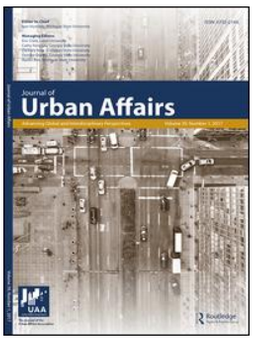

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Contentious memories: History and urban redevelopment in Bogotá, Colombia

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ABSTRACT

In 2004, the city of Bogotá designated the historic working-class neighborhood of *Las Aguas* an "Urban Renovation Zone." Subsequently, in 2012 the Universidad de los Andes proposed a massive redevelopment plan called *Progresa Fenicia*, with city approval. Redevelopment is imminent and residents' responses have been diverse. In an effort to contribute to the literature that seeks to enrich and nuance our understanding of urban renewal processes and gentrification, this article explores the subjective experiences of long-term residents and the role of history and memory in such processes. Our analysis is based on participant observation and 31 oral histories from long-term residents of the small urban area designated for intervention. Through them, we seek to illuminate how residents understand their personal experience of the transformation of the neighborhood, and their part in urban renewal processes that extend into the past but also the future. We emphasize the agency of long-term residents, arguing that the past and memory play a significant role in how people define place, position themselves vis-à-vis urban interventions, and shape their experiences of urban redevelopment beyond monetary issues, class displacement, physical landscape, and housing policy.

> Today that community tradition is lost, because before we had little shops that were the center of the community, where we went for a drink. That does not exist anymore, that town tradition, neighborhood tradition, does not exist anymore.
> —Farid

Introduction

The neighborhood of Las Aguas, northeast of Bogota's historic city center, has undergone important transformations since it came into being as a working-class neighborhood in the early 20th century. Urban industrial growth in the decades of the 1890s and 1900s brought some of the first Colombian factories producing candles, paper, soap, hats, chocolate, beer, and glass into the area. Since then, the area had a bad reputation among city elites who associated it with bars, brothels, and crime, and considered the racially mixed working class inhabitants to be intrinsically flawed, both physically and morally. This notoriety had a lasting effect. Despite deindustrialization in the mid 20th century, until today the area is considered dangerous, degraded, and in need of intervention.

In the second half of the 20th century, Las Aguas has faced a new and increasingly powerful neighbor: the Universidad de los Andes. Founded in 1948, during its first decades this private university coexisted side-by-side with Las Aguas's residents without much interference. Since then, the university has physically expanded. At first, the institution bought a few houses in the area, but in 2008 it built its massive 10-story Business School right in the heart of Las Aguas. This has radically

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transformed the area and impacted on Las Aguas's inhabitants in manifold ways. While some residents have economically benefitted from the university's expansion, others feel threatened by the changes and complain about rising prices in local shops.

Now even larger change looms on the horizon. In 2004, the city government classified an important area of Las Aguas, an 8.8-hectare zone called "Triángulo de Fenicia" (Fenicia Triangle) that is inhabited by nearly 460 families, as an "Urban Renovation Zone" (URZ). A URZ is considered to be a "deteriorated" area in need of "revitalization" and "rehabilitation."[1] Local law allows urban interventions in renovation zones to be carried out by the city or by private actors. Thus, in 2012 the Universidad de los Andes proposed the redevelopment plan called *Progresa Fenicia*. The project claims to champion urban renewal that avoids gentrification through a participatory scheme that brings together the interests of residents, potential investors, the university, and the city government. In allegiance with city law, the project states it will enlarge the extent and quality of public space, accessibility, economic activity, environmental sustainability, shared financial benefit, and will secure the permanence of current residents. To this end, current property owners are offered the possibility to partner up with the project. If they sign over their property, in return they will receive a residential unit of the same size in one of the new buildings.

Despite these efforts to integrate the current residents in the renewal process, it remains to be seen if low-income property owners will be able to stay in the rapidly appreciating area in the long run. Even less clear is what will happen to the large number of tenants who live in the triangle. This is the case of *inquilinatos* or tenements in run-down houses, where multiple families have lived—in some cases for decades—sharing kitchen space and bathroom. In addition, independent of the outcome of the renewal project, it is clear that the Fenicia Triangle will be deeply transformed, and with it an important chapter in the history of Bogotá will be over. In the face of looming change, residents reflect upon Las Aguas's history, some with hope, others with dread.

Research on urban renewal processes and gentrification has focused on examining the economic, political, and cultural aspects of the phenomenon. In the present case, the importance of political and economic decisions is also evident: the politics and economics of both the University of los Andes as well as the city administration are a decisive factor in the transformation of Las Aguas. Yet, as Hwang and Sampson (2014) note, the common way of studying urban transformation processes based on census data and administrative measures falls short in explaining the complexity and nuances of the process. In addition, little attention has been paid to the long-term residents who are affected by urban renewal, and how they negotiate the process (but see Khechen, 2018; Parekh, 2008). Affected residents are often portrayed as passive victims who appear to lack agency. A few studies, however, focus on the identity and lived experience of residents in gentrifying neighborhoods (e.g., Freeman, 2006; Williams, 1988 in Parekh, 2008). Our study aims to contribute to this reorientation of urban renewal studies by concentrating on the subjective experience of residents and their strategies in confronting the processes that renewal implies. More specifically, we highlight the role of history and memory in urban redevelopment (Ng'weno, 2018; Ocejo, 2020)

Herzfeld (2010) argued, even if it seems initially somewhat counterintuitive, that historical preservation has come to justify urban renewal processes. One layer of history is officially declared worthy of (state) preservation. This, in turn, delegitimizes any other built structure that can then be torn down in the interest of the "greater good." Yet, whose history is taken into account in public remembrance? Based on oral histories from residents of the small urban area designated for intervention, in this article we examine the role of the past and of memory in place-making in the context of the urban renewal project *Progresa Fenicia* in Bogotá, Colombia. We take memory to be the process of making meaning of a past experience. Memories are thus not mirrors of experience that can be retrieved at will; they are articulated in the present and thus belong to it (Halbwachs, 1992; Portelli, 1991; Stern, 2004; Trouillot, 1995). The past will be relevant to our analysis to the extent that local history must be taken into account in order to understand the shape that urban development takes in the present, as well as the meanings that people assign to both the past and their present concerns. We want to highlight that urban renewal is not a matter of the present alone:

it has a long history, and people's experience of it is inextricably tied to the stories through which they assign meaning to both the past and the space they inhabit. The focus of the article is thus on the personal, subjective memories of times past by residents. Why do they have such divergent perceptions of the past? What effect does memory have on residents' present-day positioning vis-à-vis de urban redevelopment project? How do their life experiences relate to their memory and to their expectations for the future?

The article is organized as follows: we begin with a short discussion of urban renewal/gentrification processes, highlighting the importance of history and memory in such processes. The second part historicizes urban development to highlight its deep roots. We discuss the changes of Las Aguas during the 20th century, emphasizing a long history of city administration that has looked upon the area as one in need of transformation. While in the early 20th century the trend was to use a language of "degeneration," pulled from racial theories of the time to describe unwanted areas and their inhabitants, today the language has changed to one of "deterioration" that calls for "revitalization" and "rehabilitation." In the third section we discuss our data derived from 31 oral history interviews and participant observation carried out in the area in 2013–2014. Here, we try to unpack the meaning of urban renewal for the people most affected by it. We present the dissimilar ways in which interviewees assess the past, and analyze the ways in which that diversity relates to their differing experiences, present takes on the project of urban renewal looming over them, and attitudes toward what the future might bring. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of history and memory in urban renewal processes both as instruments of control and tools of empowerment or agency for the people affected.

Urban renewal, gentrification, and memory

Since Ruth Glass coined the term *gentrification* in 1964, and geographer Neil Smith promoted the concept to examine urban transformation processes under capitalism, there has been much debate about how to define gentrification and/or whether there are substantial differences in the process across time and space. There is, however, wide agreement that the most important characteristic of gentrification is the replacement of one class by another. "Gentrification ... refers ... to *the class dimensions of neighborhood change*—in short, not simply changes in the housing stock, but changes in housing class" (Slater et al., 2004, p. 1144; emphasis theirs). In this context, researchers distinguish *displacement* from *replacement*. The first describes a process whereby "pressures on the housing market from affluent groups create inflated rents and prices which can push out the low paid or unpaid over time" (Atkinson, 2000, p. 307, in Slater et al., 2004, p. 1144). With replacement, in contrast, "working-class homeowners [take] advantage of the rise of property values to retire, sell out and move to the suburbs or beyond," leading to "a process of slow replacement of a group which is contracting by one which is growing" (Hamnett, 2002, p. 25–27, in Slater et al., 2004, p. 1144).

The class dimension of urban renewal project is similarly observable in the Colombian context. Nevertheless, the direct and uncritical application of the term *gentrification* to the Global South, and in our case, Latin America, is questionable. After all, the economic processes giving rise to the phenomenon and the regional socioeconomic circumstances are different. Thus, local specificities should be a point of departure for research, instead of being assumed. In this article, we argue that attention to the particularities of local urban renewal are highly relevant to understand the similarities and differences between gentrification processes in different global locations. We thus focus on the experiences of urban renewal by the inhabitants of Las Aguas to highlight the human side of gentrification (Freeman, 2006; Gibson, 2015; Mirabal, 2009; Shao, 2013). This approach, which allows for different subjective perspectives, offers a more nuanced picture of gentrification (Freeman, 2006). It exposes the negotiations and accommodations of people who navigate urban renewal processes, and moves us beyond simplistic portrayals of winners and losers of urban renewal processes that reduce those most affected to passive victims.

In this article, we draw attention to memory and history as key to understand how people give meaning to place (Hayden, 1997). Specifically, our case study highlights how places trigger emotions and memories, both positively and negatively. They are thus vital aspects of people's everyday experience, and even identities. This idea is reflected in Waterton et al.'s (2017) discussion of memory and heritage. The authors highlight the materiality of memory embedded in urban settings, placing "heritage narratives and the spatiality of those narratives in the thick atmosphere of the built environment" (p. 11). Jones and Evans (2012), in turn, emphasize the active connection between bodies, spaces and memory. Spaces trigger "recollection of place attachment" (p. 10). Importantly, this is a relation that develops with time:

> There is, therefore, a strong time component to this, with affective relations creating a developing series of emotional connections; body and landscape become entangled with the individual's memory of ongoing physical engagements with place. In short, connections to place build up over time. (Jones & Evans, 2012, p. 7)

Thus, a focus on memory can offer us insights into the deep effects of place on bodies and emotions.

Beyond this, we approach memory as a contextualized practice of positioning that plays a vital role in urban transformations. As Schrauf (1997) noted, (autobiographical) memory is a form of "reconstruction" of personal experiences influenced by social factors such as affective states of socio-cultural circumstances. Yet, in the process of reconstruction, the past is also interpreted and evaluated, which leads, in turn, to "inferences, lessons, and thematic insights" for the future (Singer & Bluck, 2001, p. 92). Moreover, history and the active memory of it, highlights local specificities. After all, the destruction of the (historical) built environment and the displacement of long-term residents also eradicate a locally particular history. Attention to memory and people's renderings of history, therefore, helps us understand how urban transformation processes are locally specific, despite sharing similarities with gentrification processes in other parts of the world.

Furthermore, focusing on memory allows us to delve into a more profound understanding of urban renewal: one that brings people, their experiences, perceptions and stories into conversation with issues like economic value, class displacement, physical landscape, and housing policy. Exploring the stories through which people associate and define their space, adds important layers to the conversation on gentrification (Henery, 2017). Thus, memory complicates the way city dwellers assign value to their property beyond the monetary, bringing in concerns about ancestry, and filling space with stories that, just like people, also inhabit it, imbue it with meaning, configure it, and risk being displaced. Talking to Las Aguas's neighbors about their past, makes the possibility of displacement and its consequences stop being merely a matter of present conditions, and acquires new dimensions. Present anxieties are informed by previous experiences of displacement as well as past and present precarious living conditions, which also shape how people project and are able to imagine the future.

Discussing the different ways to remember and portray history, we argue that urban residents use memories to position themselves and make claims vis-à-vis urban interventions. Thus, in contrast to other studies of urban renewal processes that emphasize the loss of local histories caused by the displacement of the original population, here we emphasize the agency of long-term residents. Without denying the often violent impact of urban renewal, our research shows that residents are, first, not a homogenous group with shared interests and, second, not simple victims. Instead, it will become evident how long-term residents adroitly participate in shaping memory and history as an integral part of how they experience the process of urban transformation. Memory and history play different roles in the process, including the shaping of identities, the attribution of meaning and value to space, the articulation of political positions, and the negotiation of benefits. Even if they are not always (or ever) successful in their endeavors, we argue that urban renewal is not simply a one-directional process but that people subjected to it do impact on its workings and development. Yet, far from celebrating some form of "heroic resistance" or exaggerating the power of low-income urban residents, we simply emphasize the contested nature of urban renewal processes and the role

of memory in those struggles. Contemporary contestation over urban transformation is about the present, the future, and also the past.

Memory and history in this context have a triple role: on the one hand they are instruments individuals use to position themselves and to ground personal claims either in favor of or against the urban intervention. On the other, they are a collective, living "good" that is in danger of being lost by the transformation of the neighborhood. Finally, we have history, the socio-historical processes of the local, regional and national past, which provides not only a frame to present-day processes but also actively impacts on, and is in dialogue with them. Here we focus especially on the first use to show how residents use history to their advantage in the face of urban restructuring. Remembering the past emerges as an active social process—of which people are agents, actors, and subjects (Trouillot, 1995, pp. 22–23)—that affects on and is affected by urban renewal processes. At least in the local context, and maybe even more generally in the Global South, the outcome of redevelopment is not a foretold story.

Las Aguas: Industrial growth and urban poverty in the shadow of a growing university

While independence from Spain came in the early 19th century, Bogotá maintained its colonial appearance and grew very little during the first decades of republican life (Mejía, 2000, pp. 139, 161). Until the late 19th century, Las Aguas marked the northeastern fringe of the city, a suburb occupied only by humble shacks and dedicated mostly to rural activities. The church of Las Aguas dates back to the 17th century, but it was only recognized as a parish in 1882, a transformation that indicates the integration of the area as a proper neighborhood of the city. The census of 1912 reports that the neighborhood had 11,864 inhabitants which amounted to 10% of the city's population; it was one of the most heavily populated areas of the city (Mejía, 2000, pp. 359, 365). While in the centric neighborhoods of the city the rich and the poor lived side-by-side, peripheral neighborhoods like Las Aguas were mostly occupied by the poor (p. 388).

During the first decades of the 20th century, Bogotá experienced rapid demographic growth. From 121,257 inhabitants in 1912, it grew to 143,994 in 1918, and to 235,421 in 1928. As the population increased, the city started to transform. Expanding street lighting, water and sewage systems, streetcars, cinemas, and cafes slowly changed the colonial aura that had accompanied the city throughout the 19th century. Socio-spatial differentiation became more marked: the elites started to move out of the city center into new suburbs, while eastern and southern neighborhoods like Las Aguas consolidated as working-class quarters known as *barrios obreros* (Archila, 1991, pp. 57–58).

Demographic and urban growth was accompanied by industrial expansion. Several factories set up shop in Las Aguas. Small factories produced candles, paper, soap, hats, and chocolate. However, the most prominent was *Cervecería Germania*, a beer factory founded in 1889 by the German Leo S. Kopp. Soon after, he would also found the glass factory *Fenicia* in Las Aguas, to produce the bottles for his beer instead of importing them (Oligastri Uribe, 1990). Kopp also built housing for his employees in the area, consolidating Las Aguas as a popular working-class neighborhood. Characterized by overcrowding, housing in *barrios obreros* consisted mostly of single-room dwellings called *tiendas*, and tenement houses. The government saw them as hotbeds of disease, moral degradation, and crime, and they became the targets of organizations like the *Junta de Higiene* formed in 1887, renamed *Dirección Nacional de Higiene* in 1918, to identify and tackle hygiene and health issues but also a wider so-called "social question" (Miranda et al., 1993, pp. 176–191; Noguera, 2003, pp. 47–80).

At the base of hygiene policies was the belief—backed up by the racial science of the time—that the poor were inherently "degenerate," that is, that they suffered from a hereditary physical, intellectual, and moral digression or weakness. Doctors found signs of this degeneration in a perceived proliferation of certain diseases including tuberculosis, leprosy, and cancer, anatomical defects, low intellectual capacity, fatigue, impulsiveness, and presumed criminal tendencies. Vivid

debates in which doctors and intellectuals participated in the 1920s explained this problem as the result of a mix of issues: the adverse effect that living in the tropics was assumed to have on human beings, the influence of Indigenous and Black heritage, and centuries of servitude under Spanish rule. However, following the neo-Lamarckian eugenic theories of the time, they believed that degeneration could be countered with hygiene and education. They focused their energy on campaigns to promote the use of shoes, cleansing habits, sanitary facilities, proper ventilation and lighting of the home, appropriate uses of leisure time, as well as to combat sexual promiscuity, prostitution, and the extended drinking of *chicha*, a fermented corn drink (Muñoz, 2011). Their interventions aimed precisely at working-class neighborhoods like Las Aguas (Noguera, 1998). State intervention over this urban area thus has a long history.

A 1938 report of the *Departamento de Higiene* about the hygiene conditions of the houses in Paseo Bolivar, an area which began in the easternmost area of Las Aguas and continued south, read: "Most settlements in Paseo Bolívar are not properly houses, but mostly huts or shacks, miserable shacks cohabited by peoples in unspeakable promiscuity, tolerant to the calamities inherent to this state of things, and to the inclemency of the natural elements" (as cited in Urrego, 1997, p. 109). This quote is illustrative of the association that intellectuals and doctors at the time made between the precarious living conditions of the poor and an assumed moral deviation. To them, both the houses and the inhabitants of this area were in need of state intervention.

While the discourse of racial degeneration tied to eugenics faded in the mid-20th century, the area continued to be seen as dangerous and in need of reform. Urban planning continued to be an instrument of marginalization and criminalization of poverty-stricken areas deemed in need of order and hygiene, all in the name of urban modernization. In 1966 an article in the newspaper El Tiempo, for example, portrayed Las Aguas as a neighborhood that had "stagnated in the 19th century," and used adjectives like "mediocre," "ugly," and "shelter of ruffians and women of the night." According to the author, the neighborhood now only awaited urban "remodeling."[2] Urban renovation plans continued to target the area in the second half the 20th century. One example was the *Programa Integrado de Desarrollo Urbano de la Zona Oriental de Bogotá* (1971–1978), oriented to "revitalize as well as provide facilities and urban services" to the area (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 1972). This included the construction of the *Avenida Oriental de los Cerros* in 1973, which generated significant opposition by the inhabitants of the poor eastern neighborhoods where many families were displaced for the construction of this avenue (Grupo de Estudios José Raimundo Russi, 1975).

During the second half of the 20th century downtown Bogotá changed drastically. From 1951 to 1964 the city faced the largest growth, from 715,000 to 1,697,000 inhabitants. In the following decades growth continued at a slightly slower pace, reaching 5,484,000 in 1993. The elites who still lived downtown moved out, as did a good part of the industry and service sector, including finance. The result was an extended notion that downtown was in "decay." During the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s private and public interests developed real state projects to "recover" and densify the city center. The old downtown Santa Bárbara neighborhood was completely demolished to develop the apartment complex Nueva Santafé, which displaced old impoverished residents for the benefit of a new middle class. In Las Aguas, two 31-story towers—*Torres de Fenicia*—were built on grounds that used to belong to the Fenicia glass factory. Las Aguas population thus diversified to include middle-class professionals. In 1985, the city formulated a larger strategy for the recovery of downtown Bogotá called *Plan Centro*. The plan sought to recover public space, promote housing in the area, as well as to improve accessibility and mobility (Jaramillo, 2006).

For most of the second part of the 20th century, the task of modernizing Colombia's city centers was at least implicitly attributed to new actors such as educational institutions. In Bogotá, three educational institutions were founded in or close to Las Aguas: The Universidad de los Andes in 1948, Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano in 1954, and Universidad América in 1956. Over time, these institutions encroached upon and transformed the old working-class neighborhood. In the case of the Universidad de los Andes, the expansion is clearly evidenced in a series of plans of the university's campus over time. Figure 1 depicts campus in 1991. Most of the university's buildings are contained in the main campus; the surrounding neighborhood is not depicted in the map.

Figure 1. General Campus Map, Universidad de los Andes, 1991.
Source: https://campusinfo.uniandes.edu.co/es/recursos

The 1999 campus map evidences the university's expansion beyond its closed-off campus into Las Aguas (Figure 2). To the north, we can see two new areas depicted absent in the 1991 map: a public green space, *Parque Espinoza*, and the site Ñ33. This corresponds to the area previously occupied by *Cervecería Germania*, which later became a public parking lot. After purchasing the plot, the university built on it the eight-story School of Engineering that also houses the main library and

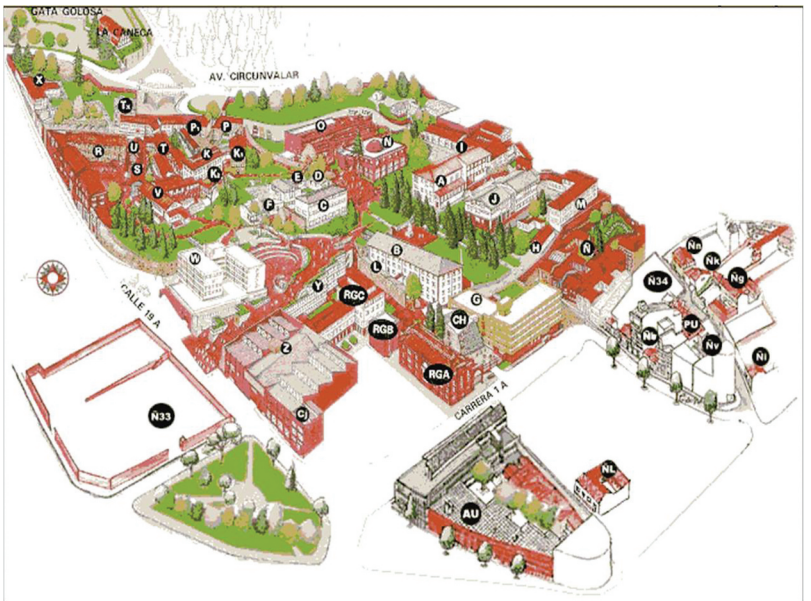

Figure 2. General Campus Map, Universidad de los Andes, 1999. Author: Carlos Forero.
Source: https://campusinfo.uniandes.edu.co/es/recursos

auditorium. To the west, we can now see more university buildings labeled AU, ÑL, Ñ34, Ñn, Ñk, among others.

Ten years later, in 2009, the expansion has progressed. Figure 3 shows the School of Engineering building (ML), and a new 10-story building to the northwest of it labeled SD, which houses the business school. Furthermore, the surrounding area of Las Aguas is now clearly shown in the map and several labels identify houses the university has purchased in the area.

The maps illustrate how the Universidad de los Andes, with the support of the city administration, became an important agent promoting notions of progress and modernity in the area. A small institution at the beginning, it coexisted with barrio Las Aguas without much interference during its first decades. In the past two decades, however, the student population has grown significantly and the institution has subsequently expanded physically. In 1998 the university had 9,926 students (Universidad de los Andes, 2004, p. 17) and in 2018, the student body amounted to 18,985 students (Universidad de los Andes, 2018, p. 55). The expansion of university buildings and growing student presence in the surrounding neighborhood has been accompanied by changes such as increased presence of security guards with dogs in the area. University expansion has also brought new business opportunities. Shops and restaurants sprang up and ever more street vendors cater to the students' needs. Public space, like the *Parque Espinoza*, is now clearly dominated by student presence.

The university's spreading beyond its historical confines has radically transformed the area and impacted inhabitants of Las Aguas in new and radical ways. Today, the neighborhood is a stark mix of students in trendy outfits and expensive cell phones and the remaining working-class inhabitants of the neighborhood. Some residents evidently benefitted from the added commercial possibilities,

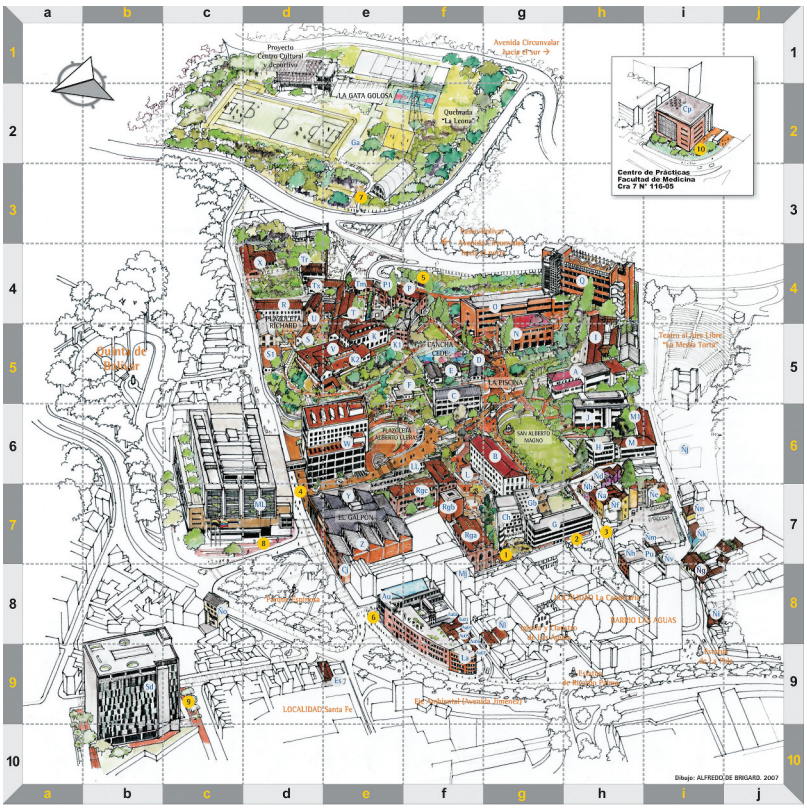

Figure 3. General Campus Map, Universidad de los Andes, 2009. Author: Carlos Forero.
Source: https://campusinfo.uniandes.edu.co/es/recursos

opening new restaurants and shops that cater to the student population. Others demolished buildings to turn their property into parking lots that are in high demand despite the university's efforts to discourage private means of transportation. But there are also a substantial number of long-term residents who feel their neighborhood is being taken over and who complain about the rising prices in local shops.

Even larger change is looming in the near future. In 2004, the city government classified an area within Las Aguas denominated *Triángulo de Fenicia* (after the glass factory that used to be there) as an *Urban Renovation Zone*: a "deteriorated" area in need of "revitalization" and "rehabilitation." Since the mid-1990s, in the context of the new Constitution of 1991 and its efforts to deepen democracy, several Bogotá administrations have used a language of "transformation," "renewal," and "renovation" mixed with democratic ideals such as inclusion, civil participation, and social justice. While public investment in basic rights and public services increased heavily—noteworthy examples include increased access to health care, education, transportation, and public space—urban development has also been guided by neoliberal values and policies such as the privatization of public services. Urban interventions that emphasized inclusion and equality, have led to exclusion in contradictory ways such as the displacement of informal street vendors in the context of the expansion of public space. Effectively, Bogotá's urban renewal projects in recent decades, considered models for urban development in the region, have had at best ambivalent results, reflective of the tensions between neoliberalism and democratic ideals (Pérez, 2010).

The classification of the area of Las Aguas as an Urban Renovation Zone was part of the 2004 *Land Use Plan* (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, or POT) that projected Bogotá's urban planning vision for the following 12-years. The plan is an effort to redefine the role of the state in urban planning through long-term strategies, the designation of considerable public resources, and the possibility of seeking public-private partnerships. The law explicitly lays out that urban intervention in renovation zones in specific areas of the downtown area can be carried out by the city or by private actors. It is in this context, that in 2012 the university proposed a plan for participatory urban development called *Progresa Fenicia*. The plan claims that it will renovate the area without causing gentrification through a participatory plan that brings together the interests of residents, potential investors, the university, and the city government. Aligned with the POT, the project states it will enlarge the extent and quality of public space, accessibility, economic activity, environmental sustainability, while at the same time offering current inhabitants a share of the financial benefits and the option to stay. Concretely, it offers property owners the possibility of becoming partners in the project. If they join, they sign over their property and in return will receive an equally sized apartment in the modern buildings that will replace the current constructions.

The university's proposal is innovative in that it envisions urban renewal without displacement, highlighted by the pervasive use of concepts such as "inclusion" and "participation." Progresa Fenicia has cast the university as a socially progressive institution that challenges previous renewal paradigms. It is, however, far from clear whether this model of urban renewal will indeed prevent displacement or if it will eventually still lead to gentrification and exclusion albeit in a more subtle form (Pérez & Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá y Secretaría Distrital de Planeación, 2015).

Indeed, various residents of Fenicia are worried about displacement in the short or long run. Even though they do not have much leverage against the powerful player that the university is, residents are not simple victims in this urban renewal process. They have formed activist groups in opposition to the project with the slogan "¡Las Aguas no se tocan!" [Las Aguas will not be touched!]. Others simply refuse to become partners.

Yet not all residents are necessarily opposed to the renewal project. In fact, responses are varied, as varied as the residents themselves. The area includes a few buildings with apartments owned by middle-class professionals, who tend to see the project as an economic opportunity and who join into the discourse of progress. Working-class property owners, in contrast, are more divided in their opinions. Some favor the university's initiative but others remain anxious about the risk of future displacement by the forces of the market. The situation of residents who are not property owners is

more precarious. This group includes people who rent rooms in overcrowded tenements or *inquilinatos*, as well as families who have inhabited their home, often for generations, but lack legal title to it. Since they do not have deeds to formalize an owner status, they cannot join the project in the same conditions as legal owners. Their future in the area is much more uncertain.

Framing memories: Attributing meaning to urban renewal

While residents' fate and reaction to the renewal process is diverse, it is undeniable that Las Aguas is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The character of this foundational Bogotá neighborhood is certain to change. In order to understand the implications of that transformation, the previous section focused on documenting the neighborhood's past via archival sources. This section also deals with the past but not with the intention of understanding its facts per se; here, we resort to oral history as a tool to understand the meaning that current residents attach to that past in the present context (Passerini, 1987; Portelli, 1991). The following analysis is based on 31 semi-structured oral histories recorded with Las Aguas's residents in 2013–2014. The interviews were designed and carried out with a team of undergraduate and graduate students of the School of Social Sciences at Universidad de los Andes. Seeking to capture subjective views and experiences, we opted for semi-structured interviews that included two broad main questions but allowed for dialogue and narrative to freely flow. First, we inquired about the interviewees' earliest memories of the neighborhood, i.e. when they arrived, or if they were born and raised in the area, about their childhood memories. How did they perceive the past of the neighborhood? Second, we inquired about their perception of how the area and the experiences of its inhabitants changed over time. Interviews lasted between 40 to 90 minutes. People often showed us their homes and brought out family photo albums as part of the conversation. These turned out to be useful ways to explore more deeply their ideas about the past. Interviewees were selected seeking to include diverse experiences and perspectives: long-time residents and recent arrivals, middle-class professionals and informal workers, homeowners and people who rent, people from different age ranges, from various residential locations within the neighborhood, and also individuals who were for and against the urban development project.[3]

The memories recorded in the interviews varied widely and were often contradictory to the point that they seemed to be describing different places. When speaking of Las Aguas's past, some described it as a friendly and safe place where, despite the hardships of life, neighbors knew and took care of each other. Others portrayed Las Aguas as a dangerous area characterized by crime and prostitution. Why did residents have such differing interpretations of the past? Here, it is not relevant to inquire if memories are correct, but to inquire why they differ so sharply. How do conflicting interpretations relate to different past and present life experiences, to fears and expectations, and ultimately, what do these different memories tell us about the meaning of urban renewal for Las Aguas's residents? Before analyzing the differences, there are commonalities we must address.

One constant was the identification of the most important transformations with the expansion of the universidad de los Andes: "Before the arrival of the university, this area consisted only of houses," commented Hernando, contrasting a previously mainly residential neighborhood with the recent changes. Some interviewees made reference to other sources of change like the renovation of public space brought about by the construction of the so-called *Eje Ambiental* in the late 1990s. The Eje is a boulevard designed by prestigious architect Rogelio Salmona, which brought the San Francisco River back to the street surface after being channeled underground in the 1910s. Some inhabitants also mentioned the construction of a TransMilenio (Bogota´s BRT bus system) line along Carrera Tercera as a source of renovation in the area. Yet, the increasing presence of the Universidad de los Andes was the most referenced cause of transformation in the area. Residents frequently mentioned the increasing presence of large numbers of students in the area, taking over public spaces that used to be theirs such as sidewalks or the Parque Espinoza, as well as the resulting commercial explosion. Where previously only a few shops catered to local residents, now new restaurants, stationary and copy shops have opened. There is even a hair salon catering to the new

clients. Interviewees agreed in temporally placing these developments in the last decade, and in particular connecting them with the arrival of the business school building, known as the SD, in 2008: "When they built the SD everything started to change."

Importantly, the transformations do not have the same meaning for all the interviewees. While residents share experiences of change, their memories and hence their interpretation and assessment of it are diverse. Without denying the ample variety of memories,[4] two forms of framing memory stood out among the different ways in which our interviewees configured their past: some memories cast a positive light on the transformations brought about by the university while others framed it as a process of deterioration of the local community. Let's begin with the former.

Horacio is a photographer and filmmaker who has lived in the neighborhood for 20 years but has had his business in Las Aguas for 5 decades. Asked about his perception of the neighborhood when he first arrived in the late 1960s, he emphasized the existence of many brothels: "more or less 50% [of the area] were brothels." He explained that during the day it was not dangerous to walk around, but at night "things got more complicated." He also described the neighborhood as made up of shacks. According to him, with the expansion of the university, the area has become "cleaner" and better. "Now there are only normal people, everyday people … poor or middle class but everyone is a good person. For many years we have not seen any problems."

Anita and Jorge, a couple living in the neighborhood since the early 1990s, own a copy shop catering to students. When they first opened their store, they were one of the very few businesses in the area, located at the only entrance to the university. They remarked that the neighborhood used to be unsafe. They remembered the fear they felt about a man who roamed around the neighborhood and intimidated students and business owners by requesting money, not so much as charity but as a form of payment for not getting robbed. Students were mugged walking in the area if they were not careful. "The university has changed the surroundings significantly; a lot. The fact that the university has been expanding has provided security; it has generated more safety in the area because they use surveillance."

Rodrigo and Alba, in turn, have lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years. They arrived in Las Aguas as newlyweds and rented a room in a large house. A few years later they were able to buy their current home. Today they laugh about how precarious it was when they purchased it: a single space, with dirt floors, a wooden stove and a broken ceiling that let the rain in. Over time they fixed it, making improvements and adding two floors above. Today they run a small grocery store on the first floor that sells mainly to residents. While students do not frequent their street, the couple still appreciated their presence in the area. They too recalled living in fear until a few years ago, when according to them the university's surveillance made the area safer. Alba recalled that in the past when she took her children to pre-school, to the east of Las Aguas she was in danger of being robbed or even being caught in street gun-fights. They recounted how when they hailed a taxi on the street to go home and told the driver where they were headed, drivers refused to take them because of the lack of security in the area. In their view, the neighborhood used to be insecure, and this changed thanks to university security guards and cameras. "Before, this neighborhood was ugly; there was much insecurity. But this has changed with the university."

Another testimony that casts the university's influence in a positive light is that of Consuelo, a retired woman who was a public servant for over twenty years and has lived in the area for three decades. Consuelo lives in an apartment complex called *Multifamiliares*, and her neighbors are middle class professionals. She suggests a stark difference between them and other inhabitants of the neighborhood. While her direct neighbors are "good people," the rest of the area is "a neighborhood of thieves." Consuelo narrated how she never walked around the neighborhood, especially street blocks other than her own. It was only when the university built the SD building that she started moving around the area. Referring to the neighborhood beyond her block, she said: "To me, that did not exist … . It was an area of old shacks, about to fall. Mostly settlers, people without property deeds."

These memories of progress and improvement contrasted with those of other residents who recalled a tranquil past with friendly neighborly relations prior to the transformations that the

university's expansion has brought. They had fond memories of old neighborhood life. Hernando, 58 years old, born and raised in the neighborhood, was happy to narrate what everyday life was like: "On First Street there were *piqueteaderos* [restaurants that sell local, popular food, in an informal setting]. There were shops everywhere. And the people who helped customers were grandmothers who would ask you: *What do you want, son?*" He recalled a happy childhood: "I remember when I was little, going outside to play, playing with fireworks, and having awesome Christmases … . All the families were very united." Clara, 75 years old and also a resident since birth, agreed: "We were very happy in the neighborhood, which was very healthy." She contrasted her happy childhood with the present: "It was not like now, with so many drunkards around. Girls and boys could go out and play with their toys, and neighbors invited my mother to have some wine with fritters." Milbia gave a similar testimony of her childhood in the 1960s: "The risks of today did not exist then, because I could skip and stroll down every block, and this was a healthy neighborhood." Elda (56 years old) also portrayed her childhood as very happy, as she described the different games that she played with her friends on the streets.

Residents who recalled a happy past expressed concern about the changes brought about by the university. They complained, for example, about the rising prices of foodstuff. Hernando mentioned that stores now charged people 800 or 900 Colombian pesos for a pound of potatoes that according to him "really costs 500 Colombian pesos." He added, "People are taking advantage of the arrival of the university to charge more than it is worth." Others voiced concern about a historical loss caused by the transformation. Elda's 28-year-old son complained that the changes in the neighborhood not only meant tearing down houses but that it would also destroy the history of the area. Clara contrasted her happy childhood with a dark present, which she characterized as unsafe because of robberies, and an uncertain future: "The neighborhood is in trouble because everyone has to leave; and since many do not have legal papers and such … . The neighborhood is in deep trouble."

As Clara's testimony suggests, the negative view of recent changes goes hand in hand with an anxiety about the future. Milbia, for example, said she worried that public services in the area would become much more expensive after the urban renovation. Bogotá has a system of differentiated costs for public services like water, gas and electricity according to areas of the city. Neighborhoods are classified according to a system of strata (*estrato)* from 1 to 6, in which the higher levels subsidize the costs of public services of the lower ones. At present, Las Aguas is classified as estrato 2. Residents have pushed the university to make the city government guarantee this estrato for the next ten years in order to prevent their displacement due to rising costs of living. People like Milbia worry, however, that the estrato will eventually change nonetheless.

Why is it that for some residents of Las Aguas the distant past was a happy time and recent changes were considered negatively, while for others it was the past that was dark and dangerous, whereas recent changes were positive? As Halbwachs (1992), Portelli (1991), Stern (2004), and Trouillot (1995), among others suggest, memory is not merely a recollection of past experiences. Memory is also the meaning people attach to the past, and the process of remembrance and attributing meaning is grounded in the present. Indeed, the differences in the way residents of Fenicia recall the past are by no means arbitrary but reflect residents' diverging experiences. Thus, those with positive memories of the past tended to be working-class residents who mostly did not have the privilege of home ownership. Instead, they had lived lives as tenants in inquilinatos. That is, they rent a single room for their family to live in, while sharing bathroom, kitchen and laundry spaces with the other tenants. It is not surprising that they were the most anxious about the possibility of displacement, thus cutting the emotional string that attached them to the place. While Progresa Fenicia offers homeowners new housing in the form of apartments in the new housing blocks in exchange for the old houses that will be torn down for the renewal project, the situation of non-owners is more difficult. Renters have been offered savings plans to eventually buy low-income housing included in the project. Yet, besides the uncertainty that this will become true, non-owners' informal employment situation hardly allows them to set aside money; their income is barely enough to cover their daily expenses.

A common way of making a living among this group of interviewees is a *chaza* or small street cart they push in and out of their homes on a daily basis and from which they sell candy, snacks, and cigarettes to the students. Others work in domestic service or in the parking lots of the area. Thus, their present is one of economic hardship, and while they often describe their past as characterized by adversity as well, they interpret the past as joyful and peaceful in contrast to their present-day uncertainties. Evidently, their memories are shaped by a present full of challenges. Moreover, some of them had previously been displaced either by urban development projects in other areas of the city center or by inquilinato owners who suddenly kicked everyone out to sell their property. These previous experiences of displacement clearly inform their perceptions of Progresa Fenicia today.

In contrast, those who see the past as dangerous and the present in a more positive light tended to have more economic stability. A few among them were professionals. All of these interviewees owned a business in the area and were homeowners. Their experience of the neighborhood differed strongly from the previous group: many had moved to the area much later and consciously sought out the place for its location in the city center. At the same time, they did not feel all too comfortable in the working-class neighborhood. They rarely mingled with the older groups of residents, from whom they differentiated or distanced themselves. Thus, Felipe, 33 years old and working for an NGO, represented the poor youth of the neighborhood as a group who "prefer to rob rather than get a job that pays minimum wage." Another example quoted above is Consuelo, who told us that while the professionals who are her neighbors in the apartment complex are "good people," the inhabitants of other parts of the neighborhood, which she associates with informal housing, are mostly "thieves." The expansion of the university and the transformations this has generated were an improvement in the eyes of these residents: the university brought more security, more students, and new fancier shops to cater to their needs.

Diverging memories of the past, however, are not only due to different life experiences. They are also shaped by the present and the challenges people face today. That is, memory can become a tool, a platform to negotiate present-day interests. Homeowners with relative economic stability are in a more comfortable position vis-à-vis Progresa Fenicia. They see the urban renewal process as an economic opportunity. Even if they do not contemplate staying in the area knowing full well that the cost of living will rise significantly, they expect to make a profit: the value of the new apartment they will receive in exchange for their old homes will be many times higher than what they could sell their current property for in the real estate market. From their perspective, the transformations brought about by the university and the urban renewal process hold great promise, and they value that promise more than the memories of, and/or their attachment to place. It is clearly in their interest to join in a discourse of progress—Progresa Fenicia—from a dark past to a better present and even brighter future.

Residents who face an uncertain future, in contrast, nostalgically interpreted their pasts as better times. They did not deny the hardships they had endured: many of the interviewed women shared stories of working from an early age, for example, washing clothes in the river, or having to fetch water from it before the aqueduct was built. María, a 79 year-old woman who was born in the neighborhood and always lived in rented rooms inside inquilinatos told us: "We washed [laundry in the river] because in these rooms there was no water so we had to bring the water up from the mountain … . I was very young when we had to take the *múcuras* [earthenware jugs] to collect water. … My childhood was hard, our childhood was hard, but we made it." The challenges of the present, however, importantly differed from those of the past: the outcome of the urban renewal project and its direct effects on these residents is uncertain, which makes the future feel quite threatening. Thus, residents in precarious living conditions staked their claims to the present by supporting a view of decline, destruction, and uncertainty. As we can see, the past is relevant in a contentious present.

Memory and place-making

As the previous section illustrates, memory is tied to the contemporary political positions of people vis-à-vis looming urban renewal. In this section, we want to highlight two other dimensions of memory that show the richness of the uses that residents of Las Aguas attribute to it: memory as a form of valuing place and memory as a form of claiming ownership of space.

Residents of Las Aguas value their neighborhood for different reasons. A prime attraction is the strategic closeness to the city center. At the same time, located at the foot of the mountain range that shelters Bogota's eastern edge, residents appreciate that despite living downtown there is a connection with nature. Furthermore, in a city famously bogged down by daily traffic jams, the area is favorably located and has good access to transportation infrastructure. Some residents also appreciate the fact that, as a result of historical permanence, they know most of their neighbors. Indeed, Milbia declared she lived in paradise "because of nature, because I am close to everything in the center … . What don't I have here in the center? I call [this area] spring and paradise, because to me this is the most beautiful place in Bogotá." Yet, her fondness of the neighborhood was not only due to its location. "I like the center because I have lived here all my life … . This is where I studied, where I lived my first years, my adolescence, where I met my husband and where I had my children."

This quote introduces another element that many residents alluded to when speaking about why they value Las Aguas: the neighborhood is home to their cherished personal memories. The place embodies those memories; it becomes an emblem of people's lives. During the interview Elda remarked many times that her family has a long history in Las Aguas: her grandparents and parents were born and spent their lives there. Her father worked at *Fábrica de Vidrios Fenicia* and with much effort bought the house she currently lives in with her children and grandchildren. She recounted the different games she played in the mountain behind her house, taking the time to mention and show us pictures of particular places like trees, brick walls and water tanks—some of which have disappeared and some of which still stand—down to the places where family dogs were buried. She indicated where her childhood friends lived back then, and the places where she had built relationships over the years. The mountain was particularly important for her: "In the mountain we would take a rope and a sweater or blanket to make a swing; that was a swing for us. We would tear up a cardboard box and use it to slide downhill. That was our slide; that was our life." In a similar way, 58-year-old Hernando, who was also born in the neighborhood, pointed out the location of every house his family lived in, and how many of them have turned into parking lots. His wife, Carmen, told us proudly that their children were born right there, in the house were they currently live and where we interviewed them. Hernando's mother was the midwife.

Besides the personal memories that fill the neighborhood with meaning, long time residents also commonly appreciated certain areas to which they attributed historical value. Several interviewees mentioned the beer and glass factories especially as significant elements of an industrial past. Interviewees shared their memories about the time when the factories were still running. In Elda's words:

> My mom used to send me to the store for groceries and I would get distracted in the glass factory because the machines looked like hands, and as a kid you would stay there mesmerized seeing the machines put lids on the bottles. We also liked the sound, because it was not exasperating; it was a noise that attracted you to stare at this deal with the bottles. And it was even more interesting to me because I knew my father had worked there.

María Emma, a 65-year-old woman who has lived in the neighborhood all her life, recalled that her first job was in *Germania*, the beer factory, when she was sixteen. "They paid me very well; I worked day and night, even on Sundays; I made good money there." She remembers they employed people from the neighborhood and beyond for different tasks including putting labels in the bottles, cleaning, and packing them, among others. She also recalled factories that produced hats and candy. Regarding Fenicia, the glass producer, she said: "Fenicia produced a noise in the bottling part, that was when my dad was still alive years ago. But then the factory left and it felt desolate; it felt bad

because the noise was gone. We missed it." Graciela, who is in her 80s, also recalled: "Fenicia was right here, where bottles were made. Back then one would come close to see how from a falling drop resulted a bottle." Shared memories like these ones add an important layer of value to the neighborhood. Some residents contrast this value with the economic value that they accuse Progresa Fenicia of using to assess the future of the area. In their eyes, the university overlooks the many meanings and values that this place holds for them.

In their narratives one can also identify memory as a way of claiming ownership of space: knowledge of who lived where, which buildings and stores used to be there, popular anecdotes of local characters and even ghosts, are told by people in an effort to show their mastery over the area. María for example, stated that she is the oldest person of the original residents who is still alive at 79 years old. After mentioning some of the old residents who have died, she was proud to say that sometimes she asks people if they knew so-and-so just to see their pensive faces but knowing full well that they did not know them. By claiming to be the oldest resident who holds the memory of those who are gone, she legitimized herself as an authentic resident and the true holder of history. That discourse also sought to claim ownership of the place. This is similar in Clara's narrative. At 75, she claims that the other residents who claim to have been in the neighborhood for that long are lying: her and her sister Maria are the only original residents still living there.

Germán is particular in this respect. He was the president of the Board of Communal Action (*Junta de Acción Comunal*) at the time of the interview, an elected neighborhood committee for the development of the community. Given his political position, his narrative about the past differed from that of regular residents in that he spoke for all as a holder of the neighborhood's memory. His responses were long and well articulated, and full of anecdotes. He told us for example, the story of "La loca Teresa" (Crazy Teresa) who according to him was famous for owning the best *chichería* in the area and was hated by the women because she flirted with their husbands. Even when we asked questions to change the conversation, he would return to his stories: "Well, returning to the history of the neighborhood, I have more curious things to share … " and he would go on.

The uses of memory that we found among our interviewees reveal that it would be misleading to portray memory as a political tool alone: it holds an important place in the construction of, and emotional attachment to place, and of the self. However, its political uses are also relevant. Residents who fear displacement have organized themselves into a committee called *No se tomen las Aguas* to protest against Progresa Fenicia. Opponents have used their memories as a tool in the struggle: they emphasize a happier past before the arrival of the university and also insist on the historical value of the neighborhood as an argument to prevent its tearing down. The testimony of Elda, whose son actively participates in No se tomen las Aguas is exemplary. We started the interview by asking about the history of her family and how they had arrived to the neighborhood. Very soon, after telling us that her parents and grandparents had been born in Las Aguas, just as her, her children and grandchildren, she leapt into the present:

> I am 56 years old and I have always lived here; I have three children who were also born in this house. I have a granddaughter and she was also born here. And there's tradition. I, personally, am very sad; I even got sick, because as soon as this project emerged it was very hard for me to hear that they are going to kick us out of a neighborhood where our tradition has taken place.

During fieldwork we encountered the constant problem of being identified by our interviewees with the university. Even though we explained that we were researchers not associated with the urban renovation project, people often spoke to us with the hope of communicating to the university. Indeed, we reported our findings to the team in charge of Progresa Fenicia, but we have no direct power of decision. But Elda tried hard to explain to us why this project and the prospective of having to leave were so hard for her. She did not only speak of the past: she thought that the interview could be useful for her because it was a way to voice her concerns to the university. She spoke of her past, but the intention of defending her present interests was clear.

Yet, those in favor of the project also mobilize the past to legitimize their claims. They stress that the neighborhood has been under deep transformation for a long time, and that the historic, traditional neighborhood is long dead. Some of them, like Germán, value the past but insist that it is gone and embrace the discourse of progress: "We cannot keep on living in *adobe* houses, with the donkey chained to the door and raising pigs with leftovers; we need to move forward." Misael stresses that when he arrived in the neighborhood twenty years ago, it was already a "deteriorated" neighborhood, "declining, with houses falling down." What Las Aguas needs now, he argues, is "progress," which he ties to the expansion of commerce that the university has brought about and that Progresa Fenicia will further propel. Describing the past as somber, full of delinquency, immorality, and decay, is an argument for the pertinence of the urban renewal plan: this plan will finish the positive transformation that the university has started.

As we can see, contemporary contentious camps discussing the pertinence of urban renovation imbue their discourses with memory. In the same way, oral history interviews almost always touched on present issues brought up by the interviewees. Gentrification studies that use oral history often document how communities experienced and perceived displacement, and denounce the unequal access to the city. Contributing to a better understanding of urban renewal processes, in this study we show how communities' engagement with gentrification is imbued with memory. Studying memory as part of the struggle can aid us in better understanding the experience of the affected population by not presenting them as victims only, but as actively engaging with the process.

Conclusion: The memory of place and the place of memory in urban renewal processes

Studying the displacement of low-income owner residents in downtown Santiago de Chile, López-Morales et al. (2016) argue that gentrification should not be conceived of as simply the outcome of neoliberal redevelopment processes, but instead as generated in and through multiple, intertwined processes. The same holds true for the Fenicia Triangle project in Bogota. As in Santiago, what is happening here is influenced by a combination of interconnected processes that include increased (international) financial flows into the real estate market, zoning policies that (re)designate urban areas to attract investments, societal transformations that influence residential preferences and choices, and a (slow) re-valuation of the capital's downtown area as an "object of desire" (Carrión, 2005, in López-Morales et al., 2016, pp. 1094–5).

In this article, however, we explored urban renewal from the perspective of the memories of the people who are affected by it, thus moving beyond conceiving of urban redevelopment as a unidirectional process. Bringing in residents' voices, stories, perceptions, and participation, the story of the gentrification of Las Aguas and its meanings reveals multiple layers and facets beyond debates of property value or housing policies. By featuring to the human face of gentrification, the voices of residents allow us to delve into the complexity, diversity, and nuances of the process of urban transformation in Bogotá. Particularly, we have argued that memory plays a special role in urban renewal, displacement, and gentrification, both as a means to position oneself vis-à-vis powerful agents in the process of change, as well as a claim to place. Las Aguas's residents experience urban change in heterogeneous ways and adopt different positions vis-à-vis Progresa Fenicia, all of which is mediated by their perceptions about the past and expectations for the future. Their understanding of place is not independent of time and historicity; much to the contrary, the past is present in this "pluritemporal landscape" (Crang & Travlou, 2001). The debates over neighborhood transformation include dissonant voices that assign different meanings to place: while developers, the city administration, and some residents regard Las Aguas as a "deteriorated" area, other residents signify this place in a positive light and resent efforts to "rehabilitate" the area they are fond of. All of these meaning-making processes, that at times appear to describe different places, are informed by the past and by memory. Residents are not by-standers or passive victims in the face of imminent urban transformation: they position themselves, negotiate and struggle, and memory is crucial component of the process.

As becomes evident from the evidence presented here, places are memory triggers and indeed embodied experiences. Yet, instead to pointing out the loss of local histories resulting from the displacement of the original population, we have focused on the richness of a process that is fundamentally human and storied. Residents actively engage in the process, enhancing the debate by summoning social relations built over time, places imbued with ancestry and identity, memories of past renovations that potently fill the current ones with meaning, and emotions that re-signify the bleakness of the possibility of displacement and housing policy. Through these stories, people participate actively in the process of urban renewal: they articulate political positions, attribute meaning to space, shape identities, resist, and negotiate (potential) benefits.

Notes

1. See Decree 190 of 2014 of the Major of Bogotá. Retrieved from: https://www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=1393
2. "Las Aguas y Las Cruces, dos barrios sin pasado ni presente." El Tiempo, November 3, 1966, p. 17.
3. Ethical considerations played an important role in the investigation given the present-day relevance of the issues discussed during the interviews, as well as the fact that researchers were part of the institution promoting urban renewal. The project was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee at the Universidad de los Andes. All interviewees signed a Informed Consent Form that explained that participation in the research was voluntary, that they could withdraw or refuse to respond a question at any point, and explained the purpose and nature of the project. It further affirmed researchers' independence from the project Progresa Fenicia, the academic use of the research results, and gave interviewees the option to use their names or chose anonymity.
4. As Steve Stern (2004) has clearly shown for the Chilean case, there are always nuances when one tries to organize diverse individual memories into what he calls "emblematic memories" shared by a group of individuals. Furthermore, there are always "loose memories" that do not fit with collective frameworks. What we present here are "emblematic memories" that we could identify among the residents of Las Aguas, but this inevitably simplifies a more complex memory landscape.

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