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Tesi di Dottorato
Dottorato in *Architettura. Storia e Progetto* (XXXIV ciclo)

**Producing Public Space in
Barranquilla (Colombia), 2000-2020:
between urban utopia and dystopia**

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Abstract

South America's segregated cities are generally considered an "urban species" (Rodelo Torres: 2020:1) in their own right. Barranquilla is one such city in Colombia that exhibits the contradictions in which Latin American cities operate: rapid growth, urban transformation, and spatial segregation.

In Colombia, research interest in the production of public space in the urban design project is focused mainly on two cities: Bogota and Medellin. For this reason, the case of Barranquilla appears as a frontier of research that has been little studied. One of the purposes of this research is to fill this gap and provide new insights into the understanding of the potential relationship between public space production, urban planning, and the (re) definition of residual urban spaces in the contemporary development of the city. In this context, the urban planning project "Gran Malecón del Río" -Sector Puerta de Oro- is a meaningful opportunity for this research to study the dimension of residual urban space phenomenon within public space production.

Although the central case study of the thesis is the Gran Malecón del Río - Sector Puerta de Oro - as an urban planning project. This research also considers the project as a political one that occurs within the public space. For this reason, it is crucial in this research to understand the role that urban culture and the city's rights play in the urban design project.

The qualitative research method guides the current project's development, including an extensive literature review, archival research, narrative, field research, and observation, including the case study's method to compare and verify the theoretical and historical analysis. This qualitative approach uses Henri Lefebvre's Spatial Triad: Perceived, Conceived, and Lived space. This research also requires pointing out that urban historiography in Colombia is a new development field.

Consequently, the reference historiography found in archives and research about Barranquilla, an industrial and port city, is of an economic and social type. Due to the near absence of urban historiography of Barranquilla, the first chapter of this thesis aims to construct an analysis and interpretation of the city's urban and spatial growth concerning public space production. Two categories carry out the current research: spatial and urban development. This proposed classification makes it possible to identify the most important historical facts that refer to key moments in the spatial transformation of the city, both spatial and urban transformation.

The second chapter presents and analyzes the Gran Malecón del Río - Puerta de Oro Sector case study through Lefebvre's conceived and perceived space with Duarte's¹ Mapping the City method.

The Conceived Space theory by Lefebvre involves the development of archival work, analysis, and description of the urban design discourse's public policies to create the project's urban morphology. On the other hand, Duarte's Perceived Space and Mapping the City method requires a representation and understanding of the sensory as well as a cultural filter. In this respect, the development of the production of public space in urban design.

The aim of applying Duarte's Mapping the City theory and method is to understand the representations of the mapping with the public space produced in urban design and how people observe, perceive, and react in the public space. The interest in using this methodology is because Duarte defines this cartographic representation as a political instrument that reacts to the transfer of images and phenomena through perception. In this instance, as Duarte (2017) states, mapping becomes an epistemological instrument to understand individual and social relations in the public space.

The third chapter is in two parts: one dedicated to the visibility of the potential of residual space in the development of public space and the other to the redefinition of public space in the urban planning in Barranquilla according to two specific perspectives: the exercise of citizenship through its actors and from the analysis and critique of national and local public space policies.

This chapter also responds to the following questions: What mechanisms are used to produce these spaces in Barranquilla? Who are the actors involved? What are the policies best adapted to the type of urban design? Are there project strategies

¹ Space, Place and Territory. A Critical Review of Spatialities, 2017.

that lead to the exclusion and socio-spatial segregation of specific population groups in the use of public space in urban design? Why do sizeable public space urban design projects produce residual spaces?

