Planning for Urban Life: Equality, Order, and Exclusion in Bogotá's Lively Public Spaces

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Abstract

Bogotá has been presented as a city that exemplifies the current, purportedly more socially sustainable urban policy trend. From place-making to creativity-based approaches, the planning mainstream embraces discourses centered on social tolerance and inclusion in public spaces. Insisting on a discourse of equality, a succession of mayors have sold Bogotá as a model of inclusionary urbanism. But a qualitative study of the city's planning discourse around urban life shows the limits of Bogotá's inclusionary planning agenda. This article focuses on the concept of urban life in public space planning discourse, noting how it is used to justify the exclusion of people perceived as sources of disorder. Exploring the different notions behind this concept, the article nuances the meaning of inclusion behind Bogotá's current approach. In addition, it expands the story of how zero-tolerance policing tactics have been transferred and adapted in Latin America. The article also argues for the careful examination of strategies ostensibly intended to promote urban life, taking into account the kind of inclusion they actually do promote and its effects on the most vulnerable urban populations.
Keywords: *Bogotá, public space, inclusion, exclusion, urban life*

Resumen

El caso de Bogotá se ha presentado como ejemplo de una tendencia contemporánea hacia políticas urbanas más sostenibles socialmente. Dichas tendencias urbanísticas, desde el "place-making" hasta la "ciudad creativa," hacen énfasis en la tolerancia y la inclusión en los espacios públicos. Siguiendo esta línea, una serie de administraciones municipales han presentado a Bogotá como un modelo de urbanismo incluyente. Basándose en un estudio cualitativo del discurso de "vida urbana" en el urbanismo bogotano, este artículo revela los límites de la agenda incluyente de la ciudad. El artículo se centra en el uso del concepto de vida urbana en el discurso de la planeación del espacio público, resaltando su uso para justificar la exclusión de personas que son percibidas como fuentes de desorden. Al explorar los diferentes usos del discurso de vida urbana, el artículo busca complejizar el alcance

de la inclusión que enmarca el urbanismo bogotano contemporáneo. Adicionalmente, el artículo busca matizar análisis recientes sobre la transferencia y adaptación de políticas de cero tolerancia en América Latina. De esta forma, el artículo llama a una reflexión cuidadosa sobre agendas urbanas que son presentadas como estrategias incluyentes, pero deben ser analizadas según qué tipo de inclusión promueven y qué efectos tienen sobre la población más vulnerable.

Palabras clave: *Bogotá, espacio público, inclusión, exclusión, vida urbana*

Introduction

Urban life has long played a role in articulating planning and architectural visions for cities (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1984; Simmel 2004). From J.L. Sert's modernist "urban biology" (Sert 1942: 3) to critics of modernism, like Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of the City* (1961) and Jan Gehl's *Life Between Buildings* (2008, 2010), urban scholars have articulated their visions for the city in terms of fostering urban life. Continuing in this tradition, new planning paradigms—from creativity-based approaches to urban place-making—emphasize urban life as a key area of governmental intervention. The current, seemingly more progressive trend in urban politics that calls for more inclusionary cities positions social inclusion as a key element for promoting urban vitality (see, among others, Whyte 2001; Florida 2005; Peñalosa 2009; Gehl 2010; Lerner 2014). Concerns about the liveliness or livability of cities (or bringing them back to life—their revitalization) are at the center of current planning discourse and practice.

But what do planners really mean when they articulate visions for the city in terms of urban life? In this article, I interrogate how the concept of urban life is deployed by Bogotá's urban planners. I am interested in this concept as key to understanding some of the contradictions of Bogotá's purportedly inclusionary urbanism—in this case, the exclusion of vulnerable populations such as the homeless and street vendors from public spaces in the name of producing inclusionary public spaces.

Bogotá's story is often presented as one of astonishing urban transformation. News accounts in the 1990s presented a city besieged by violence and mired in a sense of unviability. At the turn of the 21st century, however, newspaper travel sections, documentary films, and the planning community joined to celebrate the city's apparent and improbable rise from the ashes (Fettig 2008; Dalsgaard 2009). These reports elevated Bogotá to the status of a model city and beacon of hope for cities rich and poor (Burdett 2006). Often hyperbolic, what Berney (2017: 8) called the "dystopia to hope reenvisioned" story emphasized interventions in public spaces and public transport as more than beautification efforts. Rather, they were presented as critical infrastructural interventions needed to produce a more egalitarian and accessible city (Urban Age 2007; UCtelevision 2009). Many urban scholars were ready to embrace this story because it offered a glimmer of hope for cities plagued by increasing inequalities, and a policy landscape defined by aggressive, revanchist approaches (Martin, Ceballos, and Ariza 2004; Cervero 2005; Montezuma 2005; Gilbert 2006; Beckett and Godoy 2010).

But the status of Bogotá as a 21st-century planning model has also attracted significant critical attention. There is an increasing number of studies of the circulation of

knowledge and "best practices" that document the global networks involved in producing the "Bogotá model" (Montero 2017b), as well as the marketing efforts, simplifications, and mischaracterizations employed by the city and its leaders to bolster this process (Duque Franco 2011; Montero 2017a). In addition, a sizeable body of work has documented the continuing exclusion faced by many of Bogotá's vulnerable populations in this "model city" (Maldonado and Hurtado 1997; Castañeda Cordy and García Bañales 2007; Vargas and Urinboyev 2015). Donovan (2008, 2010), for example, documents what he calls "wars" for public space as street vendors were forcibly removed from various locations. The continuing harassment of homeless people, sex workers, and other marginalized populations by city authorities and community groups has also attracted scholarly attention (Ritterbusch 2011, 2016; Galvis 2014). These studies show how under the same policies that are sold as progressive steps toward a more equal city, Bogotá's poor face further marginalization. Recent literature has likewise documented how these exclusionary trends persist across Latin America (Swanson 2007, 2013; Bromley and Mackie 2009; Crossa 2009; Freeman 2012; Aufseeser 2014; Schmidt and Medeiros Robaina 2017).

This article focuses on the discursive constructions that allow planners to justify such exclusions in the name of inclusionary policies. My analysis includes interviews with officials in Bogota's public space agencies (Planning Department/Secretaría Distrital de Planeación [SDP] and Public Space Ombudsman Office/Defensoría del Espacio Público [DADEP]) and other related sources. I build upon critiques of liveliness and livability as urban planning goals (Evans 2002; McCann 2008; Hankins and Powers 2009; Kaal 2011), to show how Bogotá's planners justify depriving many of the city's poorest citizens of their livelihoods while claiming to nurture urban life. I suggest that the persistence of these exclusions is an intrinsic element of the concept of urban life as articulated in their planning discourse.

I call attention to the kind of equality articulated in this discourse by analyzing the discourse of urban life voiced by planners and urban managers. While the literature on contemporary urban exclusion in Latin America emphasizes zero-tolerance discourses and practices (Becker and Müller 2013; Davis 2013; Swanson 2013; Valenzuela Aguilera 2013), I focus on the use of inclusionary discourse to frame urban exclusions. In doing so, this article contributes to debates about the nature of post-revanchist approaches in Latin America and beyond (DeVerteuil 2006, 2014; Murphy 2009; Herbert 2011; Huang, Xue, and Li 2014; Mackie, Bromley, and Brown 2014). This is important because Bogotá's approach was one of the first to be presented as a working alternative to revanchist urban policies (Hunt 2009; Beckett and Godoy 2010; Pérez Fernández 2010). In addition, the article adds to a mounting critique of place-making and creativity approaches to urban governance that are predicated upon the promotion of lively and inclusive public spaces (McCann 2002, 2007; Peck 2005; Donegan and Lowe 2008).

In the section immediately following, I explore the literature on urban liveliness and livability—two concepts associated with public space planning discourse in Bogotá. This is followed by three main sections: 1) a section providing context for how planning discourse is produced and explaining my analytical approach; 2) an analysis of how liveliness and livability are realized in Bogotá's planning discourse; 3) an exploration of the contradictions between these two concepts and how they are used to justify the exclusion of undesirable individuals from public spaces.

Urban Life: Liveliness and Livability

Urban life has long been a theme in urban studies. Fin de siècle urban sociology based its analysis of industrial society on what was called "metropolitan life" (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1984; Simmel 2004). Ever since, references to the city as a living thing have helped to theorize and politicize urban aspects ranging from architectural design (Sert 1942; Kurokawa 2000) to the city's connections with the environment (Gandy 2004; Heynen, Swyngedouw, and Kaika 2006). For instance, Kurokawa (2000: 6), rejecting the strictures of modernist planning, proposed a new "[a]ge of life [which] represents an age of pluralism and diversity." This pluralism, tied to unscripted, happenstance street-level social relations, has also been theorized as essential for the development of an inclusive urban society (Jacobs 1961; Gehl 1989; Light and Smith 1998; Whyte 2001; Mitchell 2003; Avritzer 2009).

These references to street life and its quality have figured in all manner of public space policies that are predicated on bringing back to life or revitalizing the city. These range from classical regeneration (Smith 2002), to place-making (Whyte 2001; Gehl 2008, 2010), to creativity-based (Florida 2005), and even "urban acupuncture" approaches (Lerner 2014).

Critical assessments of these theories have pointed out the extent to which revitalization initiatives have often resulted in municipally aided processes of gentrification (Smith 2002; Gaffney 2016). These critics note how revitalization often works to obscure the growing class inequalities produced by neoliberal development (Peck 2005; McCann 2007, 2008). They analyze the political economic implications of revitalization, revealing its consequences for different kinds of people, from the racialized poor to sex workers, street vendors, and the homeless (Mitchell 2003; Staeheli and Mitchell 2008; Herbert 2008; Beckett and Herbert 2010). As such strategies continue to move through ever-extending networks of policy transfer and intereferencing (McCann, Roy, and Ward 2013; Swanson 2013; Peck and Theodore 2015), it is important to take a closer look at how notions of urban life allow for these exclusions. In the case of Bogotá, which has traveled the world as a model of public space policy, references to urban life were key to articulate this policy.

An interest in urban life also clearly emerged in the discourse of the Bogotá planning officials I spoke with, particularly as they explained what kind of public spaces they sought to produce. Asked about the characteristics of a successful public space, officials often brought up the idea of urban life:

> I think public space has to be diverse; the more activities you can have there, the livelier, the happier it is. . . . The ideal public space must have commerce, must have life. (Interview with Public Space Master Plan/ Plan Maestro de Espacio Público [PMEP] consultant).

> Our job as [public space officials] is to promote that one person talks to another, that a passerby sees life here. (Interview with high-ranking SPD official).

But *vida urbana,* the concept most commonly used by the planning experts I interviewed, was used to refer to more than diverse urban social life. The emergent discourse of urban life, as vida urbana can be more directly translated, was used to talk about both lively and livable public spaces—concepts with a history in the English-language geography and urban planning literature dating to the 1980s.

Liveliness, defined as the existence of socially active and vibrant spaces that foster urban democracy and diversity, has a long history in the planning literature (Jacobs 1961; Gehl 1989, 2008; Holston 1999; Whyte 2001; Florida 2005; Fincher and Iveson 2008). Geographers have noted how notions of diversity, creativity, and vibrancy are often spatialized in ways that produce or reinforce exclusion (McCann 2002; Peck 2005; Staeheli and Mitchell 2008).

Likewise, livability, loosely defined as the quality of life provided in a place, has long featured in planning literature (Wheeler 1998, 2013; Godschalk 2004; Dumbaugh 2005) and has also been considered critically by geographers (Ley 1990; Pacione 1990; Lees and Demeritt 1998; Evans 2002; McCann 2007; Hankins and Powers 2009; Kaal 2011; Kraftl 2014; among many others). In particular, these analyses have pointed out how references to livability signal the imposition of order on the spatial and social features of the city (Keller 2010). All manner of planning and policing paradigms based on the regulation of street life have been predicated on livability or quality of life (McCann 2008; Vitale 2008).

As a concept and a practical planning goal, urban life refers to both street-level inclusion and the imposition of social and spatial order in the city (Blomley 2010a). In Bogotá's planning discourse the contradictions between liveliness and livability come to the fore: Official accounts of a livable city imply a degree of order and security. A lively city, however, cannot be overregulated or staged. As Staeheli (2010) notes, a crucial facet of this contradiction is the political questions about what constitutes order or disorder. Sorting out these contradictions clarifies how policies ostensibly predicated on openness and diversity turn against these very principles by prioritizing limited notions of order and security as necessary preconditions for "proper" urban life.

The concept of order has long been key to various theories of urban life. Blomley (2007, 2010a, 2010b) highlights the contradictions between ordering the efficient flow of people and things, and political ideals about diversity and inclusion in public spaces. Blomley links this contradiction to Foucault's theorization of the regulation of commerce in the history of governmentality. Foucault distinguished between the state's prerogative to effect order and the theoretical notion of inclusion that is part of a liberal democracy. As Blomley (2012) reminds us, this distinction matters because the administrative logic of what Foucault called "police power" is separate from larger political principles. Putting different people and activities in the "right place" follows a different logic than does providing for broad inclusion in public spaces. Pointing out these diverging logics, however, should not lead to the conclusion that the exclusion that emerges as a result of police power ought to be accepted in the name of the greater good (Martin 2012). Highlighting the places where liveliness and livability collide helps to repoliticize the administrative logic of police power by revealing which subjects the lively city is for.

Focusing on the role of order in fostering urban life also helps explain how Bogotá's approach can at once challenge revanchist discourses and practices in Latin America

and also engage in the revanchist strategies it is supposedly challenging (Beckett and Godoy 2010). The literature about zero-tolerance policing approaches in Latin America has tended to highlight the story of northern policy trends that "headed south" (Swanson 2007; Mitchell and Beckett 2008). Bogotá's emphasis on nominally inclusionary politics has been singled out as a softer adaptation of these trends (Pardo 2007; Hunt 2009; Berney 2010, 2011). Some have celebrated Bogotá for avoiding the aggressive aspects of zero-tolerance policing (Beckett and Godoy 2010). Untangling the various notions inherent in the concept of urban life shows how Bogotá's approach is fully compatible with the goals and methods of revanchist purification.

An analysis of planning discourse sees planners' insistence on equality as more than just empty rhetoric. Anchored in a long tradition of urbanism as social policy (Hatch 1984; Holston 1995, 1999; Stickells 2011; among others), Bogotá´s planners understood their space-producing role as an opportunity to design more equal relations between different classes of people in public spaces. Yet planners singled out street vendors and homeless people as agents of disorder who threaten urban life, thereby preventing more equal relations to materialize. They talked about these subjects as "invaders," harkening back to deep-seated notions of the "uncivilized" and "uneducated" racialized lower classes at the root of Latin American liberalism (Henderson 2001; Jacobsen 2005; Alberdi 2006). Rather than softening the rough edges of an imported zero-tolerance urban governance regime, Bogotá's inclusionary discourse makes more sense as an articulation of social difference that sees disorder and disorderly people as threats to orderly, civilized inclusion.

Methodology

This analysis of planning discourse looks at the content and uses of the concept of urban life by Bogotá planners. The focus is on planners involved in creating the public space policies that for many commentators defined the "Bogotá model" in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While policy and its outcomes are relevant sources of information, I focus on the experts in charge of producing and implementing policy (Li 2005; Boyer 2008). By focusing on the discourse of these experts, I am not implying that their ideas are homogeneously circulated throughout the state bureaucracy and seamlessly enforced as coherent policy. Nor am I implying that they are passively received on the ground by different kinds of people. Indeed, the populations I single out as subjects of exclusion devise various methods to resist, reinterpret, or otherwise negotiate their livelihoods vis-à-vis official policy (Donovan 2002, 2008; Parra Vera 2006; Morris Rincón 2011). At the same time, as powerful discourse capable of both constructing policy and interpreting its meaning to the public, expert discourse is a very valuable source for understanding the workings of state power (Ferguson 1990; Mitchell 2002).

To analyze expert discourse, I conducted 51 semistructured interviews with key subjects, including city officials, former officials, and consultants hired by the city. Participants were recruited based on their work as mid- and high-level officials in the SDP and DADEP, which are the two main cabinet-level departments involved in drafting and implementing public space policy in Bogotá. Snowball sampling continued until a saturation point was reached, when the difference between isolated opinions and pervasive discourse in the planning community was clearly discernible (Hay 2000). Interview subjects

participated in drafting public space policy from the first Antanas Mockus administration (1995–1998) to the Gustavo Petro administration (2012–2016). One policy proposal from the second Enrique Peñalosa administration (2016–2020) is also considered. A majority of interview subjects served during the Mockus-Peñalosa-Mockus decade (1995–2004), during which most of the groundwork for current public space policy was laid down. I focus on this decade when the DADEP was created and the PMEP was drafted (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 2005) because that was when Bogotá officials started to position public space as a crucial element of city planning, drawing a direct connection between public space and the promotion of a more equal city.

Political differences between various administrations aside, it is possible to identify persistent trends in planning discourse about public spaces, starting in the mid-1990s. Indeed, it was then that public space and its associated discourse of urban life became important among Bogotá's planners. Before the mid-1990s, public space was not an important part of the city's political or planning discourse. Ahead of the 1991 mayoral elections, for example, the city's leading architects complained about the candidates' inability to "grasp of the concept of public space, which is not just a sidewalk or a street, it is a city where you live, eat, breathe, and work" (Vallejo 1991). Their frustration signaled the upcoming change in the discourse about public space and urban life in Bogotá: *El Tiempo* published about 200 articles about public space in 1990; the same newspaper published about 2,000 in 1998.

Public space has remained as a central feature of Bogotá's planning discourse, even after the Peñalosa and Mockus administrations. The forms of community governance of public spaces, inspired by early notions of liveliness and enshrined in the PMEP, continued and grew from 2005 onward, during the Luis Eduardo Garzón, Samuel Moreno, and Petro administrations (Galvis 2014). A discourse about vida urbana persisted among planners despite the particular emphases various administrations placed on public space policy during their tenures.

The key interview subjects in this study included several heads and former heads of SDP and DADEP, as well as other high-level officials. Interview subjects were asked about the process of producing public space policy and its goals. They were also asked about their ideal public spaces, specifically as they related to creating urban equality. Interview transcripts, policy documents, reports, city council ordinances, and public statements were analyzed systematically using NVIVO software. The analysis tagged the use of vida urbana and other related words and phrases that point to the same concept (such as lively or happy—*alegre*), refer to the nature of street life (such as environment—*ambiente* and climate—*clima*), as well as its antonyms (dead—*muerto*, empty—*vacío*). These concepts were then analyzed in context to reveal their systematic connection with ideas about the goals of public space planning, specific subjects such as street vendors and the homeless, and the connections between these two.

In talking about life in public spaces, planners articulated a discourse that was pervasive across the various administrations. The quotes in this article are representative of this discourse, which connected planners' normative notions of the public space the city ought to have with their notions of order and the threats against which public spaces should be protected. Despite disagreements about how to implement these ideas

on the ground or ideological positions about what is public in public space, planners were surprisingly consistent in highlighting urban life as a key aspect of public space. In what follows, I analyze this discourse around the concepts of liveliness and livability, exposing the contradictions inherent within them.

Life in Bogotá: Liveliness and Livability
    References to urban life were key in articulating planners' normative ideas of what inclusionary public spaces should be. This section explores how planners envisioned public spaces as 1) lively in their capacity to offer dynamic and diverse environments; and 2) livable in that they are secure and well-ordered. Organizing the analysis along these two axes shows how meanings are articulated in relation to specific subjects, questioning public space as an arena in which to address social differences.

    In our conversations, Bogotá´s planners described their job as infusing life into public spaces. In doing so, they described urban life in terms of what the literature previously cited defines as liveliness. Asked about what makes a successful public space, planners described unprompted social interaction and unrestricted access. In this version, a lively place is free from excessive regulations or design limitations. More importantly, it is a place defined by its openness to a diversity of peoples and activities. Beyond being open as places for unscripted social contact, Bogotá planners described public spaces as key for the circulation of ideas and political debate. In the words of one influential planner, in lively public spaces all forms of social public expression are included:

> A plaza, should work one day as a market, the next day a military parade, another day a religious procession, and the next day just for one person to go from City Hall to the church. [It should foster] quotidian urban life, ceremonial urban life, and political and popular expression. (High-ranking SDP official).

    More importantly, Bogotá's public space planners saw in lively public spaces a direct way for various social classes to address their differences. According to this conception, lively public spaces that are open to a diversity of peoples and activities work as loci of urban equality. Likewise, when liveliness and openness are choked off by regulating access or otherwise obstructing urban life, social equality is threatened. Mayor Peñalosa often juxtaposed images of living or dying public spaces, insisting with tireless consistency that lively spaces are crucial for social equality:

> [Obstructing access] creates a more segregated city, a more exclusionary city where higher-income people leave, and what public space should be, a place for all to meet as equals independently of our socioeconomic position, dies. (Negrón 2010b).

    This emphasis on equality played a role in guaranteeing an influential spot on the international lecture circuit for Peñalosa and other Bogotá officials (Galvis 2017). According to their view, lively public spaces were not just a quaint feature of beautifying the city;

they were essential for producing an urban society in which people can meet in public spaces as if they were equal.

But behind this notion of lively public spaces lay ideas about the right kind of people egalitarian spaces should work for. In articulating these ideas, planners often turned to what the literature refers to as livability. The logic of livability was most prominent when planners talked about public spaces as a policy instrument, rather than as an abstract space where social differences would be addressed. This was particularly salient in discussing the idea that public spaces can be used as pedagogical tools (Hunt 2009; Berney 2011, 2017). As the planner quoted below makes clear, the political role of public space goes beyond inclusion and includes communicating to citizens the government's ability to effect control:

> [P]ublic space was the classroom where we had to intervene for people to change behaviors. . . . [W]e started to see the need that someone [be in charge] of public space [because it] is a crucial part of the governmental process. There is [where] people are going to feel if there is a government or not: if you have a degree of control over what happens in that space. (Former SDP head).

This quote is an example of how order is key for planners as part of producing a livable city. References to urban life are concerned with creating a controlled environment. For example, in a telling passage of her account of serving in Mockus's cabinet, Government Secretary Alicia Silva noted, "The administration's vision was to implement strategies directed at different aspects of city life with the goal of improving the 'urban climate' and thus reducing violence and criminality" (Silva Nigrinis 2009: 48). In this way, Bogotá did not seem to depart much from the general objectives of broken windows policing: Orderly public spaces deter further disorder by teaching people how to behave properly. The unconventional nature of Mockus's interventions in urban life—or, as Silva puts it, the city's "climate," captured the attention of *Bogotanos* and international commentators alike. The main goal of these interventions was to produce an ordered and secure environment (Silva Nigrinis 2009: 44). Mayor Mockus made this point very clearly in a TV interview:

> So the goals were: to increase voluntary rule compliance, to increase people's capacity to kindly correct each other to follow the rules. . . . The state appears when people make themselves citizens. There is something in common with the theory of zero-tolerance: Small behaviors matter. But the difference is people first have to listen. If we all learn to understand the rules, following them becomes less an issue of the stick. (Negrón 2010a).

Notably, Bogotá's strategy in public spaces stemmed from the need to regulate "small behaviors." As many a street vendor in Bogotá knows, this regulatory strategy does not preclude "the stick." However, it is in regulating the life of the street that the municipal

state finds the opportunity to communicate its vision. Planners envisioned public spaces as key places to produce a livable city by establishing a didactic order in them.

This recourse to livability can be seen more clearly when considering planners' notions of the city as a living being. They related urban life to the city's good health and the interventions needed to preserve it. Reminiscent of urban planners at the turn of the 20th century, planners used bodily metaphors to make statements about how the city worked, enumerating the threats and pathologies to be addressed and the treatments available. One planner's description of the importance of public space for the city's health is revealing:

> If I have problems in public space, the city collapses. It's like the blood system in the human body: [Public space] makes the city work like a human body, and so if I alter the life of a particular [public space] I start to create a series of problems in the rest of the city. (National Planning Department official).

Here, the life of public spaces matters beyond lively, inclusionary places or stages for pedagogical intervention. Crucially, these well-ordered spaces are evidence of robust metropolitan health. Planners used these metaphors to highlight the need for heightened order in public spaces. Poorly behaved citizens, those who will not learn from Bogotá's pedagogical exercises, were construed as threats to the city's life—ill creatures to be extirpated from public spaces.

One of the most revealing examples of this medical approach was the embrace of "urban acupuncture." Starting in the late-1990s, programs to infuse life into Bogotá's neighborhoods by beautifying small city parks were described as pinprick interventions intended to preserve the overall health of the city (Lerner 2014). This approach continues to this day. In 2016–2017, the Bogotá city council debated the creation of Beautification and Appropriation Zones: *Zonas de Embellecimiento y Apropiación* (ZEAs) to "recover the *vitality* of areas suffering physical and social deterioration [. . .] beautifying and making them safer" and "recover the *vital signs* of specific areas" (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 2016, emphasis added). Recovering the city's "vital signs" goes hand in hand with the pedagogical concepts embedded in Bogotá's policymaking (Berney 2011, 2017). Almost requisite in myriad policy and planning instruments since the mid-1990s, the proposed plan for ZEAs includes among its objectives to "incentivize a culture of citizenship [to] form citizens interested in working together to [. . .] improve their quality of life" (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 2016: 2).

Small-scale, strategically located interventions provide loci for urban social interaction that transcends the intervention area itself. These loci of vitality are supposed to have a contagion effect in surrounding neighborhoods and ultimately improve the overall health of the city. Lively spaces, in other words, are supposed to help produce a more livable city. Accounts of the links between small-scale liveliness and large-scale livability reveal much about who exactly is supposed to enjoy (or not enjoy) urban life.

Alongside the pedagogical effects mentioned earlier, the proposal for ZEAs states that lively spaces become livable by "guarantee[ing] the displacement of the agents of

insecurity and disorder that have coopted public spaces" (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 2016: 2). In other words, providing the environment for the right kind of people and the right kind of liveliness, the city would be able to marginalize the threats to the city's good health and "recover its vital signs." Who exactly these agents are is not explicitly defined in the plan for ZEAs. But this is not an oversight. This reference to "agents of disorder and insecurity" has a long history in Bogotá's policymaking. Among these agents, as I explore in the following section, are street vendors and the homeless (Donovan 2002; Galvis 2014).

The Living City: Contradictions and Exclusions

In this section, I explore how the apparent contradictions between promoting liveliness while pursuing livability are resolved when considering specific "agents of disorder and insecurity" such as street vendors and the homeless in public spaces. I propose that the coming together of these two logics under the notion of urban life only makes sense when subjects who are perceived to threaten the health and order of the city are excluded. In planners' discourse, a healthy, lively Bogotá necessitates the exclusion of its most vulnerable citizens from public spaces. The aggressive methods documented in Bogotá against these populations (see Donovan 2008; Ritterbusch 2011; Galvis 2014) are not just deviations from an otherwise inclusive policy. The exclusion of these people is, ironically, at the core of a discourse about promoting urban life for a more equal city.

In interviews with Bogotá planning officials, contradictions surrounding the concept of urban life emerged most clearly when planners were asked about street vendors and homeless people. One high-ranking planner made clear the challenges the homeless pose to his idea of lively public spaces:

> I am excited when I see a [homeless person] who can enjoy public space. . . . If [they] lie down to get some sun for a moment, that's okay. But if the homeless person appropriates a bench to live there . . . then that doesn't work anymore: You enjoy this space but allow others to use it too. (High-ranking SDP official).

Merely being homeless does not disqualify you from partaking in the inclusive nature of public spaces. In fact, a homeless person who sits "for a moment" to enjoy the park represents a powerful symbol of the inclusive potential of Bogotá's public spaces. However, sleeping or "living" in the park—some of the material conditions that define a homeless person in the first place— are deemed unfair because they represent unacceptable private encroachment on a public space.

Despite planners' insistence that interventions in lively public spaces were not simply about beautification, they considered unsightly subjects as unworthy to appropriate the spaces. Initiatives like ZEAs, predicated on the promotion of public appropriation of public spaces, were not meant for people like the homeless to actually "appropriate a bench." ZEAs are devised as "beautification interventions [against] [v]andalism, the presence of homeless people, lack of control [among others] that can result in increased criminality" (Concejo de Bogotá 2017: 3). This signals a sense of the kinds of people

whose presence detracts from lively spaces. Following the logic in Mayor Peñalosa's quote above, the presence of "unlively" subjects such as a homeless person engenders insecurity, scaring away the right kind of lively people. This constitutes a threat to inclusionary spaces. In their presence it is impossible for lively public spaces to fulfill their role of places to "meet as equals independent of socioeconomic conditions."

The plan for ZEAs shows how notions of inclusion in the lively city were often qualified by ideas about how unlively subjects detract from urban life in public spaces. The idea of specific people who, instead of benignly appropriating, encroach on public spaces, was pivotal in planners' ideas about urban life:

> Life is that which is more inclusive: If you walk by and see people sitting [in this outdoor café] . . . [l]ife is what we are doing here: people talking to one another. . . . A stand selling magazines and cookies and chocolates is invading the ground not with people, but with the exclusive use of one single person who is exploiting the use of public space and taking space away from people. (High-ranking SDP official).

> [With] fifty vendors staked out on a sidewalk, you can't walk through. People have to be able to walk freely. Being able to sit down at a café and have a cappuccino calmly in a pedestrian area, I think that is enjoyable (PMEP consultant).

> There is a lot of pedestrian circulation and all those vendors don't even let you walk, enjoy the landscape . . . being able to go have a coffee, that is interesting, but has to be regulated and organized (PMEP consultant).

These planners' description of the outdoor café points to urban life as lively, unscripted interaction, with room for everyone. They arrive at livability when depicting the typical vendor as encroaching upon universal public access and, crucially, impeding "proper flow." The change from liveliness to livability is thus determined by lively or unlively people and activities: an outdoor café adds to lively public interaction, whereas a street vendor subtracts from the city's livability. The role of encroachment and circulation as features of this discourse cannot be understated: The planners celebrate the outdoor café as a valuable opportunity to have "people sitting" and condemns the street vendor for obstructing people's passage.

In keeping with place-making paradigms, Bogotá´s planners place significant emphasis on producing places where people want to stay rather than move through. At the same time, people like street vendors and the homeless are regarded as overstaying their welcome. These planners describe good public spaces as those that slow down the city to a contemplative stroll, a moment spent on a park bench to enjoy some sun. Actually remaining in these spaces is seen as preventing the legitimate enjoyment of others, effectively killing the spaces. The key distinction, however, is not about the amount of time that separates acceptable temporary enjoyment from permanent encroachment. Instead,

the distinction is based on the kinds of uses that define subjects such as the homeless or street vendors: urinating, washing, sleeping, and making a living selling chocolates should have their own places somewhere else. This suggests that the motivation to create a livable city is not just about creating an ordered environment. It is also about sorting out different classes of people and activities and their diverse claims for public space. In other words, it is about assigning the proper space and social place for everyone.

Like many approaches described in literature as "post-revanchist" or "compassionate" (Murphy 2009; Herbert 2011; Mackie, Swanson, and Goode 2017), this position is not articulated as an attack on the public provision of services for the most vulnerable. These distinctions reveal underlying notions about the purpose of having lively spaces, who are these places for, and therefore, who should be excluded for a lively place to serve its purpose. Making an argument about the need to keep "disorganized" street vendors from "invading" public space, a planner noted how order is necessary to create the conditions that make the right people stay:

> An ordered environment creates security. That is one of the most important aspects in a city. . . . As long as people feel safe, they can feel a sense of belonging toward public space, [and they] will use [it] more frequently, not just to go from one place to the other, but to remain there. (High-ranking SDP official).

Consistent with the plan for ZEAs and in line with broken-windows policing theories, security is said to emerge from the creation of orderly environments. There is no evidence that street vending or panhandling alone make places less secure. But the point planners make about security is not that vendors or the homeless themselves are or attract criminals. Rather, planners argue that they scare away the right kind of people, the ones who should remain in a public space to make it lively. The use of logics of flow and circulation to make this point is striking, considering planners' rhetorical commitment to social equality: Street vendors and the homeless should not be allowed to stay put because they scare away or obstruct the movement of others. Vendors and the homeless should be removed to encourage these others to stick around.

Such discursive framings of public space make sense to planners because talk of order is not just about efficient circulation and talk of security is not just about crime reduction. Rather, it is an expression of a notion of urban life underpinned by ideas about the right social and spatial place for different peoples and activities. This suggests, moreover, that ideas about pedagogical intervention and equality are less about education and generalized social inclusion and more about guaranteeing a social order in a particular kind of public space. Such notion of urban life explains why Bogotá has policies to push street vendors out of certain areas, while simultaneously boasting of inclusionary and socially sustainable urban policies.

I highlight planners' contradictions as evidence of how a particular notion of social order is explicit in their language and approach to planning, and not to suggest their talk about equality is merely deceit. Indeed, looking at how planners solve their own contradic-

tions provides evidence of how Bogotá's approach works to promote an abstract version of equality while functioning as a exclusionary mechanism.

The most prevalent way for planners to make sense of the contradictions between promoting lively spaces and producing a livable city was to abstract the meaning of inclusion. When faced with the specific, competing claims for public space, planners deferred to the general collective as the ultimate owner of the city:

> [Vendors] are using a public good that belongs to everyone and limiting the space to be and circulate for millions of citizens. . . . Public space belongs to 8 million citizens [in Bogotá, and] if I use it for my benefit I am taking it away from them. (High-ranking SDP official).

In a classical liberal move, diversity dissolves in the general public. Everyone is welcome to partake in public space as if they were all equal, as long as they do not upset a general sense of order. Disorder, in turn, threatens the life of public space and its ability to neutrally welcome everyone. Disrupting this order or using public space for one's own benefit is seen as an infringement on the sanctity of the abstract general public. The contradictions inherent to Bogotá's notion of urban life in public spaces are evaded by circumventing the concrete, embodied difference represented by subjects that "abuse" public space. Ironically, the abstract life of the city is given preeminence over that of people who are literally living in, or making a living from, public space.

Despite all the talk about equality, the material conditions that produce competing claims for public space are key in defining what kinds of people threaten urban life. In other words, Bogotá's planning discourse requires the specific claims of people like street vendors and the homeless to be out of the picture for abstract, classless subjects to safely exercise their right to the city.

Conclusion

Bogotá's public space planning discourse is, at first sight, inspired by the nominally progressive goals of promoting urban life in inclusionary public spaces. An analysis of this discourse shows the confluence of two elements of urban life. On one hand, it is presented as unscripted liveliness. On the other hand, livability is evoked to talk about creating order and providing the proper physical and social places for people and activities. This dual nature complicates the picture of Bogotá as a working alternative to revanchist urban governance. Indeed, although the city has been celebrated as an alternative to revanchism for its pedagogical approaches as well as for its emphasis on inclusion, planners' notions of successful public spaces reveal an intent to sort out subjects, putting them in their correct places. In doing so, the familiar discourses and practices of globally mobile policies such as broken windows policing rear their head.

Like other urban strategies centered on diversity and creativity, Bogotá's celebration of diversity works to effectively proscribe subjects like the homeless and activities like street vending from public spaces. These groups are presented as threats to the vitality of the city, agents working against the inclusive potential of urban life. Similarly, appeals to order and security work to further proscribe these people and activities, presenting

them as blights or as urban pathologies that warrant removal and relocation to their other physical and social spaces.

Bogotá's planners insist on presenting urban life as a key element in defining the meaning of inclusionary public spaces. The discourse analysis presented here shows, however, how the urban life they promote is tied to specific notions of the citizens and activities that should be included in public spaces. Urban life thus plays a role in justifying both the general formulation of an inclusionary policy and the exclusions made on the ground in its name. Indeed, contradicting notions of urban life, movement, and order in the city reveal the subjects to whom equality—and a rhetorical right to the city—are directed in Bogotá: those who have the material ability to enjoy the diversity of activities that lively public spaces should offer.

The pervasiveness of this kind of discourse throughout Bogotá's planning community suggests that the city's renown as a successful experiment in urban inclusion must be qualified by the experience of many of its most vulnerable citizens. Aggressive enforcement against vendors and the homeless is not just a deviation or unintended consequence of otherwise inclusionary discourse. Instead, embedded in the very notion of what constitutes the life of the city are the justifications for these exclusions.

However, the implementation of zero-tolerance practices is far more complicated than the uncritical adoption of models applied elsewhere. While in some instances "interreferencing" (Roy 2011) such policies, Bogotá's implementation of aggressive, exclusionary urbanism cannot be construed as revenge by the elites to recover the city from the working classes. Indeed, what has been theorized as the adoption of street purification strategies in Latin America can be contextualized in Bogotá as part of a larger process to solidify one version of urban life (Swanson 2013). By the same token, Bogotá's approach confirms the serious limitations of compassionate or post-revanchist approaches, which themselves have been much circulated globally (Murphy 2009; Herbert 2011; Sparks 2012). Indeed, the case of Bogotá shows how claims to more progressive forms of urban governance often cloak exclusionary agendas (May and Cloke 2014; Van Puymbroeck, Blondeel, and Vandevoordt 2014; Hennigan 2016).

Urban geographers have theorized public spaces as a site of struggles and class dialectics (Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1996; Smith 1996). Bogotá´s urban planners see public spaces as sites where these conflicts should dissolve and other, positively framed, dialectics should emerge. They see removing the stubborn reminders of socioeconomic difference as the best way to defend the life of public spaces. Yet the contradictions between the concepts of liveliness and livability in the discourse of Bogotá's planners expose the exclusion of the very people whose livelihood depends on actively exercising a right to the city.

The implementation of place-making strategies in other cities may respond to different logics, mobilizing urban life in ways that make claims for inclusionary urbanism more genuine. As the case of Bogotá suggests, however, other ways of mobilizing urban life as a means to promote urban equality must be judged not in terms of their abstract embrace of equality, but rather on the way they treat those whose lives and livelihoods depend on realizing their right to circulate in and appropriate public space.

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