Duque, G. (2015). El futuro de la ciudad, in *Catedra de Historia Regional de Manizales "Bernando Arias Trujillo" Cultura y territorio*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Manizales.

Earle, L. (2012). From Insurgent to Transgressive Citizenship: Housing, Social Movements and the Politics of Rights in São Paulo. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 44*(1), 97-126.

Earle, L. (2017). *Transgressive Citizenship and the Struggle for Social Justice: The Right to the City in São Paulo* (Studies of the Americas). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Elden, S. (2004). *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. London: Continuum

ElTiempo. (2015). Manizales, la mejor ciudad para vivir en Colombia. El Tiempo. [Online]. Accessed: 15 December 2016 <http://www.eltiempo.com/bogota/manizales-mejor-ciudad-colombia-encuesta-red-de-ciudades-como-vamos/16446764>

ElTiempo (2016, November 23). *En progreso social, Manizales solo compite contra si misma*, El Tiempo edn. [Online] Accessed: 15 December 2016 <http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/retos-de-manizales-frente-a-su-alto-indice-de-progreso-social/16756908>

Elwood, S. and Leszczynski, A. (2013). New spatial media, new knowledge politics, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(4), pp. 544-559.

Ercan, S.A., Hendriks, C.M. and Drysek, J.S (2019). Public deliberation in an era of communicative plenty, *Policy & Politics*, vol 47, no 1, 19–35

Escobar, A. (2016). Thinking-feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South. *AIBR – Revista de Antropología iberoamericana*. 11:1, 11-32

Evans-Cowley, J. and Hollander, J. (2010) The New Generation of Public Participation: Internet-based Participation Tools, in *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), pp. 397-408.

Fals Borda, O (1984). *Resistencia en el San Jorge*. Bogota: Carlos Valencia Editores.

Fals Borda, O. (1996). A North-South Convergence on the Quest for Meaning. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 76–87.

Ferilli, G., Sacco, P., Blessi G. (2016) Beyond the rhetoric of participation: New challenges and prospects for inclusive urban regeneration, in *City, Culture and Society*. 7(2) pp. 95–100.

Flyvbjerg, Bent. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 2, 219–245.

Forero, E.S. and Pérez, R.S. (2003) *América Latina: conflicto, violencia y paz en el siglo XXI*. LibrosEnRed.

Foth, M., Brynskov, M. and Ojala, T. (2015) *Citizen's Right to the Digital City: Urban Interfaces, Activism, and Placemaking*. Springer.

Foth, M., Forlano, L., Satchell, C. and Gibbs, M. (2011) *From social butterfly to engaged citizen. Urban infomatics, social media, ubiquitous computing, and mobile technology to support citizen engagement.* London: The MIT Press.

Foucault, M., & Faubion, J. (2002). *Power* (Essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984 ; v. 3). London: Penguin.

Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a 'post-socialist' age. *New Left Review*, 212, 68-93.

Frediani, A. A., & Cociña, C. (2019). 'Participation as planning': Strategies from the south to challenge the limits of planning. *Built Environment*, 45(2), 143-161.

Gallinat, A. & P. Collins. (2010). *The Ethnographic Self as Resource: Writing Memory and Experience into Ethnography*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Gardner, E. and Mars, M. (2011). *Tracing concepts: In, out and through computing.* Volume, 28, 2- 23. Retrieved from https://monoskop.org/images/1/12/Gardner_Edwin_Mars_Marcell_Tracing_Concepts _In_Out_and_Through_Computing_2011.pdf

Garrett, R. K. (2006). Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs. *Information, Communication and Society*, 9(2), pp. 202-224.

Gasca Salas, J. (2017). Henri Lefebvre y el derecho a la ciudad. Exégesis desde sus "Tesis sobre la ciudad". *Bitácora Urbano Territorial,* 27(2), 19-26. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.15446/bitacora.v27n2.63039

Gaventa, J. (2006). Finding the spaces for change: a power analysis. *IDS bulletin*, 37(6), 23-33.

Gladwell, M. and Shirky, C. (2011). From innovation to revolution: do social media make protests possible? *Foreign affairs*; New York. 90(2), 153-154.

Gobierno Digital (2019) *Manual de Gobierno Digital. Implementación de la política de Gobierno Digital*. Decreto 1008 de 2018. Ministerio TIC de Colombia. Accessed 20 May 2019 <http://estrategia.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co/623/articles-81473_recurso_1.pdf >

GobTIC (n.a.). GobTIC. Eficiencia gubernamental. Accessed: 15 November 2016 <http://webapp.gobtic.co/account/landing/>

Gonzalez, E., and Velasquez, F. (2003). *Que ha pasado con la participación ciudadana en Colombia?* Fundación Corona. Bogota DC.

Gonzalez, S., and Vigar, G. (2008). Community influence and the contemporary local state: Potentials and contradictions in the neo-liberal city. *City*, 12(1), pp. 64-78.

Goodin, R.E. (2003). *Reflective democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Gordo, B. E. (2002). What Planning Crisis? Reflections on the "Digital Divide" and the Persistence of Unequal Opportunity. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 16(1), 4-23.

Gordon, E., & Mihailidis, P. (2016). Civic Media: Technology, design, practice. The MIT Press

Graham, S. (2004). Beyond the 'dazzling light': from dreams of transcendence to the 'remediation'of urban life, *New Media and Society*, 6(1), pp. 16-25.

Graham, S., and Aurigi, A. (2007). Virtual cities, social polarization, and the crisis in urban public space, *Journal of Urban Technology*, 4(1), pp. 19-52.

Grewal, D. (2008). *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press

Gualini, E. (Ed.) (2015). *Planning and Conflict: Critical Perspectives in Contentious Urban Developments*. London: Routledge.

Gurstein, M. (2003). Effective use: A community informatics strategy beyond the digital divide. *First Monday*, 8(12).

Hamdi, N. (2004). *Small change*. Earthscan.

Hamdi, N. (2010). *The placemaker's guide to building community*. Earthscan.

Hamed. (2019). GitHub blocked my account and they think I'm developing nuclear weapons [personal post]. In: Medium [website]. Retrieved from: https://medium.com/@hamed/github-blocked-my-account-and-they-think-im-developing-nuclear-weapons-e7e1fe62cb74

Han, B-C. (2017). *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and new technologies of power*. London, UK: Verso Books.

Harvey, D. (1973). *Social justice and the city*. Edward Arnold Ltd.

Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *New Left Review*. 53 (sept-oct), pp. 23-40

Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. New York: Verso.

Harvey, D., & American Council of Learned Societies. (2013). Rebel cities from the right to the city to the urban revolution (Paperback ed..). Verso.

Harvey, D. (2015). *Entrevista a David Harvey en la Universidad Nacional de Colombia*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. 12 February 2015. Retrieved from: https://repositorio.unal.edu.co/handle/unal/61795?locale-attribute=es

Haunss, S. (2007). Challenging Legitimacy: Repertoires of Contention, Political Claims Making, and Collective Action Frames. In Hurrelmann, A., Schneider, S. and Steffek, J. (Eds), *Legitimacy in an Age of Global Politics*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. 156–72.

Hay, I. (2010). *Qualitative research methods in human geography* - 3rd edition. Oxford.

Hemmersam, P., Martin, N., Westvang, E., Aspen, J., & Morrison, A. (2015). Exploring Urban Data Visualization and Public Participation in Planning. *Journal of Urban Technology*, 22(4), pp. 45-64.

Hillier, J. (2000) Going round the Back? Complex Networks and Informal Action in Local Planning Processes. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 32(1):33-54.

Holman Jones, S., Adams, T. E., & Ellis, C. (2013). Coming to know autoethnography as more than a method. In J. S. Holman, T. E. Adams, & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 17−48). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Holston, J. (2008). *Insurgent citizenship : Disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil* (In-formation). Princeton, N.J. ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.

Holston, J. (2009). Insurgent citizenship in an Era of global urban peripheries*. City & Society : Journal of the Society for Urban Anthropology.*, 21(2), 245-267.

Horelli, L. (2013). Participatory e-planning meets the glocal. *New Approaches to Urban Planning: Insights from Participatory Communities*, pp. 131-152.

Horelli, L., Saad-Sulonen, J., Wallin, S. and Botero, A. (2015). When Self-Organization Intersects with Urban Planning: Two Cases from Helsinki, *Planning Practice & Research*, 30(3), pp. 286-302.

Hosio, S., Kukka, H. and Riekki, J. (2010). Social Surroundings: Bridging the Virtual and Physical Divide, *IEEE MultiMedia*, 17(2), pp. 26-33.

Innes,J., and Booher,DE., (2010), *Planning with Complexity*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & Boyd, D. (2016). Participatory culture in a networked era. NewYork, NY: Polity Press.

Juris, J. S. (2006). Movimientos sociales en Red: movimientos globales por una justicia global. In M. Castells (Ed.), *La Sociedad en Red: una visión global*, pp. 415–139, Madrid, Spain: Alianza Editorial.

Juris, J. (2012). Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. *American Ethnologist*, 39(2), 259–279

Kellett, P. (2011). Living in the field: Ethnographic experience of place. *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 15(04), 341-346.

Kleinhans, R., Van Ham, M. and Evans-Cowley, J. (2015). 'Using Social Media and Mobile Technologies to Foster Engagement and Self-Organization in Participatory Urban Planning and Neighbourhood Governance', *Planning Practice & Research*, 30(3), pp. 237-247.

Korn, M. and Voida, A. (2015). Creating friction: infrastructuring civic engagement in everyday life. *Proceedings of The Fifth Decennial Aarhus Conference on Critical Alternatives*. Aarhus, Denmark. Aarhus University Press.

Kozinets, R. V. (2015). *Netnography.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

LaPatria. (2014, November 13). *Victimas de San Jose dan su testimonio*. La patria. [Online]. Accessed 10 Oct 2018 <http://www.lapatria.com/manizales/victimas-de-san-jose-dan-su-testimonio-147046>

LaPatria. (2014b, March 6). Ciudadanos trabajan por ordenar POT. La Patria. [Online]. Accessed 20 may 2019 <http://www.lapatria.com/manizales/ciudadanos-trabajan-por-ordenar-el-pot-58346>

Latour, B. and Weibel, P. (2005). *Making things public: atmospheres of democracy*.

Laurans, A., (2012). *¿Qué es el gobierno electrónico y para qué sirve?* El Espectador [Online] Accessed 5 May 2017 <http://www.elespectador.com/tecnologia/el-gobierno-electronico-y-sirve-articulo-325179>

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, OX, UK

Lefebvre, H. ([1968] 1996). "The Right to the City." In *Writings on Cities*, edited by Kofman, E. & Lebas, E. 63–184. London: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, H. (2003). Space and the State, *State/space: A reader*, pp. 84-100.

Lefebvre, H. (2014). *Critique of Everyday Life*. London: Verso.

Lefebvre, H. (2014b). *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2014. Web. Retrieved from: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ncl/reader.action?docID=1637302

Leigh, P., & IGI Global. (2011). *International exploration of technology equity and the digital divide critical, historical and social perspectives*. Hershey, Pa.: IGI Global

Ley 388 de 1997. Ley de Desarrollo Territorial (Territorial Development Law) Accessed 20 March 2018. <http://www.minambiente.gov.co/images/normativa/leyes/1997/ley_0388_1997.pdf>

Loader, B., and Mercea, D. (2011). NETWORKING DEMOCRACY? Social media innovations and participatory politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14:6, 757-769

Lotan, G. (2014). Israel, Gaza, War & Data: Social networks and the art of personalizing propaganda. Accessed 11 May 2017 <https://medium.com/i-data/israel-gazawar-data-a54969aeb23e>

Luck, R. (2003). Dialogue in participatory design. Design Studies, (24)6, pp. 523-535

Luna, D. (2015, July 25). *Manizales y Caldas: modelo nacional en tecnología*. MinTIC. Accessed 20 March 2018 <http://www.mintic.gov.co/portal/604/w3-article-12756.html>

MAEID. (2015, October 27). Arturo Escobar Tejiendo el pluriverso. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/p6KsJ-vDO7k

Manizales.gov. (2014). Alcaldia de Manizales. Accessed 20 May 2019 < http://www.manizales.gov.co>

Mäntysalo, R. (2000). *Land-use Planning as Interorganizational Learning.* Acta Universitatis Ouluensis Technica, C 155, Oulu.

Mäntysalo, R. (2004). Approaches to participation in urban planning theories. In *Workshop in Florence* (Vol. 2005).

MapKibera. (2009). MapKibera.org, Making the Invisible Visible. Retrieved from https://mapkibera.org/

Marche, S., and McNiven, J. D. (2003). E-government and e-governance: the future isn't what it used to be. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*, 20(1), pp. 74-86.

Marcuse, P. (2014). Reading the Right to the City. *City*, 18:1, 4-9.

Mason, J. (2002). The Ties that Bind: Infrastructure as the Defining Role of Planning. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 16(1), 77-87.

Massey, D. (2012). Space, place and politics in the present conjuncture. *Urban*, (4), 7-12.

McCarthy, J. and Wright, P. (2015). *Taking [a]part. The Politics and aesthetics of participation in experience-centered design.* London, England: The MIT Press.

McCullough, M. (2005). *Digital ground: architecture, pervasive computing, and environmental knowing.* Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge, Mass.: MIT.

Mergel, I. (2013). A framework for interpreting social media interactions in the public sector. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), 327-334.

Merrifield, A. (2011). The right to the city and beyond. *City*, 15:3-4, 473-481.

Messeter, J. (2015). Social Media Use as Urban Acupuncture for Empowering Socially Challenged Communities, *Journal of Urban Technology*, 22(3), pp. 79-96.

Miessen, M. (2010). *Collaboration and the conflictual. The nightmare of participation: Crossbench as a mode of criticality.* Sternberg Press Berlin.

Mihailidis, P. (2019) *Civic media literacies: Re-imagining human connection in an age of digital abundance.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315526058

Milan, S. (2013). *Social movements and their technologies. Wiring social change.* Palgrave. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137313546

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook.* SAGE Publications.

Miller, D. (2011). *Tales from Facebook.* Polity Press, Cambridge

Miller, D. (2020, 3 May). *How to conduct an ethnography during social isolation* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/NSiTrYB-0so

Miller, D. & Sinanan, J. (2017). *Visualising Facebook (Why we post).* London: UCL Press.

MiMedellin, (n.a.). *Mi Medellín Co-Creación ciudadana*. (My Medellin, civic co-creation). Accessed 15 May 2017 <http://www.mimedellin.org/>

MinTIC (n.a.). Ministerio Colombiano de Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones. Accessed 15 November 2016 <http://www.mintic.gov.co/>

MinTIC. (2018). Manual de Gobierno Digital. Implementación de la Política de Gobierno Digital. Decreto 1008 de 2018 (Compilado en el Decreto 1078 de 2015, capítulo 1, título 9, parte 2, libro2). Accessed 28 June 2020 <https://estrategia.gobiernoenlinea.gov.co/623/articles-81473_recurso_1.pdf>

Miraftab, F. (2016). Insurgent Planning: Situating Radical Planning in the Global South. In *Readings in Planning Theory: Fourth Edition,* 480-498. Wiley**.**

Miraftab, F. (2018). Insurgent practices and decolonization of future(s), in Gunder, M., Madanipous, A. and Watson, V. (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory.* London: Routledge, pp. 276–288.

Mossberger, K., Wu, Y., & Crawford, J. (2013). Connecting citizens and local governments? Social media and interactivity in major U.S. cities. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), 351-358.

Mouffe, C. (1992). *Dimensions of radical democracy: Pluralism, citizenship, community* (Phronesis (London, England)). London; New York: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2000). *The democratic paradox*. New York: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. Routledge, London.

Nakamura, L., & Chow-White, P. (2012 eds.). *Race after the Internet*. New York: Routledge

Niederer, S., & Priester, R. (2016). Smart Citizens: Exploring the Tools of the Urban Bottom-Up Movement. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 1–16.

O'Donnell, G. (1999). Polyarchies and the (un)rule of law in Latin America: A partial conclusion. In J. Mendez, G. O'Donnell, & S. Pinheiro (Eds.), *The (un)rule of law and the underprivileged in Latin America.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Ocampo Gonzales, A. (2018). Entrevista con Dr. Roberto Follari sobre Pensamiento Crítico y Epistemología Latinoamericana. Entrevistas: Interacciones Polyphōnícas. In *Revista CELEI*, Chile. 2(2), 231-238

Olivier, P. and Wright, P. (2015). Digital civics: taking a local turn. *Interactions*, 22 (4), pp. 61-63.

O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Key Concepts in Ethnography* (SAGE Key Concepts series). GB: Sage Publications.

Patel, K. (2020). Centering the margins: knowledge production and methodology as praxis, in Walker, J., Bau Carvalho, M. and Diaconescu, I. (Eds) *Urban Claims and*

the Right to the City: Grassroots Perspectives from London and Salvador da Bahia. London: UCL Press.

Penney, J. (2017). Social Media and Citizen Participation in "Official" and "Unofficial" Electoral Promotion: A Structural Analysis of the 2016 Bernie Sanders Digital Campaign. *Journal of Communication*. 67, 402-423.

Pestoff, V. (2012). Co-production and third sector social services in Europe. *New public governance, the third sector and co-production*, pp. 13-34.

Pink, S. (2008). An urban tour The sensory sociality of ethnographic place-making. *Ethnography*, 9(2), 175-196.

Pink, S. (2015). *Doing sensory ethnography*. Sage.

Pink, S. (2016) *Digital ethnography.* Springer.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Pink, S., & Morgan, J. (2013). Short-Term Ethnography: Intense Routes to Knowing. *Symbolic Interaction*, 36(3), 351-361.

Pinzon Cardona, L. (2013). Beyond connectivity. The impacts of social media in urban development. Working Paper 160. Development Planning Unit – The Bartlett. University College London.

Pinzon Cardona, L. (2021). Digital Media in citizen participation and collective action for spatial justice. In: Ramirez Plascencia, D., Carvalho Gurgel, B. & Plaw, A. (Eds.) *The politics of technology in Latin America Volume 2. Digital media, daily life and public engagement*. Routledge.

Postill, J., & Pink, S. (2012). Social media ethnography: The digital researcher in a messy web. *Media International Australia*, 145(1), 123-134.

POT (2017). Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial de Manizales 2017-2031. Alcaldía de Manizales. Accessed: 15 December 2020. <https://manizales.gov.co/plan-de-ordenamiento-territorial-2017-2031/>

Purcell, M. (2003). Citizenship and the right to the global city: Reimagining the capitalist world order. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(3), 564-590.

Ramirez, F. (2008). The public sphere as power: Sociological controversies, the participatory experience of Medellín. *Iconos: Revista de Ciencias Sociales*. FLACSO - Ecuador. 32, pp. 61-73

Ramirez Plascencia, D., Carvalho Gurgel, B. & Plaw, A. (Eds.) (2021). *The politics of technology in Latin America Volume 2. Digital media, daily life and public engagement. Routledge*. Retrieved from https://www.routledge.com/The-Politics-of-Technology-in-Latin-America-Volume-2-Digital-Media-Daily/Plascencia-Gurgel-Plaw/p/book/9780367360115

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.) (2001). *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice.* Sage.

Redacción Pares. (2020, January 4). Estamos muy preocupados por asesinatos de líderes. Fundación Paz & Reconciliación – PARES. Postconflicto, #LideresBajoAmenaza, Retrieved from https://pares.com.co/2020/01/14/estamos-muy-preocupados-por-asesinatos-de-lideres-onu/ (Accessed: 20 May 2020).

Redacción Política. (2017, July 6). #CausasCiudadanas, la iniciativa con la que el gobierno busca escuchar a los ciudadanos. *El Espectador*. Retrieved from https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/causasciudadanas-la-iniciativa-con-la-que-el-gobierno-busca-escuchar-los-ciudadanos-articulo-701759

RCCV. (2016). Indice de Progreso Social 2016. Una medida orientada a la acción. Red de Ciudades como vamos, Universidad del Norte, and Social Progress Imperative.

RCCV. (n.a.). Red de Ciudades Como Vamos - Colombia. Retrieved from <http://redcomovamos.org/>

Robles, J., & Córdoba-Hernández, A. (2018). Commodification and digital political participation: The "15-M movement" and the collectivization of the internet. *Palabra-Clave*, 21(4), pp. 992-1022.

Rodríguez, C. (2001) *Fissures in the mediascape: An international study of citizen's media.* Hampton Press.

Rodríguez, C., Ferron, B. & Shamas, K. (2014). Four challenges in the field of alternative, radical and citizen's media research. *Media, Culture & Society*, 36(2), pp. 150-166.

Rose, D. (1990). *Living the ethnographic life.* Qualitative Re-search Methods Series, 23.

Roy, A., & AlSayyad, N. (2004 eds). *Urban informality: Transnational perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia (Transnational perspectives on space and place).* Lanham, Md.: Berkeley, Calif.: Lexington Books; Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

Saldaña, J. (2012). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Sanabria, T. H. (2016). Instrumentos de planeación y gestión urbana. Un análisis para comprensión de la norma vigente. Presentation in a conference at Consejo Profesional Nacional de Arquitectura y sus profesiones auxiliaries. CPNAA en Vivo. Retrieved from https://cpnaa.gov.co/sites/default/files/docs/4_Presentation_FUA_institucional%20_ %20CPNAA%20Julio%2029.pdf

Sanjek, R. (2000). Keeping Ethnography Alive in an Urbanizing World. *Human Organization*: Fall 2000, Vol. 59, No. 3, pp. 280-288.

Sanoff, H. (2008). Multiple views of participatory design, *International Journal of Architectural Research*, 2(1), pp. 57-69.

Sassen, S. (2015). Epilogue. Urbanizing technology. In: Foth, M., Brynskov, M. and Ojala, T. (2015) *Citizen's Right to the Digital City: Urban Interfaces, Activism, and Placemaking*. Springer.

Shaw, J. and Graham, M. (2017). An Informational Right to the City? Code, Content, Control, and the Urbanization of Information. *Antipode* Vol. 49 No.4, pp. 907-927

Shirky, C. (2009). *Here comes everybody: How change happens when people come together*. Penguin UK.

Shirky, C. (2010). *Cognitive surplus: Creativity and generosity in a connected age*. Penguin UK.

Shirky, C. (2012, June). *How the Internet will (one day) transform government* [Video]. TED Global conference. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_the_internet_will_one_day_transform_government

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative research*. Fourth Edition

Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis :: University of Minnesota Press.

Staffans, A., and Horelli, L. (2014). Expanded urban planning as a vehicle for understanding and shaping smart, liveable cities. *The Journal of Community Informatics*, 10(3).

Stringer, E. and Ortiz Aragón, A. (2020). *Action Research* (Fifth Ed.). SAGE Publications.

Swearingen, J. (2018, September 4). Facebook used the Philippines to test free Internet. Then a dictator was elected. *Intelligencer. New York.* Retrieved from https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/09/how-facebooks-free-internet-helped-elect-a-dictator.html

Swyngedouw, E. (2009). The antinomies of the postpolitical city: in search of a democratic politics of environmental production. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 33(3), 601-620.

Swyngedouw, E. (2011). *Designing the Post-Political City and the Insurgent Polis*. London: Bedford

Teisman, G., Buuren, André van, and Gerrits, L. (2009). *Managing complex governance systems – dynamics, self-organization and coevolution in public investments*. New York/London: Routledge.

TelesurTV, (2019). ¿Cuántos líderes sociales han asesinado durante 2019 en Colombia?. Noticias, America Latina. Telesur TV. 12 April 2019. Retrieved from https://www.telesurtv.net/news/lideres-sociales-asesinados-colombia-20190412-0002.html (Accessed: 20 may 2020)

Thompson J. (2000). *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press

Todos Somos Rio Blanco (n.d.). Events [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved September 10, 2018, from https://www.facebook.com/events/335166150251709

Tufekci, Z. (2017) *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale Uni. Press.

Unás, V. (2010). "Nuevos repertorios tecnológicos y movimientos sociales: el caso de la Asociación Indígena del Norte del Cauca (ACIN)". En *CS*, 6, pp. 255-282.

Uprimny, R. and Villegas, M.G. (2004). Corte Constitucional y emancipación social en Colombia, *Emancipación social y violencia en Colombia*, pp. 463-514.

Valdivia, L. (2000). *Constructores de la ciudad moderna*. Madrid: Cie Inversiones Editoriales.

Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Varela, E. (2015). Nuevos roles de los gobiernos locales en la implementación de políticas públicas. Gobernabilidad territorial y competitividad global, *EURE* 41 (123), pp. 213-237

Vargas, A. (1994). *Participación social, planeación y desarrollo regional*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Varnelis, K. and Friedberg, A. (2008). Place: The networking of public space, *Networked publics*, pp. 15-42.

Vigar, G., Gunn, S., and Brooks, E. (2017). Governing our neighbours: Participation and conflict in neighbourhood planning. *Town Planning Review*, 88(4), 423-442.

Vines, J., Clarke, R., Wright, P., McCarthy, J., & Olivier, P. (2013). Configuring participation: on how we involve people in design. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 429-438

ViveLab. (n.a.). ViveLab Manizales, Universidad de Caldas. Accessed 15 December 2016 <http://www.vivelabmanizales.com/>

Vlachokyriakos, V., Comber, R., Crivellaro, C., Taylor, N., Kuznetsov, S., Kavanaugh, A., Le Dantec, C.A. and Kim, B.J. (2015). Designing Alternative Systems for Local Communities, *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. Seoul, Republic of Korea. ACM.

Vlachokyriakos, V., Crivellaro, C., Le Dantec, C.A., Gordon, E., Wright, P. & Olivier, P. (2016). Digital Civics: Citizen empowerment with and through technology. CHI EA 16: *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. May 2016, pp.1069-1099. Retrieved from: https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/2851581.2886436

Walker, J., Bau Carvalho, M. and Diaconescu, I. (Eds.) (2020). *Urban Claims and the Right to the City: Grassroots Perspectives from London and Salvador da Bahia*. London: UCL Press.

Watson, V. (2006). Deep difference: Diversity, planning and ethics. *Planning Theory*, 5(1), 31-50.

Watson, V. (2009). Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe's central urban issues. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), pp. 2259-2275.

Weise, S., Hardy, J., Agarwal, P., Coulton, P., Friday, A. & Chiasson, M. (2012). Democratizing ubiquitous computing: a right for locality. In *Proceedings of the 2012 ACM Conference on Ubiquitous Computing (UbiComp '12)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 521–530. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1145/2370216.2370293

Weiser, M. (1991). The computer for the 21st century. *Scientific American*, 265(3), 94-104.

Wilkinson, S. and Kitzinger, C. (1996). *Representing the Other: a Feminism and Psychology Reader*. London: SAGE.

Zavattaro, S. M., & Sementelli, A. J. (2014). A critical examination of social media adoption in government: Introducing omnipresence. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(2), 257–264.

Zegada Claure, M. T., and Guardia Crespo, M. (2018). *La vida política del meme. Interacciones digitales en Facebook en una coyuntura crítica.* First edition. Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social CERES. Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo UCBSP. Plural Editores. Bolivia.

Zheng, L., & Zheng, T. (2014). Innovation through social media in the public sector: Information and interactions. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(S1), S106-S117.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Notes about perception posters on digital media practices in Manizales

Poster 1: I use my social media to:
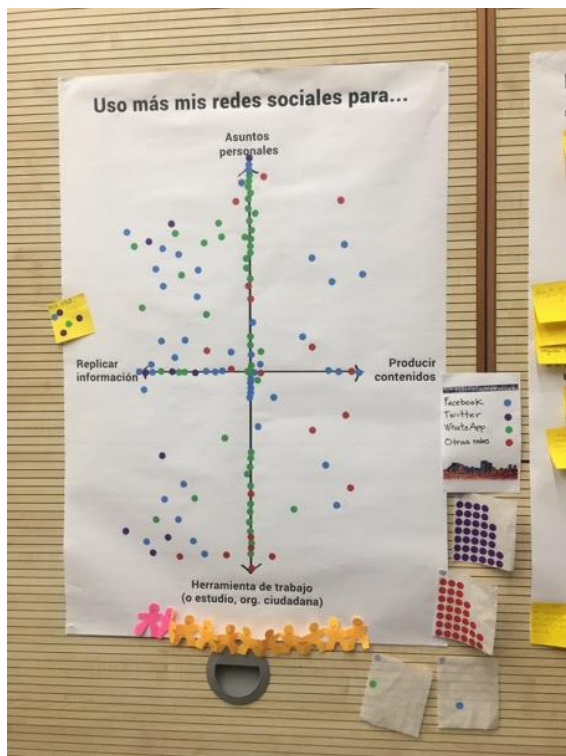
Number of stickers:

WhatsApp: 50

Facebook: 49

Twitter: 10

Other platforms: 20

I think between 50 and 60 people interacted with the board during the day. A post-it with the words 'I don't use (Social media)' was included in the afternoon as an idea from one participant. There are 3 stickers in it for Facebook, 1 for WhatsApp and 1 for Twitter.

Most of the stickers were placed on top of the axis, I am not sure whether it was done consciously, meaning their use was in the exact middle between the options, or some participants did not understand the exercise completely. Despite this, some of the reflections from the board are:

- Most of the use in general is associated with the replication of information, more than the production of content. All participants with Twitter placed their sticker on the side of 'replication of information', and only 3 out of 50 participants with WhatsApp said they use the platform to 'produce content', although the stickers are very close to the middle. The group of stickers with major number towards the side of 'producing content' is the one for 'other platforms'. I could only ask one person after I noticed he was placing the red sticker on that side, and he explained he was talking about YouTube. 12 out of the 49 Facebook stickers, and only 3 out of the 50 WhatsApp stickers, were placed towards that side as well, of 'producing content'.
- In general, there are slightly more WhatsApp and Facebook stickers closer to the end of using social media for 'personal matters' rather than using it as a 'tool for work (study, or civic organisations)'. Twitter users on the other hand seem to use it somewhat more as a 'tool for work', however, the difference is just by one sticker.

Poster 2: In the 'Digital', Manizales needs:

To get more perceptions and open discussion about the state of the digital environment in the city, I divided the poster in four with a suggestion and plenty of space for participants and visitors to add yellow post-its with their ideas and opinions. These are the four fields and people's texts (translated):

In the 'Digital', Manizales... needs more of:

- Educational programs for the community, where people are taught to manage digital media and to use them correctly for a better life project.

- Strengthening knowledge of multiple uses that the Internet has, not only for social purposes.
- More accurate information in different media, about activities in the city.
- Spread knowledge about social media, not as a bad resource, but as a tool for knowledge and learning.
- Urban appropriation
- Reconcile information and interactive channels
- Recognise the varied spatiality to identify the spaces that contain the information.
- Openness and free of charge to support access of low-income people.
- Comprehensive and supportive people
- More updated equipment in the different centres (community centres), with better quality of Internet connection.
- Digital books
- Free wi-fi in all public spaces
- More explanations
- More training for the communities with lower access to digital media
- More awareness about the digital and social media
- Digital centres in the neighbourhoods
- Apps for the city
- Games that teach about digital media
- More orientation (guidance)
- More explaining
- To be easier
- More help for coexistence

In the 'Digital', Manizales... needs less of:

- Discrimination, and less hate and resentment.
- Obsolete equipment, and less use of technology for excessive social media and fake news. Technology needs to be used properly.
- Consumption (Consumerism)
- Political programs that do not work and only fill us up with numbers.
- Preference of capital over life
- Fascination for just one means of digital information
- Seeing digital media as the aim, and not as the means.
- Lies on social media that hinder taking right decisions
- Biased political information
- Spending more public money on equipment than on education
- Commercial information and invasive advertisement

In the 'Digital', Manizales... Needs an app (software) for:

- Route of murals and urban art – app
- Recovering the local bio-cultural memory through thematic maps
- App to share knowledge among citizens and to promote activities that improve economy, health, encourage sports and integrate the community in a healthy way.

- App that allows sharing of knowledge
- Reading, knowledge and sharing
- Broadcasting of information from social organisations, like the ones present today.
- To know cultural events from my city.
- To connect cultural events, collectives and people with similar ideas and interests.
- Connecting through city events.
- Breaking down, understand and assimilate the huge amount of information that arrives to us.
- To interact with people leading projects about innovation, design and social commitment in the city.
- To connect the neighbours of San Jose that have left already.
- GIS. Geographic information about: Problems, water, social groups, and territories.
- Exchanging or bartering things and services with people from the neighbourhood.
- Tourism information of the main sites, parks and events.

In the 'Digital', Manizales... Needs spaces for:

- More active spaces of urban training that bring people closer to new technology and how these can have a practical use in their everyday tasks.
- Sharing. Spaces where music, nature environment, people and animals integrate.
- Public spaces of quality, using and recycling local materials. With less anthropogenic impact.
- Website to share spare or second handed stuff.
- Keep constructing the city we dream.
- Promoting and management of community culture.
- Street social cinema
- Anthropology courses
- Free access to internet, because it is a way to democratically access the digital territory.
- Village/rural cinema
- Free recreation to have free space
- Inclusion of people that have not an easy access to the use of ICTs
- Debating. More spaces for debate about problems of the city.
- Sharing, creating, kissing, looking at each other, understanding and listening to each other. More green parks!
- Constructing the city collectively.
- More recreational parks.
- Spaces for recreational zones.
- Sharing, learning, socialising, resting, expressing.
- Construct digital spaces for youth education to benefit student formation.
- Connecting recreational spaces.

Appendix 2: Mapping data

Interview briefs and other data collected during fieldworks - 09/7/2018

A. Interviews

These interviews are presented in chronological order. All interviews were recorded with previous authorisation of the interviewee(s), and all names have been anonymised.

01. David. 31-Aug-2017

Male, ONG Representative. Local Leader. Manizales. Rec. 0:54 h

Main purposes: local landscape of participation / connections with politics, institutions and subcases / uses of digital media / views on subcases.

David must be in his 30s, studied Sociology and has been involved in various social movements and initiatives since he was at university. The topics discussed were: a brief presentation about myself, his presentation and the story behind the NGO he represents, the situation of Rio Blanco, and finally his experience and perception about uses of digital media in Manizales. David invited me to attend a seminar about Legal Resources for Citizen Participation, and for the second session of this seminar he let me conduce the first version of the JigsAudio exercise on perception of participation.

02. Omar. 01-Sep-2017

Male, Company Director - tech developer (Private sector). Manizales. Rec. 0:42 h.

Main purposes: Local and national views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / contacts

Omar and his brother own a tech-developer company. They funded it more than ten years ago and have worked since then on web and digital technology development, mainly oriented towards online government in Colombia and other Latin American countries. To my surprise Omar tells me that the only reason they keep their business based in Manizales is because it is cheaper and easier; it is their hometown, but only a few of their projects have been implemented in Manizales, despite their efforts in getting closer to local government here. This interview was highly important to understand the national and local framework of regulations and "manuals" for online government and digital participation. He also gave me a couple of relevant contacts that were key during my fieldwork.

03. Luis. 01-Sep-2017

Male, PhD Lecturer Architecture and Urban design / activist pro San Jose, SABPO, SRRB. Manizales Rec. 1:08 h

Main purposes: local landscape of participation / connections with politics, institutions, subcases and academia / planning problems in Manizales / City's models of development / uses of digital media / views on subcases.

Luis talked from his experience as an academic and political activist in the city. He has a very interesting explanation on the types of cities Manizales has been in the last 50 years, from the Patronage City (*del clientelismo*), to the Technocrat city, to the Enterprise City (*Ciudad Empresa*), highlighting what he considers a failure of the public policy from last decade in the city framed as 'The city of knowledge' (*La ciudad del Conocimiento*). The main outcome of that last policy was that the city opened opportunities for international companies to set up several call centres in the city, wich entailed low quality contracts and low salaries to thousands of people.

He believes Manizales and other Colombians cities have failed because they use technology developments focused on the technology itself and not in the people. (Omar mentioned something similar in his interview)

04. Cesar. 04-Sep-2017

Male, ONG representative. Manizales. Rec. 0:57 h

Main purposes: Local landscape of participation / connections with politics, institutions and subcases / uses of digital media / views on subcases.

Cesar is the current director of a regional NGO, and he is interested in Manizales being more participative. But at the same time, his NGO is self-constrained and almost censured by the principal sponsors. For example, in the case of Rio Blanco, the building company behind the project is one of the NGOs sponsors. Therefore, for Cesar or the corporation, is very difficult to support a process where one of their sponsors is being accused of corruption. According to Cesar, a critical problem in Rio Blanco process is that it has been very political in its core.

According to Cesar, the lack of relevant information before participation seems to be the main problem. Another key point for him is that older people are the most active as "*veedores*" (citizen overseers) but they don't use new technology. And that, he feels, is a big obstacle for including more digital media in participatory processes. Moreover, he claims that young ones don't get too involved with citizen oversight, they feel it is a thing for old people.

05. Amparo. 05-Sep-2017

Female, PhD Lecturer in Computer Science. Rec. 0:42 h

Main purposes: Local views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / City's models of development

She seemed approachable but serious and tired. From the beginning she said that neither participation, nor digital media innovation existed in Manizales. She is an IT engineer with masters and PhD in sustainable development. Currently she supervises students from

undergraduate and postgraduate programs, and she is extremely critical with Manizales being what they say it is, a digital city, or a city of knowledge, or a Smart City. She says it barely is a "connected city". Because of her critical view she is no longer invited to committees with the public sector, with local authorities because she clearly speaks her mind.

06. Erika. 08-Sep-2017

Female, Company Director and funder, digital innovation (Private sector). Manizales. Rec. 0:54 h

Main purposes: Perceptions on local uses of digital technology / connections with social organisations, public institutions and private sector around participation / views on subcases.

Erika feels Manizales has lots of new technology and great labs or centers where technology innovation could happen (Like Vive Lab, the Lab at the INEM, or the Salmona centre), but it is closed to small circles, usually mainly academic. She feels it should be open and "brought down to earth" in simple ways so people could use it. They worked with Comunativa on a project called Aldeas del Mundo where the idea was to teach people how to use video mapping, based on their own narratives and images recorded by the participants. She recognised it was not an easy exercise, mainly because of their methodology, but she claims that theirs was the first exercise in Manizales where digital technology was brought down to people with no technical knowledge about it, in ways they could use it for their own interests.

Erika thinks that participation through artistic exploration is a type of valid participation that some collectives, like her company, are doing. This type of participation is not claiming political participation per se, but is including more people into their projects, having a social purpose in their work, opening knowledge, information and production to sectors of the city less connected and in need of transformation.

07. Nubia. 13-Sep-2017

Female, Local NGO Director. Rec. 0:31h

Main purposes: Local landscape of participation / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / connections with social organisations, public institutions and private sector around participation / views on subcases.

Nubia directs the local chapter of a national network of NGOs in the country. Her NGO deals with perceptions and statistics around Manizales social progress measured in various fields, like health, employment, security, education, and citizen participation, among others. They gave me their last report and publications and were very interested in this research. Nubia gave me some important contacts and also recommended to check and app from Bogota called Seamos, which is being used for citizens to follow the commitments city councillors made on their campaign. She seemed optimistic about participatory processes in the city, recognising the role of collective action into potentially transforming democratic dynamics. We could only talk for half an hour.

08. Alicia. 14-Sep-2017

Female, Journalist and coordinator of participation in the POT (Plan for Territorial Planning). Manizales. Rec: 1:17 h

Main purposes: Local landscape of participation / planning problems in Manizales / connections with politics, institutions, subcases and academia / uses of digital media

Alicia is a journalist who was in charge of the participatory component of the POT since 2004. She gave me a very interesting interview explaining me year by year according to participatory actions from the Planning Secretary. She only refers to participation as the event where the Planning office invited citizens. When asked about citizen participation as a civic initiative, she struggles to see how that could fit in the POT participatory component. Alicia said that social organisations were invited, specially those that are interested in urban planning in Manizales. But also highlights that the inclusion comes with operational problems (mainly due to some of the highly technical language) and obstacles in finding consensus.

09. Carolina. 21-Sep-2017

Female, Coordinator Online Government from the Municipality. Manizales. Rec. 0:15 h

Main purposes: Local views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / City's models of development / connections with social organisations, public institutions and private sector around participation

She was very energetic, nice and ultra positive about the labour they are doing on this administration, especially in her area of Online government (which to my surprise is not part of the ICT Secretary. It is part of the Development Secretary). I recorded her and then we went to Linda's office in the building next door, as a suggestion from Carolina. When she talks about participation, she describes all the many channels people now have to contact government offices, to access services, or to submit a document. She also talks about forums and places where to get feedback from citizens, but it seems that "participation" in her view always need an invitation.

10. Linda (with Carolina). 21-Sep-2017

Female, Coordinator of Mayor's Press office and social media from the Municipality. Manizales. Rec. 0:55 h

Main purposes: Local views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / city's models of development / connections with social organisations, public institutions and private sector around participation

Linda was friendly and positive about their work. I was impressed by all the work she has to do being in charge not only of print and online press, but also being the community manager of the *Alcaldia* fan page in Facebook, and several chats on WhatsApp, the most impressive one is called "un chat para mi ciudad".

My feeling is that they are doing lots of efforts for having more channels where to listen to citizens, and they answer their questions, even when questions need to be re-address to other institutions outside the Municipality. The most interesting elements in the interview were:

- The way they created the Secretaria de las Mujeres, in a participatory way.
- Knowing about Urna de Cristal (office in Bogota in charge of creating content for online participatory mechanisms)
- The WhatsApp line for all the city "un chat para mi ciudad".
- The stats from their Facebook pages.
- They're participating in a competition from MInTIC called Maxima Velocidad,

11. Juliana. 21-Sep-2017

Female, MSc student. San Jose's resident and community leader. Manizales. Rec. 0:54 h (3 files)

Main purposes: Views on subcases / local landscape of participation / planning problems in Manizales / connections with politics, institutions, subcases and academia / uses of digital media / uses of other media

Juliana studied Sociology and has been a local leader in San Jose for many years, even before the Macro-Proyecto started. Some information in the interview was not that related to my topic but very important to understand the political and social context in the Comuna San Jose. She said that people in San Jose don't react anymore. Before the Macro-project they were not that participative either, but it is even worse afterwards. She also mentioned the importance of traditional media, like megaphone cars and printed flyers to get to San Jose's people. Juliana gave a couple of examples were digital media has failed to communicate important messages in the community. Her interview also explains internal problems in the neighbourhood between local leaders and the company in charge of delivering the project. Apparently, some of the leaders were "corrupted" by the project and this deteriorated the weak organisational network in the community.

12. Chepe. 26-Sep-2017

Male, community leader, member of the three socio-territorial movements studied. Manizales. Rec. 1:32 h (2 files)

Main purposes: Views on subcases / local landscape of participation / planning problems in Manizales / connections with politics, institutions, subcases and academia / uses of digital media / uses of other media.

Chepe gave me some printed material and I took some photographs from their banners as well. Chepe was also interested on seeing how my connections with international academia could enrich the collective's process, and maybe organising a seminar or workshop to support their discussion about better ways to plan the city. Apparently SABPOT is the only NGO of their kind in the country, they started working on an alternative way to the official

POT since 2014. They managed to have integrated their vision, of Manizales for 2030, in the new Vision of the current POT.

13. Margarita. 20-Mar-2018

Female, Lawyer, civil servant in Regional Government, member of one collective that was part of this research. Manizales. Rec. 1:10 h

Main purposes: Views on subcases / local landscape of participation / planning problems in Manizales / connections with politics, institutions, subcases and academia / uses of digital media

Meeting with Margarita was key to better understand local context, culture of participation, apathy and political background in Manizales. Her position is very interesting because she has worked from academia, public institutions and as well as an activist, being part of social organisations in the city, the most recent one was SABPOT. We worked together in Bogota in 2014 and since there has been a relationship of trust, which was important to get her perceptions on local participation and political will in Manizales nowadays.

14. Yadira. 13-Abr-2018

Female, civil servant in the ICT Secretary of Manizales. Rec. 0:23 h

Main purposes: Local views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / city's models of development / connections with social organisations, public institutions and private sector around participation

Yadira explained that in 2012 when there were lots of resources from MinTIC (ICT Ministry) for municipalities, Manizales decided to transform their Secretary for "competitividad" (competitiveness) to include ICT into it, but initially it was a move to access to more resources. It seems since then, ICT has been attached, or playing mainly in pro of the private sector, and education in the city. With education she meant universities, and research centres working in pro of local industries and the agronomy sector.

When asked about what could be the office, person, or program working with digital media for social or participatory processes in the city, she thought about it for a few seconds, and then said something on the lines of: "no, I don't think there is such place at the moment in Manizales." She said that the closest would be the process of creation and design of the Secretary of Women, and the social media exercise from the Press Office. These are situations that Linda mentioned in her interview.

15. Jason. 18-May-2018

Male, PhD Universidad Nacional- Computer science. Manizales. Rec. 0:49 h

Main purposes: Local views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on local uses of digital technology / digital inclusion / contacts and cases.

Jason is finishing his PhD on digital inclusion. He studies and work in the School of "*Administración de sistemas informáticos*" (management of computer systems) at Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He gave me very clear views on issues about digital uses and appropriation. When talking about possibilities of digital innovation in a society like ours, with access issues and inequalities, he mentioned a project I have not heard yet, in Fresno (a small town between Bogota and Manizales). There, they have two local digital networks people can access as if they were connecting to Wi-Fi, one is located near the Municipality, with pages and information from the local government. And the other is from the Coffee Growers Federation. That way people with a smartphone or a tablet, but without payed internet or data in their devices (which is very common), can access these networks for information and interactions that are tailored for their local needs, of course filtered by the hosting organisations, but still it opens a possibility I have not considered yet. He is going to share some more information with me about this project and the foundation behind this. Maybe not that relevant for this research, but to future ones.

16. Ignacia and Luciana. 24-May-2018

Females, Representatives from the MinTic and Urna de Cristal. Bogota. Rec. 1:10 h

Main purposes: National views on digital possibilities for participation from the government / perceptions on national uses of digital technology for participation and activism.

I have initially set a date for an interview with Ignacia, who works in MinTIC for Open Data projects with civic groups in Colombia. However when I explained the topics of the interview (on a WhatsApp conversation) she suggested I also needed to talk to Luciana, a friend of her, who I was coincidentally trying to contact for a while now. Luciana has a coordinating role in Urna de Cristal, an office related to MinTIC working on designing content and strategies for participatory initiatives from government bodies in Colombia, at regional and local scales as well. Most of the work they are doing is through digital channels. In a way this was a double interview and very interesting since I had two points of view for each question, and they were complementing or sometimes discussing each other's answers.

B. **Participant observation**

- Spending time with key actors
- Meetings
- Seminars or presentations I attended
- Being part of groups in social media
- Netnography
- Field-notes and weekly reports

C. **Presentations**

- U. Nacional (x2)
- Unitierra

D. Exercises of local perception in citizen participation – JigsAudio (Appendix 1)

Appendix 3: Example of questions and topics used in interviews

Before each interview I planned the topics and type of questions, according to the previous information I could find about the person or the organisation they represented. This allowed me to tailor, to an extent, each type of conversation/interview to take the most of the interviewee's experience. Therefore, each interview resulted into different conversations that followed topics in a different order, and stressed some issues more than others, depending on the person's profile. However, there were common steps in the way I conducted interviews to make sure to cover my interests, and to give enough time for the interviewee to expand on particular matters.

First, I introduced myself and the research objectives. Then I asked the person interviewed to tell me about what they do and how they were involved in processes around citizen participation, collective action or digital media innovation, depending on their profile. For example, after introducing myself and the research to the interviewee who coordinated the participatory element of Manizales POT, I explain:

> *".. So, as you can see, I am interested to learn about the participatory process for the creation of the POT. I would like you to tell me how this process was and what was your role in it"*

After this, the interviewee talked for about 3 minutes giving an overall picture of the timeline a process. When I noticed she had paused assuming she felt her answer was completed, I added a second question for her to expand more about how the office planning defined the ways to invite citizens, and through which means. When she replied I notices the was also explaining the process through a timeline, which was one of the questions I had prepared. Therefore, once I thought she had stopped talking, I asked her to tell me more about the beginning of the POT as a municipal project, and soon afterwards, I added another question about the key moments for participation during the history of POTs in Manizales. After this, the interviewee talked almost continuously for almost 10 minutes, except for a few times when I asked for clarification about unknown acronyms or terms.

A similar structure was used for conducting the other interviews. There was a leading open question about their roles or experience, and depending on how the interviewee decided to answer, I would add more questions to the conversation. For example, if their answer was given using a timeline, as in the previous example, I used that opportunity to ask them to expand on key moments in the history of their experiences.

The following are examples of specific questions I used for interviewees to expand in a topic of my interest. Some were questions I had planned in advance, and some were based on new information provided by the interviewee, and that I thought was relevant for my research, and required more detail.

Examples of planned questions

How is the relationship of Online Government and the ICT Secretary? (From an interview with de Municipal director of Online Government)

How was your experience in the POT participatory working sessions? (From an interview with a member the three socio-territorial movements)

From your experience, what is the best way to communicate something important to people in your collective/community/organisation? (from interviews with members of collective action)

How is this municipal administration promoting and using citizen participation? […] in which ways has participation changed with the Internet and social media? (from interviews with municipal officers)

I'm interested to know your opinion from the private-sector point of view, how do you see the relationship between citizen participation and new media technology in Manizales? (from interviews with co-founders of local private companies)

From Smart City to Smart Citizen, Have you heard about this approach before? What do you think about it? (from interviews in which the person showed interest in Smart Cities; two interviews with academics, one with someone from the private sector, and two interviews with municipal officers)

Examples of unplanned questions to follow up topics or based on new information:

Was any of those contributions taken into the final outcome of the POT? (from an interview with a representative of the collective SABPOT)

So, do you [his civic collective] win or lose with that institutionalisation, with those government constitutional mechanisms? […] what do you win and what do you lose? (From an interview with a member the three socio-territorial movements)

Is there, then, a disconnect between what's envisioned as digital innovation by the city, with social responsibility, and the sectors where the city focusses innovation programs? (from an interview with a municipal officer in the ICT Secretary)

Does this mean that questions asked on that WhatsApp chat are assumed by the Municipality as citizens using the Right of Petition? Do secretaries respond in the same way to questions asked online than to petitions printed and posted? (from an interview with a person in the Municipal Press Office)

So, even small municipalities, like towns, do they need to comply with the same standards from the Online Government Manual? What about the resources to do so? (from an interview with a private company co-founder)

Appendix 4. Perceptions from the field

Perceptions around citizen participation, collective action and digital innovation in Manizales.
Extended version of Table 6 in section 5.2.1

	Perceptions from the field according to:		
Topics	Municipal officers	Participants from socio-territorial movements	Supporters of participation
Citizen participation	• The Land-use Ordinance Plan (POT - *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*) as well as the creation of the Women' Secretary were two examples given of good practices in participatory processes. • By law, there were several instances of participation during the POT design (over six years). The Planning Secretary decided when and whom to invite. • Manizales received national recognition for their participatory mechanisms in the creation of the Women's Secretary. They asked people several questions via multiple channels including social media, telephone, SMS and face-to-face surveys. The municipality defined the mission and programs of the new secretary based on people's opinions.	• Citizen participation was perceived as institutional events with topics and mechanisms already defined. Such events tended to be only informative. • Institutions tended to misuse citizen participation in search of political recognition to manipulate people's opinions in support of prefabricated decisions. • Exploring participation took them to the realization that social interests from the government and the community are completely different, being the reason why participation (as understood by the government) cannot be enough. • Some expressed more trust and interest towards participatory mechanisms related to political control, these are legal tools established by the National Constitution. Since citizens initiate the production of such spaces, governmental representatives often assumed a defensive or evasive response, complicating the chances for a constructive debate.	• Municipal initiatives are short, restrictive for the majority but also permissive to a few privileged, according to personal and private interests of strategic allies. • The municipality is not interested in citizen participation that is not under their control. • Lack of awareness about formal participatory mechanisms of political control, particularly amongst younger leaders. • Participation usually occurs without enough information to argue against the power structures. This is a weak form of participation.
Collective action	• Some referred to collective action as activism (with a negative connotation of destructive opposition). • For some, citizen collectives had the capacity to propose solutions.	• Frustration with the status quo led citizens to work on alternatives that moved beyond protesting into assuming a political role by proposing other possible solutions. • In Colombia, the possibility of transformation	• Some saw Manizales society as conformist and apathetic to contest the government, as a result of decades of boosterism and cultural expectations for high sense of belonging. • Collective action in the last decade brought the topic of

	• Collective action was not seen as citizen participation without a prior invitation from an institutional initiative.	must go hand-in-hand with social pressure. • There is a need for training and education so collective action can intervene directly in decision-making. • Citizen's collectives need to work together. One of the causes of disconnect and mistrust is due to corruption at very local levels (i.e., political favours in Community Action Committee)	city planning as a new matter of public debate. • Organized collectives were generally reactive but willing to offer proposals and collaboration. • Citizen organizations, when weak, had been the usual targets for politicians in electoral campaigns. (i.e., buying votes, political favours). • Issues around environment, heritage, diversity, public space and spatial justice were among the most common motivators for collective action.
Digital innovation	• Manizales was leading citizen participation, employing multiple channels of digital and traditional media. • Manizales was recognized nationally for their use of social media (Facebook and Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter) despite not having the budget for a specialized team. • MinTIC and international bodies recognised Manizales' efforts regarding digital innovation for participation and online government, placing the city high in the national rank. • Innovation programs in the Secretary of ICT and Competitiveness were aimed at local business development and education.	• Digital innovation did not reach marginal communities. Large parts of the city had no access to the internet on a regular basis. • Technology investment in the city was based on private interests. • Some citizens lacked skills to integrate digital and social media into their everyday life. • Younger participants perceived 'digital innovation' as the development of their own capacities to create and share content in diverse platforms. (i.e., self-taught video editing for YouTube, or using Canva to design posters and invitations)	• There was interest from the city in digital innovation, but efforts were focused only on elites. • Despite the development model of "Manizales as a city of knowledge and technology", the most visible outcomes were motivated by private interests and the benefit of external investment. One outcome was a complex of call centres, and the second outcome was the National research Centre for Bio-informatics and Computational Biology (BIOS), which is arguably the most important initiative of science and technology in the country, but has no connection to social problems in Manizales. • Rankings showing Manizales at the top of social progress and innovation were based on manipulated data. Grounded research challenging the city's reputation was usually silenced.

Appendix 5: Digital media tools in everyday life of collective action

Extended version of Table 7 in section 6.2. Digital media tools in everyday life of collective action. Manizales 2017-2018. Source: Author

Digital media tools	Common uses	Incidence in the everyday	Unusual uses	Requirements	Obstacles
Email	Formal communications, invitations, structuring ideas or proposals, coordinating meetings or activities, sharing documents and contacts.	High		Low. All participants had and used their emails in a regular basis.	Most people only read email from their computer, which create delays in answers.
Facebook (Instagram and Messenger)	Promote collectives' ideas and events, with self-produced content. Connect to similar collectives, key individuals and organisations in and out the city. Replicate foreign information, memes, documents, events and invitations related to the objectives of the collective. Real-time video streaming of forums, conversations, demonstrations, and key events in general.	High	Same person opening individual accounts for every initiative they led (issues: unmanageable, low impact, and easy to forget). Replying publicly in disagreement to communications from official press and local authorities.	Low. Most people had accounts, used them actively and had access from their phones.	Mix of personal matters with organisational purposes and political stances. Need to pay in order to be seen by more people. No autonomy over the platform. Potential hacking of accounts.

WhatsApp	Coordinate activities, previously and during their development. Share own photos, audios and videos from their events. Share foreign audio-visual content related to the objectives of the collective. Share of non-related content is common in some groups, particularly large ones.	High	Structured conversation to support simultaneous creative processes (i.e. communicative piece for social media).	Low. Most people had accounts, used them actively and had access from their phones.	Assumption of inclusion and collective agreement. Some members do not use the application or were not part of the conversation when a decision was being taken. Noise and disruption in the conversation by sharing non-related material. Misinterpretations on the tone of messages create clashes. Important points getting lost in long conversations.
Online cloud storage (i.e., Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox)	Share supporting documents, photos, videos, audio, proposals, communication images (memes, invitations, posters). Facilitate simultaneous multiple collaboration in one document (to avoid superseding inputs).	Medium-high	Linked to websites as an open digital library (instead of uploading documents and videos to the website server).	Medium. Mostly accessed from computers.	Skills needed to access and use (Some older members struggled). Not enough space on free services (when videos are stored). Issues around ownership, control of access and organisation of information (i.e., Someone removing or moving information between folders without notice). Risks of being hacked or accessed when public computers are used.

YouTube	Display of audio-visual content, recorded and edited by collectives. YouTube accounts are usually linked to email or Facebook accounts. Upload videos of events. Search and make lists of songs, videos, conferences, talks posted by other individuals and collectives in and out of Manizales.	Medium-high	Big efforts around video editing are seen in some cases but are not that common.	Medium. Depending on the quality of the video specific equipment is required (i.e. video cameras, microphones, editing software)	Video recording and particularly video editing requires skills that no all members of a collective share. Sometimes these tasks relied on the same individuals.
Online maps	Show urban collectives in the city and surroundings with the purpose of visibility and networking. Mapping individuals working on urban food gardens to work as a network.	Medium	Adding information to 'formal' maps. (i.e. Adding San Jose's community park, which is considered informal by local authorities, to Open Street map.)	Medium-high. It is easier to edit maps on computers than on mobile phones. Editing maps requires certain digital skills, but once learnt members can easily pass this onto others.	Making modified maps more visible, and including them into the everyday of people in Manizales is a remaining challenge.
Skype / Zoom	Tele-conferences with multiple users, remote meetings, one-to-one conversations to coordinate projects or actions.	Medium	Collaborating online in a document or project while connected through teleconference services such as Skype or Zoom.	From low to high, depending on the use. Tele-conferences with multiple connections, and more than a couple of people on each end might need good quality internet connection, projection devices and	Delays and low fluency of conversations when there are issues with the internet connection, or the quality of the device used. Risk of conversations feeling unnatural. Some people believed conversation in such platforms can be recorded without

				external speakers. One-to-one conversations can be done using only smartphones	authorisation, or accessed by strangers, which makes some people hold back opinions during a conversation.
Blogs	Share personal or collective opinions on policies and projects. Post notes exploring aspects of collective action such as their visions of society and the city, activities, proposals, obstacles, etc. Sommetimes blogs are linked to other websites, social media accounts, or official press sites.	Medium-low	Share academic production or projects in relation to socio-territorial issues to larger audiences.	Medium. Blog posts tend to need more time to prepare than Twitter or Facebook messages. Some include images, audio or videos.	Blog entries might need to be linked to Facebook or Twitter to gain visibility. Some uses of those last two platforms replace (for some people) the necessity to run blogs.
Twitter	Get a glimpse about current news, trending topics, and opinions on issues related to individual or collectives' interests. Connect to similar organisations at national and international levels. Promote opinions, criticism, documents or activities from the socio-territorial movements. Reply to discerning posts from local authorities, organisations or individuals.	Low	Communicate with others via direct messaging.	Low. Twitter application comes installed in most smart phones. Skills used for Facebook and WhatsApp are easily transferable to using Twitter.	Twitter was not that popular among the research participants. Those who used it, employ it mostly to share other users' posts and to upload invitations to their collectives' activities.

Websites	Central point to display collective's history, vision, projects, collaborations and contacts.	Low	Space for collaboration and open archive to support collective action in Manizales. (i.e. Pluriversos' colaboratorio)	Medium to high, depending on the quality and capacity of the website. It might require some economic funding to cover server and hosting costs. A member usually does design tasks.	Compete for attention with Facebook pages and social media platforms. Require extra efforts to keep websites active, visible, updated, visited and ideally integrated into collective action digital landscape.
Podcasts	Podcasts, as self-produced, are not common among the collectives studied in Manizales.	Low	Record and broadcast 'conversas', meetings, conferences or presentations about local matters and collective action that can be of interest to larger audiences. Usually, the posts are not periodical and the links are shared on social media accounts when they are released.	Medium to high depending on the quality desired and the broadcasting service. The cases observed used free software and simple devices to record sound. The editing was minimal, as a result podcasts were longer than one hour.	While the recording and online posting does not require very specific skills, the structure and edition of podcasts need extra efforts, time and some technical knowledge. Long podcasts are unpopular and risks not being listened.