BOGOTÁ: A MEGACITY IN THE MAKING - AN INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Foreword

Growing up I never imagined that I wanted to pursue academic studies beyond my undergraduate degree. I thought I had a practical mind, that I would study if there was a reason for knowledge. I always wanted to help the poorest of the poor and eliminate misery, not in the form of charity, but long-lasting effective change. In 2017 I thought of a solution to urban poverty. Yet, I needed to prove to myself if this idea in my head was worth pursuing or not, if it had already been tried, and if it was, did it fail? Why or why not. Therefore, I enrolled in the MA of International Development and Globalization at the University of Ottawa, with the sole purpose of answering one big question: Do big cities make sense for development? My theory was no. They don't. We should try to find ways to develop small towns, each with their own comparative advantage, and well interconnected, so that we improve the quality of life evenly across towns rather than merging everything into one big agglomeration in each developing nation. I thought, slums are only found in large cities. I feel stressed in large cities due to insecurity; time wasted from point A to B; pollution is unbearable; and the lack of community life in large city neighborhoods contributes to many feeling forgotten and neglected. In conversations with Professor Cao, I came to realize that this was my perception of megacities, but he was right in pointing out, that this might not be how everyone felt regarding big cities. Therefore, I decided to focus my MA thesis in finding out if megacities make sense for developing countries. In my future Ph.D. I hope to provide an approach to developing small towns in developing countries, to support a developing project I started in 2021 in Colombia.

In trying to answer my big question, I began by reviewing the literature to understand the advantages and disadvantages of big cities from different aspects such as the economy, the environment, health, social attractions, and inequalities. The results from my initial literature review open the door to governance. This is why this thesis looks at two big topics: challenges megacities in developing countries experience and decentralization as an urban governance model. Each topic aims at answering the main question from its unique perspective. As time and resources are limited, it is impossible to cover each of these topics to the fullness each one of them deserves. What I have done here is to provide the most interesting insights and perspectives resulting from my work reviewing the literature and conducting fieldwork in Bogotá, Colombia. I think a full book could be written in each of these topics, but to avoid the task of lots of reading to my evaluators only the summary of findings is presented.

I am grateful for the opportunity to explore the academic approach to research, and I have tremendously learned on the methodology, albeit the shortcomings of this work. I stared working on this thesis in 2020, and I am only submitting in 2025. This past five years have been impacted by the delays in conducting fieldwork due to the pandemic, mental-health challenges, and my own stubbornness to answer my one big question while working part-time and why not, start-up an NGO to bring about my idea of developing small towns and just recently deciding to get married. I feel a sense of accomplishment, that I have partially answer my big question with this research but also ended up with many more questions for further research. I sincerely hope that the time spent researching somewhat contributes to the literature that aims at understanding better, Bogotá, megacities, and the specific challenges cities in developing countries encounter.

Abstract

This thesis investigates whether megacities are ideal urban phenomena for developing countries, using Bogotá, Colombia as a case study. The research highlights the contextual and institutional governance challenges that hinder megacities from adequately meeting the needs of its inhabitants. A mix-method approach was used to gather and analyse the data. Key findings indicate that residents of Bogotá are drawn to megacities for perceived employment opportunities, yet they have a strong preference for living in smaller cities; that Bogotá is a city of contrasts and impacted by its context; that governance is more complex in megacities; and that megacities necessitate two layers of decentralization. This research invites policymakers and academics to re-evaluate megacities while increasing efforts for small city development and to re-think how we understand democracy, to radically improve citizen's experience of the urban governance process.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine si les mégapoles sont des phénomènes urbains idéaux pour les pays en développement, en utilisant Bogotá, Colombie, comme étude de cas. La recherche met en évidence les défis contextuels et institutionnels de la gouvernance qui empêchent les mégapoles de répondre adéquatement aux besoins de leurs habitants. Une approche mixte a été utilisée pour recueillir et analyser les données. Les principales conclusions indiquent que les habitants de Bogotá sont attirés par les mégapoles en raison des opportunités d'emploi perçues, mais préfèrent vivre dans des villes plus petites ; que Bogotá est une ville de contrastes et impactée par son contexte ; que la gouvernance est plus complexe dans les mégapoles ; et que les mégapoles nécessitent deux niveaux de décentralisation. Cette recherche invite les décideurs politiques et les universitaires à réévaluer les mégapoles tout en augmentant les efforts pour le développement des petites villes et à repenser notre compréhension de la démocratie, afin d'améliorer radicalement l'expérience des citoyens dans le processus de gouvernance urbaine.

Resumen

Esta tesis investiga si las megaciudades son fenómenos urbanos ideales para los países en desarrollo, utilizando Bogotá, Colombia, como estudio de caso. La investigación destaca los desafíos contextuales e institucionales de la gobernanza que impiden que las megaciudades satisfagan adecuadamente las necesidades de sus habitantes. Se utilizó un enfoque de métodos mixtos para recopilar y analizar los datos. Los hallazgos clave indican que los residentes de Bogotá se sienten atraídos por las megaciudades debido a las oportunidades de empleo percibidas, pero prefieren vivir en ciudades más pequeñas; que Bogotá es una ciudad de contrastes e impactada por su contexto; que la gobernanza es más compleja en las megaciudades; y que las megaciudades requieren dos niveles de descentralización. Esta investigación invita a los responsables políticos y académicos a reevaluar las megaciudades mientras aumentan los esfuerzos para el desarrollo de ciudades pequeñas, y a repensar cómo entendemos la democracia, para mejorar radicalmente la experiencia de los ciudadanos en el proceso de gobernanza urbana.

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Introduction

"Cities are humanity's greatest creation"
(Kotkin, 2005)

Cities are the homes of our communities. Streets are its hallways. Buildings are its rooms. The morphology and architectural shape of the city contain the history, policies, and culture of its people. Cities reflect the personality of a nation, its magnificence, or its debacle. The power of wealth creation and economic progress has for centuries attracted people to conglomerate (Kourtit et al., 2017, p. 43) unleashing the "creative urges of humanity…[and reshaping] the natural environment in profound and lasting ways" (Kotkin, 2005, p. 17). Some cities are unerringly planned, others left to scorn. For some they are places of liberation, for others places of fear and threat (Butler, 2008, p. 226). Social interchange coexists concurrent to social exclusion (Cao, 2010, p. 975). Cities matter not only because "over the course of five to seven millennia, [they] have generated most of our art, religion, culture, commerce and technology" (Kotkin, 2005, p. 17), but because the unprecedented urbanisation is leading us towards a 'New Urban World'[1] (Kourtit et al., 2017, p. 43; Kraas, 2014, p. 1).

Twenty-one years ago, in 2004, the UN forecasted that world population would reach 7.1 billion by 2015, with record growth in the greatest cities of the world.

Table 1: Urban Growth 1950-2015

City	Population 1950	Prediction 2015	Population 2015	Population 2024
New York (metro)	12 million	17.5 million	18.6 million	19 million
Los Angeles (metro)	4.2 million	14.2 million	12.3 million	12.6 million
Jakarta	2.8 million	21.2 million	10.1 million	11.4 million
Cairo	2.1 million	14.4 million	18.2 million	22.6 million
Karachi	1.1 million	20.6 million	14.2 million	17.6 million
Lagos	1 million	24.4 million	12.2 million	16.5 million

Note: Extracted from (Liotta & Miskel, 2004, p. 18) and contrasted with 2024 numbers from: https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/22044/karachi/population. Retrieved May 14, 2024.

As Table 1 demonstrates, New York, and Cairo surpassed the 2004 predictions. Jakarta, Karachi, and Lagos, while significantly overpredicted, did surpass the 10 million mark that only metropolitan New York had reached in the 1950s. As a result, in 2015, 4 billion people or 54% of the world's population, lived in cities (UN-Habitat, 2016a, p. 2). The expectations are that by 2050 about 6.6 billion or 68% of the 9.7 billion inhabitants will live in cities (UNDESA, 2018, 2019b). What this growth would mean for our world is a question that has sparked multiple possibilities,

[1] The New Urban World as defined by Kourtit et al: "(i) a strong rural-to-urban drift of people; (ii) a rising importance of cities—or metropolises—as spearheads of innovation and economic development; (iii) a rise of both medium-size and large cities, with an increasing trend towards megacities in developing countries. These megatrends are the results of various global forces: (i) a continuing population rise (up to an estimated level of some nine billion by the year 2050) with a strong concentration in urban areas (especially in the developing world); (ii) a rise in global competition in which cities— through their agglomeration forces—play a central role (see also Bairoch & Goertz, 1986; Bairoch, 1988)" (Kourtit et al., 2013, p. 285)

even as far-reaching as considering expanding to other planets, with new/futuristic dimensions (Krzemińska et al., 2019, p. 8363). While science fiction can be full of impossibilities, more realistic future predictions see a distinction in regional urban growth. Although developed countries urban growth is expected to increase by only 0.6%, less-developed countries will grow by 2.4%, or 15 times more than that of developed countries between 2010 and 2050 (Angel, 2012, p. 13). For development politics, urbanization per se is not negative, but rapid urbanization in cities that are already struggling to meet the needs of their already populated cities, should be a concern for academics, and policymakers, since rapid growth will make it more difficult to meet any of the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Stopping urban growth is like trying to divert a hurricane from its course. The number of urban poor has steadily increased since the early 1990s (Gilbert, 1996, p. xvii). Megacities are hubs of development and attract not only the wealthy and the middle class, but also the poor. Lack of services, urban infrastructure, health facilities, as well as unemployment and evictions are but some of the current struggles of the world's urban poor. Migrants searching for better lives move to large metropolises in both developed and developing countries and are often subject to harsh migration routes (UNODC, 2010) and resettlement difficulties (Lewis et al., 2015, p. 580). The most populous cities of the developing world have become megacities unable to provide equal access to basic services to all their inhabitants, and while some are lifted out of poverty, inequality abounds (García-Ayllón, 2016, pp. 131–132). For instance, in Delhi, India "democratic urban politics create and maintain inequalities" (Bhan, 2014, p. 547). In Mexico City, Mexico, economic decentralization policies have spurred urban growth at a social and environmentally unsustainable rate since 1975 (Hernández-Flores et al., 2017, pp. 110–111). In São Paulo, Brazil, 30% of urban citizens live in slum-like conditions lacking basic services such as potable water or sewage (Hylton & Charles, 2018, p. 41). Even the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, demonstrated the importance of cities, and the need to re-think how we plan and govern cities in the future (Jasiński, 2022).

Local governments are often unable to meet basic urban needs when confronted with rapid urban growth. Informal settlements, with living conditions below the level required for human dignity, are often the only temporal housing recourse for the poorest. Many of the proposed urban planning projects aim at upgrading slums and integrating inhabitants into the tapestry of society. While this is a much-needed government action, its consequence is the inevitable enlargement of cities. Bogotá (4,310 individuals per km^2), Lima (7,793 individuals per km^2), and Mexico (9,800 individuals per km^2) are extremely dense societies. Economic benefits are sometimes gained from clustering individuals and industries together. Perhaps, with improvements in technology and increased labour market flexibility, the idealization of megacities as a viable economic and urban solution for cities in developing countries can be revised.

As mega-urban growth is inevitable, this master's thesis asks whether megacities should be or not, promoted as ideal urban phenomena for cities in developing countries. Is there a direct link between the size of a city and its ability to provide essential services that stimulate equitable economic growth? It might not be a coincidence that the majority of megacities are hosts to the biggest slums, and only one of the world's megacities (Tokyo) was listed as the world's seventh most liveable city in 2019 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019, p. 4). Would the majority of people's standard of living be increased with the encouragement of mega-urbanization? As there are many avenues one can embark on when trying to assess this question, this research has chosen

an explorative approach that focuses on the institutional and contextual challenges megacities in developing countries encounter, with a specific case study of the city of Bogotá, Colombia. The introduction and the following six chapters aim at answering these questions.

The literature review on Chapter 1 collects a birds-eye view of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of living in megacities. The economic, environmental, and social aspects were evaluated to conclude that what determines the success or failure of a city is the success or failure of its governance model. This finding provided the clear next step in this research: to focus on urban governance as a determinant of the viability of megacities in developing countries. Also in this chapter, a brief profile of the political and urban context of Colombia and Bogotá is provided to introduce the complexities of this Latin American megacity.

Chapter 2 introduces critical realism as the philosophical approach that guided the methodology of this research. Through inductive and deductive reasoning, a research strategy was developed including one survey and fifteen interviews. The data from the survey results was evaluated through statistical analysis, while for the interviews thematic and narrative analysis were performed. This chapter presents the steps and strategies undertaken during the research process.

Chapter 3 provides a collection of the specific challenges Bogotá experiences as a megacity in a developing country. Rapid urban growth, traffic congestion, spatial inequalities, crime, violence and corruption uniquely converge in Bogotá, providing contextual challenges to governing an ever-expanding city. These city-specific issues highlight the importance of adequate institutional mechanisms of decision making for governing megacities in developing countries.

Chapter 4 presents the administrative structure of Bogotá and defines the type of governance model the city has adopted since the 1991 Constitution. This chapter also critiques and evaluates Bogotá's hybrid decentralization model and its efficacy enabling good governance. This institutional assessment highlights the complexity and contradictory aspects of governance in megacities.

Chapter 5 evaluates Bogotá, as a megacity. It begins assessing survey's responses on what they like about living in Bogotá, and what their ideal size of a city would be, if the city provided access to all the things they like. This is an important component of analyzing what megacities do for their inhabitants. This chapter then presents leadership, vision, and civic culture, as key issues needed in Bogotá's search for good governance. The last section of this chapter proposes two discussion that arise from the analysis of the different components of this thesis. Inviting readers to rethink the commonly accepted understandings of megacities and democracy.

Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the research accomplished and the findings presented. It also provides a section on the limitations encountered and the proposed future studies.

I hope this work serves to enlighten the conversation around urban development models for cities in developing countries and perhaps it will help academics and policymakers to re-frame the future of our urban spaces, so cities can become ideal places we all want to live in.

Chapter 1: Exploring the Landscape: Megacities, Governance, and Bogotá Case Study

1.1. Making Sence of Megacities

"Urbanization in and of itself is neither a good nor a bad thing"
(Liotta & Miskel, 2004)

How can megacities be defined? Before the 2000s, there was little consensus on the definition of a megacity. Super-city, giant-city, conurbation, megalopolis, and world city were terms used interchangeably to denote the phenomenon of large agglomerations of between 4 and 10 million inhabitants (Gilbert, 1996, p. 3). Today, the consensus is a population of 10 million inhabitants (UN-Habitat, 2016a, p. 4). The concept of megacity not only refers to the size of the city, but also to the urbanization process, which includes the primate city and satellite towns/outer zones that compose a single economically integrated territory of "dense population and mixed land uses extending from 75 to 100 km from the urban core" (Silver, 2008, p. 20). In developing nations, large agglomerations, structurally speaking, contain a range of structures, from high-end high-rise buildings to shanty paperboard, timber-like living quarters (Keck & Etzold, 2013, p. 1). The current terminology is that of a meta city or hyper city for agglomerations surpassing 20 million dwellers (Davis, 2006, p. 5). As of 2019 "Tokyo is the world's largest city with an agglomeration of 37 million inhabitants, followed by Delhi with 29 million, Shanghai with 26 million, São Paulo and Mexico City with 22 million each" (UNDESA, 2019a, p. 17). Back in 1996, urban planners and scholars did not see a problem with the size of the cities, but rather focused on the lack of economic growth and urban planning of large agglomerations. Did our predecessors not imagine growth of such magnitude? Today, one in eight urban dwellers lives in one of 33 megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants (UNDESA, 2019a, p. 1). UNDESA's 2019 estimates suggest that by 2030, 43 cities will have a population surpassing 10 million, and most of them will be located in developing regions (Canitez, 2019, p. 319).

Large agglomerations are not an invention of the twenty-first century. Footprints of ancient urban networks were found in Mesopotamia and its multiple cities, including Ur, Agade, Babylon, Nineveh, Memphis, Knossos, and Tyre, as well as in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in Pakistan, and Chang'an in China, all of them with equal complexity and magnitude as those of their Western contemporaries (Kotkin, 2005, p. 18). What is new to our planet is the proportion of habitants in urban versus rural spaces. In 1950, only 30 per cent of the world population lived in cities, while it is expected that by 2050 as much as 68 per cent of the world will be urban (UNDESA, 2019a, p. 1). For some, mass urbanization is inevitable (Kalan, 2014, p. 70). However, urban exponential growth is not expected globally. North America, Japan, and some European countries, for example, are experiencing population decline due to low fertility rates (UNDESA, 2019a, p. 12).

Why, then, did we experience such unprecedented urban growth over the past 100 years? While higher life expectancy rates and lower mortality rates have resulted in global population growth, population growth alone does not explain urban growth. Historically, industrialization has been identified as the first factor of urbanization – with factories came the cities. While this was the case for most cities in developed countries, it was not true for cities in developing countries. "Kuwait, Gabon, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, Angola and Nigeria are as urbanized as Uruguay, Taiwan, South Korea, Mexico, Malaysia, South Africa and China respectively, and yet the former countries have not industrialized to the same extent as the latter" (Gollin et al., 2016). Why is this the case? For Edgard Glaeser, author of *The Triumph of the City*, technological advances in

transportation are the principal cause of the contemporary urban population explosion (Glaeser, 2011, p. 3). Yet, many medium-sized cities (3-4 million inhabitants) did not experience exponential growth despite introducing the latest transportation technology. The answer might be found in the complexity of the "urbanization process [that] is driven by a series of interrelated changes: economic, political, demographic, cultural, technological, social, and environmental" (Han, 2012, p. 4). For example, innovation in transportation or architectural techniques will trigger policy changes that will lead to new urban projects that in turn increase the urban capacity of cities. Rural migration is often linked to farmers searching for higher levels of education, better health facilities, greater access to social services, and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation (UNDESA, 2018). The prospect of a higher standard of living is the greatest magnet of megacities.

1.1.1. Economic Potential

The strongest argument supporting megacities is the ability for large agglomerations to lift the poor out of poverty (Chen & Zhou, 2009; Han, 2012; Kalan, 2014; Wei et al., 2016). Rural to urban migrants, often searching for better economic opportunities, are transformed in themselves as well as the cities that they move into (Han, 2012, p. 2). Cao argues that "no country has ever climbed from low-income to middle-income status without a significant population shift into cities" (Cao, 2017). As of 2014, 14 percent of the world's economic output was produced in megacities. In Seoul, for example, "infrastructure projects and economic reforms from the 1960s onward helped transform South Korea from one of the world's poorest economies (equivalent to modern-day Benin) into the 15th largest economy, becoming a global commercial hub" (Kalan, 2014, p. 70). Urban agglomeration increases the demand for high-skilled workers, which in turn increases the demand for public infrastructure, and this circularity moves cities towards efficiencies and high labour productivity (Wei et al., 2016, p. 95). Shanghai, with its double-digit annual growth from 1992 to 2007 has not only lifted many out of poverty, but has surged as "China's premier city with a global city status" (Chen & Zhou, 2009, p. vii). Shanghai, with a current population of 24.24 million, since 1992 has attracted 23% of China's total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or twice the amount invested in the whole of India. What made Shanghai so attractive to FDI? Was it mainly the size of the city? This is unlikely since many megacities of similar size have not experienced Shanghai's exponential economic growth in the past 30 years.

Larger agglomerations will not strictly lead to economic growth. Good governance, security, and high efficiencies have been identified as incentives to attract human and economic capital to major cities (Wei et al., 2016, p. 88). International Financial Centers (IFCs) develop in cities with strong financial structures, open and flexible labour markets, internationalised non-financial sectors, strong rule of law, and contract enforcement (Wojcik et al., 2015). In 2018, Frick and Rodríguez-Pose developed a urban population dataset capturing the evolution of urban concentrations from 1985 to 2010 in 68 countries around the world. They found that, "contrary to the general perception, urban concentration levels have on average decreased or remained stable… and the results of the econometric analysis suggest that there is no uniform relationship between urban concentration and economic growth. Urban concentration is beneficial for economic growth in high-income countries, while this effect does not hold for developing countries" (Frick & Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, p. 156). What causes economic growth in megacities might not just be a factor of its large populations.

Investment in urban infrastructure in megacities is calculated in trillions of dollars (Bogunovich, 2016). The ability of megacities to attract much-needed investment will also determine their ability to provide the necessary services in the coming decades.

1.1.2. Environment Paradox

One of the biggest concerns of megacities is the perceived negative impact on the environment. Megacities "consume the planetary ecosystem faster than any other human creation, while at the same time they are our best chance at preventing global ecological calamity" (Bogunovich, 2016, p. 4). Large cities are perceived as areas of high global risk with potential impacts across entire countries (Dobbs et al., 2019; Han, 2012; Kennedy et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2016). Providing water and wastewater services, for example, require tremendous investments and adequate institutional capabilities (Yang et al., 2016, p. 1). Food production and loss of biodiversity affects the environment and the wellbeing of citizens in megacities (Dobbs et al., 2019, p. 174). Poor air pollution also causes severe health impacts in many megacities in developing countries (Kennedy et al., 2015, p. 1) and pollution from "these urban centers make them immense drivers of climate change" (Kalan, 2014, p. 71). Yet, the levels of pollution and consumption vary among megacities. According to Kennedy et al.'s study of 27 megacities' use of energy and material flows, many cities need to increase resource flows to provide services for all citizens, while others need to decrease energy and material flows to reduce environmental impacts (Kennedy et al., 2015, p. 6). Decades ago, realizing the need for development and environmental protection, the international community introduced the concept of sustainability, where the economy and the environment can be prioritized at local and international levels (Ivanova, 2017, p. 13).

In 1983, the World Commission on Environment and Development, published Our Common Future, which defined sustainable development as "a development which satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own necessities" (J. Joseph, 2001, p. 219). Since then, attempts to apply this definition have generated much debate, not only at the technical, but also at the ethical and political levels (J. Joseph, 2001, p. 219; Kourtit et al., 2017, p. 44). The realization of anthropocentric climate change has put developing countries in a situation where they are to lift their inhabitants out of poverty without damaging the environment (McManus, 2014, p. 15). Some developing countries feel pressured to reduce population, preserve rain forests and water, etc. while their basic material needs remain unmet (Angel, 2012, p. 13; J. Joseph, 2001, p. 219). Yet, a third way must be found, for child exploitation and environmental abuse for economic development was wrong in Western development and continues to be wrong today.

Innovation, technology, investment, and political will can propose new models for economic development of the poorest in megacities. In fact, large cities can achieve sustainable growth better than rural areas in both developed and developing megacities (Glaeser, 2011, p. 14; Kalan, 2014, p. 70). For example, rural areas continue to use coal, wood, and other biomass that contributes to deforestation and air pollution (Kalan, 2014, p. 71), while New York City ranked next to last for energy consumption in the country (Glaeser, 2011, p. 14). As urban areas enlarge, their emissions decrease because larger regions burn less energy per capita than smaller regions, making infrastructure and resource use more efficient. "Whether megacities can develop as sustainable cities depends to a large extent on how they obtain, share, and manage their energy and material resources." (Kennedy et al., 2015, p. 1)

The opportunities for megacities in developing countries to lead in sustainable development are immense. For example, studies have demonstrated a link between the environmental context and the reduction or increase in crime (Céspedes et al., 2018, p. 56). Violence is one the social problems of megacities, that could be counteracted by greening cities and reducing the "feeling" of insecurity as research has demonstrated. This is plausible, since large cities are also more likely to invest in green projects (Kalan, 2014, p. 72). Developing countries can also contribute to reducing climate change globally by sharing their resourcefulness, for example, when it comes to re-using materials. Often in developing countries, when things break, they are converted to some other use (Kennedy et al., 2015, p. 1; Obono, 2007, p. 36). Technology is also making it possible to meet the challenge of sustainability. Beijing, for example, has "experienced drastic reductions in quantity and quality of both surface water and groundwater over the past several decades; it relies on the import of real and virtual water from sending systems to meet its demand for clean water, and releases polluted water to other systems (spillover systems)" (Yang et al., 2016, p. 1). These are but a few examples of the many opportunities for sustainable development in megacities.

1.1.3. Urban Health Dynamics

The success of an urban agglomeration can also be measured by the well-being of its inhabitants. Megacities pose contradictions in health matters, as they can increase individual's vulnerabilities, and at the same time improve the chances of survival. The importance of urban infrastructure for good health was something the world most intensely experienced in the recent pandemic. On 11 March 2020, the "World Health Organisation declared the spread of SARS-CoV-2 a pandemic in consideration of more than 118,000 cases confirmed in 114 countries" (Zhuo & Zacharias, 2021, p. 321). The pandemic killed many people, spread human suffering, and made evident human, economic and social crises (UNDESA, 2020). The impact of the health crisis was not only due to the high number of deaths and individuals infected, but also, many more infected or not, experienced substantial change in their mental health, increasing the incidence of "depression, insomnia, anger and post-traumatic stress" (Zhuo & Zacharias, 2021, p. 322). The pandemic will be remembered in history as a time of lockdowns, social isolation, constrains on mobility, closure of schools, universities and public institutions, which caused a dramatic change to our urban life (Jasiński, 2022). How do megacities keep their inhabitants safe and mentally healthy? This is an urban planning issue, yet important to discuss as we evaluate the benefits and challenges of megacities to keep citizens healthy.

The world experienced widespread contamination of the virus and how megacities performed can give us an indication of the advantages or not of high-density urban design and the protection of human health. In some regions, sectors with higher densities had the greatest impact of the pandemic. For example, in South Africa, "large cities became infection hotspots and experienced higher mortality rates than towns and rural areas" (Turok & Visagie, 2020, p. 1). Ten countries studied in the Western Pacific Region demonstrated lower number of daily infections throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (Park et al., 2021, p. 7). The propensity of increased infections in high density cities made some think that the pandemic destroyed some dogmas of contemporary planning. The "pursuit of high building density, promotion of public transport and the strengthening of the role of direct human contact in public space to ensure safety have all been challenged" (Jasiński, 2022, p. 1). High rise compact development became less desirable living spaces amid lockdowns and physical distancing, this lead to an increase in the value of private space such as private gardens, roof terraces, holiday homes to provide mental and physical

protection, something that the public space could no longer guarantee (Jasiński, 2022, p. 3). Low density spaces became safer, while not necessarily the most ecological choice. Increase in suburbanization means expensive infrastructure, expansion of the road network, long commutes to work and school, congested traffic and, as a result a significant burden on the environment and the depopulation of inner-city areas (Duany & Plater-Zyberk, 2008: 64–65 as cited in Jasiński, 2022, p.1). It seems that there is a need to strike a balance between high-low densities while keeping individuals safe and not creating an overburden in the environment.

The pandemic made many countries worse off, increasing global poverty (Deaton, 2021, p. 16). Yet, the poor as usual, are most affected in world crises, and when it came to the most recent pandemic, research shows that the poorest, slumdwellers, and the rural poor where greatly affected worldwide. Most countries were hit very hard economically, as many individuals lost their jobs, especially in the service sectors, such as restaurants, shops, and tourism, partially due to restrictions but also, because of the built space's inability to protect vulnerable civilians. The wealthy were almost always able to adapt and transition their workspaces, keeping their jobs working from home, and even saving in parking and fuel. Yet, this was not the case for everyone. The pandemic especially affected human mobility, not only with the lockdowns, social distancing rules, and home quarantines, but especially due to full or partial suspension of public transport. Public transport is an essential mode of transportation in megacities and for the poor reduced access exacerbate socio-economic inequalities. For example, Metro Manila experienced a -75% drop in public transportation during the pandemic (Hasselwander et al., 2021, p. 1). Public transport as currently designed in megacities, was not able to fulfil its role as a public service during the pandemic (Hasselwander et al., 2021, p. 1). The way we planned, designed, resourced and managed our cities magnified inequalities during the most recent health crisis (Rowe, 2021). Turok & Visagie's survey found evidence that the pandemic widened pre-existing inequalities between cities and rural areas and in cities between suburbs, townships and informal settlements (Turok & Visagie, 2020).

Growing megacities experience serious problems providing medical services civilians need. Vulnerable neighborhoods in large cities don't have ease of access to hospitals or medical services, increasing inequality due to spatial accessibility (P. Zhao et al., 2020, p. 1). For example, in the city of Beijing, researchers found that high income neighborhoods or neighbourhoods near the city core had 1.5 to 4 times more access to hospitals and healthcare services, while low-income and those living in the suburbs had to travel twice as far to reach a hospital (P. Zhao et al., 2020, p. 10). This social spatial inequality was aggravated during the pandemic, as the need to hospitalization and healthcare services was greatest, yet unequal provision of services together with poor or suspended public transport aggravated the poor's situation during the pandemic (P. Zhao et al., 2020, p. 10). In slums, globally, 1 billion people are deprived of basic services such as running water, and not accustomed to physical distancing, these living squatters were hubs for the virus to not only to spread (Jasiński, 2022) but to evolve complicating health risks worldwide. While the poor were greatly affected by the pandemic, they were not completely abandoned, as a global effort was made to provide grants and assistance to the poorest in cities and rural communities. In South Africa rural communities greatly benefited from government grants, even more than those in cities or small towns (Turok & Visagie, 2020, p. 5). The pandemic was something that greatly affected everyone. An interesting study shows that in fact the gap between rich and poor countries shrink between 2019 and 2020 as the richest 96 countries lost an average

of 10% in GDP, while the poor countries only decreased 5% in GDP (Deaton, 2021, p. 3). Although there is nothing to celebrate when everyone has lost, it is worth noting that not factoring health in city planning affects everyone, poor, rich, and those living in small or large cities.

As with other themes explored in this literature review, the success of a city, large or small, ultimately depends on their effective governance. Undoubtedly hypermobility and our connected world expressed in mass tourism, international business, and the use of transcontinental air travel and trains have been the main contributors of the globalization of the virus (Jasiński, 2022, p. 2). Yet, some high-density cities performed better than less dense ones in the pandemic due to public policies and citizen's collaboration to the health measures promoted by their leaders. In Europe, the first epicentres of the pandemic were small towns like Codogno in Italy, Ischgl and St. Wolfgang in Austria, Heinsberg, Gütersloh and Mamming in Germany, reflecting that even in low density, but poor citizen's collaboration contributed to the spread (Jasiński, 2022, p. 3). The efforts of governments should be on minimizing citizen's concerns of living in high density urban spaces. The benefits of compact cities, like climate change mitigation can outdo the fears of health risks, provided districts have clear albeit temporary guidelines when needed (Khavarian-Garmsir et al., 2021). The pandemic is an opportunity to re-design our cities to promote active mobility, prioritizing public transit and biking so that the poor, who use mostly public transit, are not as affected in future health crisis (Hasselwander et al., 2021, p. 1). People's habits changed during the pandemic "they walk rather than take a tram, ride a bike instead of going by bus, choose a private car over a train… shop online or in local shops instead of big supermarkets or shopping malls" (Jasiński, 2022). Overall noise and air pollution was reduced, and some people took it as an opportunity to become more active.

The pandemic brough much suffering but as in the past human experiences, great innovation and betterment of humanity also occurred after much suffering. Humanity has an incredible capacity to adapt and raise higher than before. The pandemic was such a global shock that for certain it will no longer be possible to return to the city's previous form (Jasiński, 2022, p. 4). The UN-Habitat has reminded us of the critical role urban and territorial planning (UTP) play in the well-being of cities. "If the purpose of planning is not for human and planetary health, then what is it for?" (UN-Habitat, 2020, p. 62). Urban policies define everything in the city, from the air we breathe, the spaces we use, the water we drink, how we travel, our access to food, and healthcare exacerbating or preventing health risks and creating healthy lifestyles and resilient cities (UN-Habitat, 2020, p. XI). Inclusive urban planning is the way to move forward. The pandemic also demonstrated the ability of governments to act effectively. Bold steps to rapidly implement sidewalk and patio expansions, repurposing of roads, realignment of services, financial support services, etc., was something that all levels of government practiced and showed citizens what their governments can do (Rowe, 2021). Health in megacities, or any city, is not directly dependent on the size of the city, even in those high-density areas. High density can make a city more prone to spread virus, but good governance translated as effective urban planning and implementation of public policies can increase citizen's trust and therefore compliance to leader's indications. Health in cities is a factor of good planning, accessibility, and citizen's cooperation to the indications, not only of high versus low density urban environments.

1.1.4. Social Enticement and Inequality

Generally, larger cities have more of everything. More economic opportunities, more choices for consumers, and/or the ability to create niches for specific hobbies or interests. Megacities offer multiple attractions that enlarge the already large cities. Not only are there more jobs, but more different types of jobs. Diversity leads to a specialized and highly qualified workforce, increasing value and higher earning capital potential. With higher incomes, demands for service industries increase. For example, the entertainment industry is more diverse and thrives in vibrant and large cities. Demand for amenities increases lower-income job opportunities increasing social-spatial inequalities (Sassen, 1991, p. xxi). Megacities' capacity to create and consolidate economic growth influences culture, values, and the social urban lifestyle.

The provision of basic services is better and cheaper in large cities. While the debate on the responsibility of local governments for the provision of basic services is outside the scope of this literature review, it is very well established that "urban infrastructure, such as utilities, communication, healthcare facilities, amenities, etc., are essentially important for sustainable urban development and comfortable resident's living" (Wei et al., 2016, p. 93). As megacities grow, they become political or economic capitals of the nation, increasing their ability to influence and attract national and foreign infrastructure investments more effectively than smaller cities. Higher densities reduce the costs of services. "McKinsey has estimated that it is 30 to 50 percent cheaper to provide fundamentals like housing, water, and education in populated urban areas than it is in rural ones" (Kalan, 2014, p. 70). Large infrastructure projects combined with high-density areas attract public and private investments. The social benefits of large cities entice individuals looking not only to make a living but also those looking for higher quality of life. Megacities offer opportunities for both rich and poor to better their lives.

Although providing services is much more affordable in larger cities than smaller cities, the inability of most local governments to keep up with urban population growth has led to great inequalities (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13; Cao et al., 2000, p. 92; Obono, 2007, p. 34; Ooi, 2007, p. 13). In 1949, for example, after the foundation of the Peoples Republic of China and the growth of industry, the infrastructure needed in Shanghai was not only inadequate but insufficient to meet the ever-growing population, leaving some areas of the city behind (Cao et al., 2000, p. 92). Uneven urbanization challenges equal infrastructure development of clean water and waste management among other services. In Asia for example, "most household, commercial and industrial waste water is discharged into the stormwater drainage system with no treatment or only pre-treatment resulting in pollution of water-ways and leading into waterborne illnesses" (Ooi, 2007, p. 41). In Latin America, fair distribution of income continues to be a challenge: the poor are segregated in distant ghettoes or parts of the city where access to transportation and services deepens inequalities (Bocarejo et al., 2017, p. 5129; Gilbert, 1996, p. 13).

Marginalization leads to an increase in delinquency and street violence. In Lagos close to "fifty people are killed each month in robbery attacks... reflecting the failure of the state system at large to guarantee the safety and security of its citizens" (Obono, 2007, p. 34). The size of the city does not de facto determine the safety of its inhabitants, but larger cities unable to cope with urban growth, are more vulnerable to inequalities and to street violence" (Keck & Etzold, 2013, p. 1). Megacities offer tremendous opportunities for development, but governments unable to meet the

needs of the ever-growing cities are confronted with social risks that push some to the margins, deepening inequalities and slowing down the overall potential for sustainable development.

1.1.5. The Enigma of Informal Settlements

"Slums are not a curse; they are signs of a healthy city"
(Kalan, 2014, p. 71)

While megacities are potential engines of economic growth, some urban dwellers in developing countries are left behind. Informal settlements or slums are areas in megacities that are overcrowded and lack access to clean water, sanitation, durable housing, transportation, and secure tenure (Cao, 2017, p. 63; UN-Habitat, 2016b, p. 57). According to the UN-Habitat "slums are the products of failed policies, poor governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional land markets, unresponsive financial systems, and a lack of political will" (UN-Habitat, 2016b, p. 57). For others, it seems as if megacities need to choose between investing in infrastructure to meet basic urban needs or investing to attract international business and economic growth (Ooi, 2007, p. 39). Underfunding of structural works in developing megacities causes "overburdened metropolitan infrastructures and unmanageable human sprawls, inadequate housing and health care, traffic, congestion, urban violence, high crime rates, and social and economic exclusion" (Obono, 2007, p. 36). In general, high rates of urbanization challenge sustainable urban development, leading to environmental degradation, poor infrastructure, and inadequate public services, amongst other challenges (Wei et al., 2016, p. 87). In general, the mixture of failed local and international policies, underfunding, corruption, and overurbanization have led to economic dualism in megacities in the developing world.

Slumdwellers are overburdened by the challenges encountered in informal settlements. Lack of proper basic services can cause infectious diseases and epidemics (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2017; S.-L. Joseph, 2010; Shah, 2014). In Nairobi's slums, for instance, "child mortality is 2.5 times greater than in other parts of the city due to factors such as poor sanitation and minimal health care" (Kalan, 2014, p. 71). Slumdwellers are also more vulnerable to environmental disasters caused by climate change (Andrade et al., 2013; Romero-Lankao et al., 2014). Lack of connectivity of slums located at the outskirts of the city centre reinforce inequalities (Oviedo Hernandez & Dávila, 2016). Critics of local government's attempts to increase connectivity argue that efforts such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, cable cars, or electric escalators in fact contribute to social inequality by normalizing the settlements without removing the stigma or improving the overall conditions of those living in slums (Alvarez Rivadulla & Bocarejo, 2014; Brand & Dávila, 2011; Mallqui & Pojani, 2017; Reimerink, 2018). The marginality and complexity of informal settlements have created a negative connotation that has perhaps deepened inequalities.

In view of the negative outcomes of slums, governments have intended to solve the "problem of slums" by formalizing informal settlements (Afenah, 2012; Yunda & Sletto, 2017). Property rights theories determine the approach the government takes towards slums. The concession of land titles varies between government's libertarian or utilitarian theories. Evictions are often a result of urban redesign, of planning and removing what is illegal in the city. Over 5.6 million eviction cases were reported worldwide between 2003 and 2006 and 1.6 million between 2007 and 2008 (Afenah, 2012). The poorest are often targeted and left without homes, and with psychological trauma. Yet,

what determines whether land is legal or illegal? Research on the informal sector has shown duplicity in government decisions when assigning land titles. For example, in Mexico, developer-driven projects on the periphery are consider legal, while self-built, incrementally built homes also in the periphery of the city, are always labelled as illegal (Connolly & Wigle, 2017). Robert Neuwirth, in his Shadow Cities; A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World demonstrated how at the end of the nineteenth century, policymakers deliberately misused public health statistics (especially on cholera) to legitimately clear up slums (Neuwirth, 2005). Evictions are justified if slumdwellers are seen as criminals. Lack of property rights also creates difficulties for the provision of transportation, basic services, proper housing, and bank loans. Fear of eviction also hinders the motivation to self-build a durable home. Banks avoid lending to low-income households in slums for fear of their inability to make payments (Satterthwaite, 2008, p. 234).

The solution to the problems of slums is very complex. Even with the best intentions, attempts to "improve" the life of slumdwellers does not always work as envisioned. In Nairobi, for example, hundreds of residents and businesses of Kibera, the city's largest slum, were relocated to new apartment blocks by their government. Yet many of them rented the apartment and returned to the slum. They were searching for their jobs, their social bonds, their life style (Kalan, 2014, p. 71). Civil organizations in 2015, under the "Iniciamos tu Casa (We start your home) Project," donated prefabricated housing for the poor in El Salvador, Mexico, and Uruguay. Yet, only in El Salvador did the poor experience an improvement in their living conditions. Quite often, participants abandoned the houses because of the lack of access to other desirable goods (Cooper et al., 2014). Slum-upgrading projects attempting to move people elsewhere have failed because eradicating poverty is not only providing dignified housing: the poor will forgo apartments or prefabricated houses to retain jobs and their communities. Trying to solve the problem of slums has prevented us from looking at the opportunity's slums might offer.

Informal settlements or slums originate and thrive in the megacity. The "enigma and stigma" of the megacity is the contradiction of the simultaneous status of the mega-slum and the mega-city (Obono, 2007, p. 31). Slums attract the poor looking for opportunities or those fleeing from civil unrest. Although slums might not be "desirable places to live, a billion people call them home for good reason" (Kalan, 2014, p. 71). In Latin America, 24% of the 80% urban dwellers live in slums (Butera et al., 2016, p. 2095). In many cities, slums and urban sprawl beyond the city centres are a result of the development and expansion of industrial and commercial areas in the periphery (Ooi, 2007, p. 42). In the absence of legal property rights, informal entrepreneurialism evolves among squatters as an alternative to providing services otherwise inaccessible to the poor (Blanco, 2012; Hylton & Charles, 2018; Romero-Lankao et al., 2014).

Informal marketplaces offer affordable services to the poorest. In Dharavi, a slum in Mumbai, about 17 percent of build-spaces are thriving factories, shops, and offices rather than just housing (Kalan, 2014, p. 71). Strong community bonds are formed in slums, leading to informal associations dedicated to solving their own problems. For example, the Mumbai National Slum Dwellers Federation and the Kenyan Homeless People's Federation designed their own saving schemes and negotiate mass evictions and tenant-landowner disputes (Satterthwaite, 2008, p. 234). Governments that understand the value of informal institutions are harnessing their work to provide for the services the poor so much need (Hylton & Charles, 2018; Romero-Lankao et al., 2014). However, some argue that regularizing informal entrepreneurialism is detrimental to the

poor, since they are a result of an "oligopolistic market protected by planning regulations… that prevents resistance by co-opting the poor through the pirate subdivision system" (Blanco, 2012, p. 30). Despite the controversies and complexities of slums, between 2000 and 2014, 320 million people were lifted out of slum-like conditions, which demonstrates that slums can be a catalyst for development (UN-Habitat, 2016b, p. 57).

1.2. Urban Governance

If governance is key, then what type of urban governance is ideal for megacities? City governance should encourage economic growth, environmental protection, and socially just policies aiming at leaving no one behind (UNDP, 2018, p. 14). As per section 1.1.2 of this proposal, the extension and density of a city does not determine its viability for economic development. In section 1.1.3., we saw that the environmental impact of a city can be mitigated by utilizing cutting-edge technological advances, regardless of its size. Provision of basic services, per section 1.1.4., is much more affordable in larger cities, and so inequality could possibly be reduced in megacities. Megacities might not be inadequate models for development, but poorly governed megacities create unfavourable conditions for both rich and poor. With this in mind there is a move towards a more positive understanding of "mega-urban" areas to see them as drivers of change and to achieve sustainability while significantly improving the quality of life for many, if not all, its inhabitants (Kraas, 2007, p. 82).

The size of the city is not completely irrelevant, since it does affect different variables and different income groups in different ways (Gilbert, 1996, p. 6). Overall, there is a higher quality of life in large cities than in small towns or rural areas, mainly in developing countries, and this advantage continues to attract individuals to the world's largest cities. Good governance might be key to ensuring that the poor and the vulnerable are no longer left behind. Governance has been defined as: "Processes and outcomes of consultative interactions between different constituent members including public, private, and civil organizations in order to resolve common political, economic, and social issues*"* (Saito 2003; Kooiman 2003: 4; Evans et al. 2005 as cited in Saito, 2008, p. 6), and, "process of co-ordinating actors, social groups and institutions in order to reach objectives which have been collectively discussed and defined in fragmented, even nebulous environments" (Bagnasco and Le Galès 2000, 26 as cited in Montero & Chapple, 2018, p.6).

In these two definitions, the emphasis of governance is of a process between multiple actors with a common goal. Is not just about governing, from top-bottom, or bottom-up, but also from a horizontal perspective, as actors can be all of kinds. To narrow down the scope of the literature review and of this thesis, the next sections focus on the external and internal challenges to governance. Section 1.2.1. presents most common context specific urban governance challenges derived from horizontal actors in megacities in developing countries. Section 1.2.2. focuses on understanding decentralization, its context, what it promises and the common critiques of this internal urban governance model. It is hoped that through the evaluation of the external and internal challenges to governance, a fair assessment can be made on the suitability of megacities as ideal urban phenomena for cities in developing countries.

1.2.1. Common External Urban Governance Challenges

Every city is confronted with external challenges to governing. Uneven development of cities, peri-urbanization, lack of leadership, and immigration, are a few of commonly experienced challenges to effectively govern cities.

1.2.1.1. Primacy and Peri-urbanization

It is common to find in developing and developed countries alike uneven development of cities in the nation. This phenomenon has been called the *primacy problem.* The primacy problem is when one primary city more than doubles the population of the next biggest agglomeration (Henderson & Kriticos, 2018, as cited in Resnick, 2021, p.140). Usually, primate cities are economic hubs concentrated at the core causing a direct raise in housing prices (Resnick, 2021, p. 141). Usually, this primate cities are megacities, or in the process of becoming one. Local governments are then forced to increase investments in housing to counteract the natural increase of housing prices. In developing nations, this is challenging, as resources are often lacking, and leaves individuals with no choice but to live in the streets or in slums. This trend is not uncommon, as more than 60% of the African region's urban population lives in slums, which is almost double the global proportion (Lall, Henderson, and Venables 2017, as cited in Resnick, 2021, p.141).

Peri-urbanization is urban growth in which the line between the rural and urban is blurred. This scattered growth often brings problems due to lack of planning and infrastructure, degradation of environment, or loss of agricultural land (Tian et al., 2019, p. 1). Hybrid landscapes overtime become fully urbanized, enlarging the surface area of the cities where this is present, often at the expense of the environment. This urban phenomenon presents challenges to local governance as often there are not distinct boundaries, and necessitates strategic planning to predict and control urban growth (Aguilar et al., 2022, pp. 16–17). The primacy problem and peri-urbanization are interlinked, as the primary city attracts resources, from the outskirts, and as it grows the outskirts become the greater or metro area of these cities, over time, becoming megacities. For urban governance, this presents a challenge, as these processes take much longer to identify and are too large to tackle in one mayorship when they become evident.

1.2.1.2. Fragmented Leadership

Local governance's struggle for leadership in developing countries is challenged in many fronts. Not only politicians, bureaucrats or political parties influence urban governance. There are other non-state actors that play significant roles in cities of developing nations (Resnick, 2021, p. 153). In Africa, it is not uncommon that traditional leaders secure a percentage of seats as councillors, or provide parallel services or oppose the mayor or councillor's resolutions (Resnick, 2021, p. 154). During the pandemic, resident's mistrust towards their government impeded successful implementation of policies, as only church or tribal leaders were trusted. This occurred in cities in South Africa, DRC, West Africa, Cape Town, and Liberia (Van Belle et al., 2020, p. 1). The private sector, especially with the new public-private partnerships, heavily influence urban governance. While privately run public services tend to provide better services to the society, in some cases private public services increase the cost further marginalizing the poor. Also, depending on the government's transparency, these partnerships could result in a multitude of inefficient contracts with minimal municipal accountability (Resnick, 2021, pp. 154–155). As the provision of services in developing countries is often lacking, citizens organize parallel organizations, sometime using illegal means and violence to run these services. As these illegal groups become stronger, their influence in city politics also grows either creating chaos and making it difficult to govern (Nigeria's bad boys) or they infiltrate city politics in Zambia (Resnick, 2021, p. 155). Local governments fight for leadership can be daunting in cities where there is no rule of law, and for years corruption mixed with mismanagement, and interested parties fighting to keep what they can, has proven to be a real urban governance challenge.

1.2.1.3. Accelerated Urbanization

Large influx of migrants in need of short- or long-term resettlement often present a challenge to governance in both developing and developed nations (Ambrosini, 2021; Chakrabarti et al., 2021). Even though 84% of international migrants are hosted in poorer countries, xenophobic stances are higher in richer cities of Europe and the US (Ambrosini, 2021, p. 201). Acceptance of migrants by civilians dictates the policies governments will undertake towards "the other". Even though richer countries are in better conditions to provide assistance to migrants, their fear towards "the other" forces local and national governments to marginalize migrants with policies of exclusion motivated by civilian's protests, and even burning of migration centers (Ambrosini, 2021).

Developing nations as receptors of most of international migrations have shown better acceptability towards "the other", but some regions struggle more than others to become inclusive. Chakrabarti (2021) studied migrant narratives on urban governance in Kolkata, India. He found that in Kolkata migrants experience development-induced eviction, fear of resettlement due to political pressure, a precarious life in resettlements, and the need for constant negotiation of fundamental human rights (Chakrabarti et al., 2021, p. 14). There is a need to develop political and social consciousness, as those evicted in Kolkata live in fear of further eviction, do not have toilets, electricity, waste and water management provided, which forces them to negotiate on a daily basis with state authorities at the local level, making bribing, extortion, and informal arrangements illegal and rampant in the settlements (Chakrabarti et al., 2021, p. 11). Urban migrants in Kolkata are also forced to participate in political rallies, even though they are treated like "the other" and excluded from basic services in their everyday live (Chakrabarti et al., 2021, p. 12). There is a huge gap between what is expected from migrants versus what governments provide. "There is not a single project for the urban poor to ensure a holistic development of and improvement in their socio-economic conditions and long-term inclusiveness" (Chakrabarti et al., 2021, p. 13). It is very difficult for urban governments in developing nations to provide public urban services to their inhabitants, let alone to migrants. Their challenges double, and natives fear as they must fend for themselves before feeling comfortable to share with others. They often exclude "the other" to protect themselves from suffering more.

1.2.2. Deciphering Decentralization

Decentralization is one of those generally accepted terms that embraces many definitions, and it is rarely scrutinized. This section intends to provide a definition based on various academic proposals while providing the context in which decentralization became a dominant political ideal. The last two sections evaluate the promises and critiques of this governance model.

1.2.2.1. Defining Decentralization

Decentralization is not a term without its own ambiguities. In a study conducted by the World Bank in 1984, Rondinelli defined decentralization as "the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semiautonomous public authorities or corporations, (d) areawide, regional or functional authorities, or (e) nongovernmental private or voluntary organizations" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 17). This definition introduced four types of decentralization based on the recipient of power and the extent that power is handed down. *Deconcentration* was defined as the "handing over of some amount of administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within central

government ministries and agencies" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 18). *Delegation* as the "transfers managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 19). *Devolution* as "the creation or strengthening - financially or legally - of subnational units of government… local units of government are autonomous and independent, and their legal status makes them separate or distinct from the central government" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 24). And *privatization* as the "governments divest[ing] themselves of responsibility [of] functions and either transfer them to voluntary organizations or allow them to be performed by private enterprises" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 28). In Rondinelli's definition of deconcentration and devolution, power remains with the central government, while delegation and privatization transfer the authority outside of the state, with minimal or nihil government' intervention.

A second study of the World Bank led by Manor in 1999, removed privatization as a type of decentralization. Manor argued that once a private company or volunteer organization has taken over the provision of a service, it no longer belongs to the government structure, and so, it could not be accounted as a type of decentralization. Manor initiated thinking about types of decentralization based on transfer of functions rather than on the recipient of power. Hence, he proposed three types of decentralization. *Deconcentration* or *Administrative Decentralization* refers to "the dispersal of agents of higher levels of government into lower level" (Manor, 1999, p. 16); *Fiscal Decentralization* refers to "downward fiscal transfers, by which higher levels in a system cede influence over budgets and financial decisions to lower levels" (Manor, 1999, p. 17); and *Devolution* or *Democratic Decentralization* refers to "the transfer of resources and power (and often, tasks) to lower-level authorities which are largely or wholly independent of higher levels of government, and which are democratic in some way and to some degree" (Manor, 1999, p. 17).

Falleti (2005) following Manor's typology enriched it categorizing the types of functions under each type of decentralization. Therefore, his definitions are: *Administrative Decentralization* which comprises the set of policies that transfer the administration and delivery of social services such as education, health, social welfare, or housing to subnational governments" (Falleti, 2005, p. 329); *Fiscal Decentralization* refers to "the set of policies designed to increase the revenues or fiscal autonomy of subnational governments" (Falleti, 2005, p. 329); and *Political Decentralization* as "the set of constitutional amendments and electoral reforms designed to open new——or activate existing but dormant or ineffective——spaces for the representation of subnational polities" (Falleti, 2005, p. 329).

Whittingham Munevar uses the three types of Falleti, but further defines under each type how centralization takes form, bringing back some of the concepts introduced by Rondinelli: *Administrative Decentralization*'s purpose is to improve efficiency, particularly regarding the allocation and appropriation of resources. Administrative Deconcentration is further categorized in three forms: a*) General Deconcentration* - the transfer of competences to lower levels of government *b) Functional Deconcentration*- the transfer of functions to local branches of national institutions and *c) Delegation*- the transfer of certain powers to para-state agencies of the central state (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 110). For *Economic Decentralization*, "the purpose is to limit the state's regulatory and distributive functions, releasing the fiscal budget and giving freedom to the market, its divided in two forms: *a) Privatization* – the transfer of power and responsibilities to private groups or companies; and *b) Deregulation*- the transfer of decision

competences to the market" (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 110). And for *Political Decentralization*'s "purpose as the creation and promotion of new forms of participation at the local and/or regional levels. With the forms of *a) Political delegation*- the transfer of specific functions to para-state institutions where the political parties and/or interest groups have influence; *b) General devolution* - the transfer of competences to autonomous and legitimately elected sub-national political units; and *c) Functional devolution*- the transfer of decision-making power to local institutions" (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 110).

In broader terms, decentralization is generally understood as the "transfer authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subnational entities" (Fedelino, 2010, p. xi). Yet, acknowledging the nuances of the term decentralization helps maintain an open mind, as most of these definitions were drafted after conducting field research on various countries practicing decentralization. Perhaps rather than providing a single definition, the purpose lies in discovering the way that decentralization manifests in each nation or region.

1.2.2.2. Centralization vs Decentralization

Dissatisfaction with the results of national government's outputs in developing countries spurred interest in decentralization as an alternative solution (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 10). Centralized governments were seen as incapable of meeting the demands of local communities (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 11), disassociate the voter with the government (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13), delay implementation due to multiple levels of approvals, (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 11), and of fragmentation or working silos (Resnick, 2021, p. 149) among many other foes. In fact, "for most countries centralized political and administrative institutions were a direct legacy of the colonial rulers" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 4). It was believed that the failure to promote development and reduce poverty, was a direct cause of a top-down approach of centralized governments (Manor, 1999, p. 9).

The shift from centralization to decentralization was propelled in the 1980s with the structural adjustment programs (SAPs), that while focused on economic reforms, enshrined decentralization as the ideal means to reduce the size of the state (Saito, 2008, p. 5). Since then, decentralization has been seen as "key ingredient" to improve the quality of urban governance, and it has been promoted as such in many development strategies (Campbell, 2003; Tendler, 1997; UN-Habitat, 2009; World Bank, 1992, as cited in Gilbert, 2015, p. 666). It should be noted, that while there has been a shift towards decentralization, "few countries if any, are either totally centralized or totally decentralized" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 37). However, there are many countries where departments and municipalities have started to deal with economic and social matters that were previously considered a responsibility of the national government (Castro, 2011, p. 265). In any case, decentralization over time has promised to fix many of the evils of centralization and perhaps inadvertently, also introduce its own complexities.

1.2.2.3. Promises of Decentralization

The introduction of decentralization at the national level brought very high expectations as it was championed as a political strategy that could solve many issues developing countries experienced. A decentralized state was seen as ideal to help reduce poverty (Saito, 2008, p. 4). Local officials are better informed about the preferences of local citizens (Bardhan & Mookerjee 2006b as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 40) leading to an increase in the quality and quantity of public services

(Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 13), through enhanced allocative efficiency (Saito, 2008, p. 6), and increasing local economic growth (Rumbach, 2016, p. 35). Yet, the biggest promise of decentralization is that of increased democratization.

Decentralization makes states more democratic and developmental (Saito, 2008, p. 1) as it "increases the voice of citizens and civil society actors in governance" (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007 as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 35), allows more direct participation and representation of traditionally marginalized citizens and communities in governments (Bardhan and Mookerjee 2006b as cited in Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 614). For the poor to have access to political participation, especially in megacities, democracy must be decentralized (J. Joseph, 2001, p. 219). It is believed, that with "multiplication of decision-makers, greater efficiencies are created (Pening, 2003:125 as cited in Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 614), and "citizens can participate in local decision-making processes (Saito, 2008, p. 1).

Decentralization increases development and democratization because local officials are more accountable to their constituents (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006a; Chattopadhyay, 2012; Faguet, 2012 as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 35). This means that reducing poverty is possible because elected officials are expected to make public services more responsive to the needs of the people (Saito, 2008, p. 1). This is why for some, decentralization and local governance are seen as interconnected concepts (Saito, 2008, p. 6). Finally, decentralization promises to "reduce corruption and rent-seeking behavior by politicians and political parties (Lessman & Markwardt 2010; Vernon, Williams, Corbridge, & Srivastava, 2006, as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 35), as corrupt behaviours are often a by-product of inefficient governments, something that can be improved with decentralization.

1.2.2.4. Critiques of Decentralization

The implementation of decentralization in multiple countries has demonstrated various challenges. First, the transition from centralization to decentralization is not smooth, and in many cases only partially accomplished. States in development "have faced myriad problems in designing and implementing programs for decentralizing development administration" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 17). African countries experienced a shift towards more elected local governments since 1990s, and as of 2017, 75% had elected governments (Resnick, 2021, p. 142). Yet being able to elect the mayor, especially in developing countries, doesn't always imply more political autonomy, as the intentions to allow lower-level democratization are often tinted by underlying political motives. For example, Ethiopia's and Uganda's national government allowed local elections to infiltrate in local communities to grow support. In other instances, local elections did not really matter so much for the city's autonomy, but elections were used as a political tool. In Nigeria, Malawi, and Zambia local elections were used to consolidate emerging ruling parties, and former mayors end up as new presidents (Resnick, 2021, p. 142). In Ethiopia, elections are allowed, but national governments impose quotas on the percentage seats for each political party (Resnick, 2021, p. 145). Decentralization in developing countries is often imperfect, as local governments can still be manipulated by central government's tactics such as delaying elections, reducing the territory to reduce influence, or halting progress of policy areas that require cooperation across different levels of government (Resnick, 2021, p. 148).

Second, not all the promises of decentralization have materialized. For example, studies have found that local participation has not increased with decentralization. “National voting rates are high, while opportunities for participation in local government are rare (Ghosh, 1988; Pal, 2006, as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 41). The capacity of smaller cities to manage resources and responsibilities is often lacking, making it difficult to improve the economic and social situation of citizens. “Observers of Indian urbanization argue that a long history of centralized planning and fiscal management has created cities with low capacity for governance (Banerjee & Chakravorty, 1994; Mehta & Mehta 2010; Mukhopadhyay, 2006; Pal, 2006; Shaw, 1996, as cited in Rumbach, 2016, p. 41). At the same time, decentralized urban governance is challenged by the need for coordination on local, mega-urban, and national scales (Ooi, 2007, pp. 39–40). The effective flow of major municipal projects such as highways, metro, or rapid bus systems requires effective coordination in decentralized urban systems. Decentralized governments are often critiqued as a lot of resources can be wasted in attempts for coordination between same level of governments for bigger infrastructure projects, as each mayor can be pursuing their own internal affairs. Furthermore, properly running a megacity is challenging when neighbouring administrative areas are overshadowed by giant cities (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13).

Mayors not only have to balance their relations with national governments but often, and in large cities, they also must deal with municipalities. Metropolitan areas are municipalities in close proximity to a major city united to increase inter-municipal collaboration in the delivery of services – roads, transit, waste and water management (Resnick, 2021, pp. 149–150). Lack of coordination becomes more evident in metropolitan regions as, in some cases, metropolitan areas have less power and influence than the municipalities themselves undermining cooperative governance. In Ghana, the Metropolitan area of Accra, with 4 million inhabitants, has increased the number of districts from four to twelve creating boundaries disputes, less budgets for each district, and tougher cooperation over the management of land fields, and roads (Resnick, 2021, p. 150). The difficulties of coordination and division of power have led to the literature of polycentric versus monocentric governance. In the Philippines, the Metro Manila Development Authority, for example, has 14 city mayors and three municipal mayors, while in Thailand, the Bangkok Metropolitan Region comprises fifty districts (Ooi, 2007, p. 42). In other cases, there is a move towards consolidation of districts. This has allowed for coordination of tax base and provision of services. In South Africa for example, reducing from eleven to seven administrative regions reduced the burden of alignment between regions (Resnick, 2021, p. 150). However, many urbanists support decentralization despite its challenges.

There is a need for the study and debate on the best theories and approach to urban governance in developing nations. We must shift from a predominantly globalization-driven, competitiveness-seeking top down development, to alternative priorities based on problem-, process- and people-oriented governance (Kraas, 2007, p. 82). “Policy responses should link to local conditions, and choose different tools and instruments such as regulatory tools, market-based tools, and spatial tools to achieve sustainable urbanisation and maximise the benefits of agglomeration economies and minimise the negative externalities” (Zhang, 2016, p. 241).

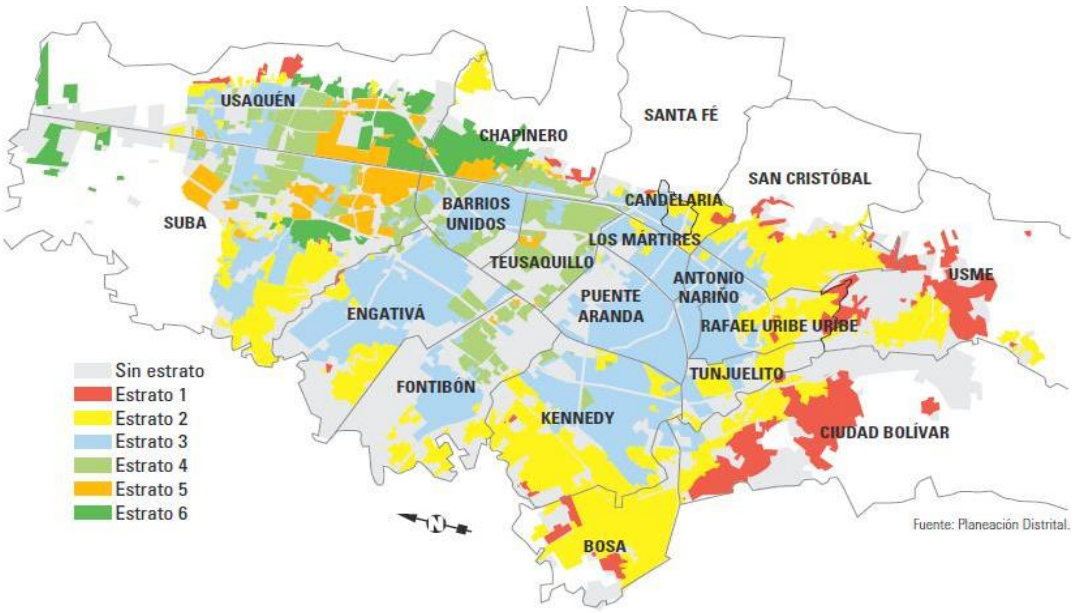
1.3. Case Study: Bogotá, a Megacity in Latin America

Bogotá, one of the 30th largest cities in the world, is the capital of Colombia, a country located in South America. As per the 2018 national census, the population of Bogotá is 7,412,566 inhabitants

in an area of 1,775 km² and with a density of 4,176 people per square kilometre (DANE, 2018). Bogotá is situated in an upland basin 8,660 feet (2,640 metres) above sea level in the Cordillera Oriental of the Northern Andes Mountains. It rains 223/336 days for about 40 inches (1,000 mm)/day, and the average temperature is 57 °F (14 °C) ("Bogotá," 2019).

The surviving ethnic groups in the capital are Negros (Black), Afrocolombiano (Colombian of African descent), Raizales de San Andres y Providencia, and Palequeros de San Basilio, which together account for 9.34% of the total population. The Gipsi, or Roma, peoples received national recognition as an ethnic minority group in 1999, currently making up 2.64% of Colombians. Only 1.9% of Colombians self-identify as indigenous. The rest of the population did not identify itself from an ethnic group (DANE, 2018), but can be assumed to be mestizo (mix of white and indigenous) and white (European descent).

Figure 1-1: *Map of localidades in Bogotá and social stratum*



Note: Accessed from Secretaría Distrital de Planeación (SDP), Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá D.C., Colombia https://www.sdp.gov.co/gestion-estudios-estrategicos/estratificacion/estratificacion-por-localidad

The streets of Bogotá are a mix of architectural colonial legacy, a thrilling modern infrastructure, and a nascent economic hub full of cultural diversity. The capital has 26 hospitals, 5,169 parks across the city, 2,070 educational centres, and 165 universities. As of 2018, 11.2% of Bogotáns had completed only primary school, 22% have achieved medium-level education (10–13 years of school), 11.8% hold a university degree, 1.6% have a master's degree, and 0.1% a doctorate. The principal economic sectors in Bogotá are commerce (31.1%), industry (12.5%), and technological/scientific (10.1%). Most Bogotáns use public transit (72.36%), while only 14.34% drive, 6.3% bike, and 7% walk to work and to school (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2019b).

The city is composed of 20 localidades [localities] or administrative divisions. Localidades are second-level territorial divisions administered by local mayors, elected by the mayor of the city. (Localidades de Bogotá [Bogotá Administrative Divisions], 2019). Bogotá uses a social stratum

classification for statistical, planification, and tax purposes. As Figure 1-2 demonstrates, the northern part of the city is where most of the wealthy civilians live, yet all other strata (1–6) are also represented in the wealthiest localidades (Usaquen, Suba and Chapinero), unlike the south part of the city, where only strata below 3 are found. Figure 1-1 and table Table 1-1present the percentage of the population of Bogotá in the different strata and the breakdown of the population by localidad.

Table 1-1: *Classification of social strata in localidades of Bogotá*

Estratos (Stratum)[2]	**Definition**	**Population[3] %**	**Localidades**
Estrato 1	Low-Low	13.1%	Ciudad Bolivar (64.7%), Usme (52.2%)
Estrato 2	Low	26.8%	Bosa (78.9%), Kennedy (48.1%), San Cristobal (67.2%), Engativa (24.7%)
Estrato 3	Medium-Low	15.9%	Engativa (57.7%) Kennedy (38.7%), Puente Aranda (77.6%)
Estrato 4	Medium	5.4%	Teusaquillo (67.9%), Suba (9%), Usaquen (13.7%)
Estrato 5	Medium – high	2.3%	Suba (10.7%) Usaquen (12.6%)
Estrato 6	High	2%	Usaquen (16.8%), Chapinero (28.5%), Suba (5.7%)
Sin estrato	No strata	5.4%	

1.3.1. Research Justification

I have chosen Bogotá, Colombia's capital, as a case study to deepen the knowledge of the relationship between governance and the size of the city, to determine whether megacities are favourable urban phenomena for cities in developing countries. Despite award-winning projects, funding, and outstanding leadership to initiate multiple urban development projects, Bogotá's urban challenges continue to puzzle urbanists. For example, the 2002 national and international award-winning Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system failed the city in 2017 when Bogotá was ranked the second-most congested city in the world (Gonzalez et al., 2019, p. 1). The successful clearing of "El Cartucho" in 2002 and its conversion into a national "Third Millennium Park" failed when years later and close to the former location, a bigger and more complex neighbourhood, "El Bronx," was born (Semana, 2024). Why did these laudable projects fail? Most of the literature on megacities identify as reasons failures of development, poor governance, corruption, or lack of funding for infrastructure projects. Yet, this is not the case for Bogotá, or at least it hasn't been the case in the past 20 years. Urban theorists have disregarded the size of the city as a major challenge of megacities. Bogotá seems to debunk the established theories of urban development and puts back in the debate the challenge of management when it comes to the size of the city. Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogotá (2016 – 2019), embarked on a mission to make Bogotá sustainable. Yet, Peñalosa's urban plans seem to have prepared the city for an increase in population. Expanding highways and building skyscrapers are turning Bogotá into a megacity. The expected population

[2] https://www.sdp.gov.co/gestion-estudios-estrategicos/estratificacion/estratificacion-por-localidad

[3] The total of the percentages presented does not equal 100%. On December 20, 2019, a message was sent to the Alcadia de Bogotá to request the rationale for the discrepancy in the percentages and for a complete breakdown of the percentages of the population in each of the strata by *localidad*. No answer was received.

of Bogotá in 2030 is 12.3 million (Macrotrends, 2024), including 20% of the 2.5 million Venezuelan immigrants that have arrived in Colombia since 2015 (Selee & Bolter, 2020, p. 29). Claudia Lopez succeeding Peñalosa (2019-2023) promoting the building of the Metro encouraged citizens to elect a new leaders who moves forward the metro and the mobility projects the city has already embarked on (Sánchez Cristo, 2023). Today Bogotá's continues to struggle with mobility and violence despite the laudable efforts of multiple administrations. Perhaps the cyclical inability of megacities to meet the demands of rapid urbanization need to be explored with an approach that takes governance and the size of a city as two sides of the same coin.

1.3.2. Political Context of Colombia

Colombia's political context is an ever-developing liberal democracy, despite its long-lasting internal guerilla conflict (Smith & Sells, 2017). Colombia's former president Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 for his outstanding achievement in striking a peace deal after 50 years of civil unrest with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The internal war in Colombia has for many decades frustrated the nation's development (Kline, 2015, p. 177). While Santos received international recognition, the peace deal could not have been a reality without the two terms of former president Álvaro Uribe from 2002–2010. Before Uribe's harsh treatment of the guerillas, former presidents Belisario Betancourt, César Gaviria, and Andrés Pastrana, tried to negotiate unsuccessful peace agreements (El Tiempo, 2016). The negotiations frustrated Colombians as the guerillas used these to manipulate the government and grow in number and strength (El Tiempo, 2016). During Uribe's term, the guerrillas diminished in numbers and influence (Kline, 2015, p. 179). Former investigations revealed that under Uribe's terms 6,402 innocent farmers were killed under the excuse of meeting quotas of guerrilla bodies that army commanders required of their soldiers (CNN, 2022). The Peace Accord was signed on November 24, 2016. This Peace Accord was jeopardized during President Duque's administration (2018-2022), mainly due to his inability to take a stand from the beginning of his mandate creating instability and doubt about the government's commitment to implementing the agreement (Maher & Thomson, 2018, p. 2143). Incumbent president Gustavo Petro has also had difficulties implement the Peace Accord. Petro's total peace mandate has been chaotic and filled with scandals. The nation and more recently guerilla leaders have spoken about their frustration with Petro's management of the negotiations for peace (Quesada, 2024). The stagnation of peace negotiation and implementation of the 2016 accord has led to an increase in violence in the country and a re-armament of the groups (Patiño, 2024). Bogotá is impacted by the national guerrilla conflict through the increase of urban crime as groups fight for control, and due to high internal migration of displaced people (Saldarriaga & Hua, 2019, p. 1). Despite the national internal conflict and tensions, Bogotá is a fascinating city for the study of the future of megacities in developing countries.

1.3.3. Urban Context of Bogotá

The urban spin of Bogotá started when Antanas Mockus[4] was elected mayor of Colombia's capital in 1995. An emblematic character, Mockus gave life to the city. Among Mockus' most outstanding legacies was his passion to form a "cultura ciudadana" (civic culture) to improve civic behaviour and sense of ownership through creative policies, from hiring 400 mimes to ridicule traffic offenders, to asking citizens to voluntarily pay more taxes, and reducing corruption in local management (Tognato et al., 2017, p. 27). Mockus' transparency approach to politics and

[4] See Appendix 1: List of Mayors in Bogotá 1995-present.

leadership was transformative and powerful, for it showed Bogotáns that political change was possible. Succeeding mayors, with few exceptions, ran on platforms that demonstrated real concern for the issues of Bogotáns. In 1998, Enrique Peñalosa was re-elected mayor of Bogotá. Having received the city in good fiscal condition, he was able to invest in multiple municipal projects. For example, the construction of the TransMilenio, a BRT network that vowed to solve the city's congestion problems received multiple national and international awards (Montgomery, 2006). In 2002 he built a millennium park in "El Cartucho" what used to be the most dangerous street in country. In 2003, Mayor Lucho Garzon's platform motto was "Bogotá sin hambre" (Bogotá without hunger), "Bogotá sin indiferencia" (Bogotá without indifference), and during his term he strove to implement social programs. In 2008, Mayor Samuel Moreno Rojas attempted to solve urban problems by proposing the construction of an underground metro, without much support and controversy as building a metro then was to oppose the ongoing project of the enlargement of the TransMilenio.

Gustavo Petro elected from 2012-2015 "repudiated the 'neoliberalization of urban space' that began in the 1990s in Bogotá" and fought vehemently to return privatized companies to the public sector, created new municipally owned enterprises, and heavy regulation of private firms (Eaton, 2020, pp. 2–3). Petro encountered multiple obstacles from national actors and powerful firms that opposed his policies, but also he wasn't able to form government coalitions to support his ideas (Eaton, 2020, p. 5). Petro was removed from office on the claims of his inability to negotiate with the garbage company's strike after he attempted to give ownership to a public company (Randall, 2012).

Enrique Peñalosa re-elected in 2016 implemented many projects to improve education, health, and recreation. Under his term 30 new schools were built and 34 existing schools were renovated in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Hospital Santa Juana, that had closed, was modernized and rebuilt. Constructed 25 new centres for vulnerable children, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Relocated 2,350 families from housing in zones of high environmental risk. Build 100km of bicycle paths and revitalized another 60km, making Bogotá the number one bicycle-friendly city outside of Europe[5]. Introduced over a thousand carbon-friendly buses. Opened three Happiness Centers[6] that can host up to 1,134 people at a time. Build 321 parks and 126 soccer fields. Inaugurated seven centres for post-war reconciliation that have served 236,235 victims of the internal conflict. Completed the construction of TransMicable, transporting 3,600 passengers per hour from the poorest neighbourhoods to the centre of the city. Cleared out the most dangerous square of the nation, "the Bronx," where drug addicts, narcotraffickers, and sex-traffickers or minors, gangs, and civil delinquents lived and traded, and converted it into the second campus of the SENA Institute for the creative arts. The majority of the inhabitants of the Bronx accepted the social help provided by the city to re-integrate into society (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2019a).

[5] According to the Copenhagenize Index, world's most complete and holistic ranking of cities friendly towards cyclists.

[6] Happiness Centers are community centres that have three main components: sports, recreation, and culture. The sporting area includes an Olympic pool, recreational pool, sports centre, and gym. The recreational space comprises multipurpose rooms, learning rooms, and a playroom for children between 0 and 5 years of age. They will be areas to stimulate the physical, motor, and cognitive development of people and spaces for healthy recreation and the use of free time. The cultural space includes recreational and participatory spaces such as the library, classrooms, and rooms for the plastic arts, dance, and music, as well as a movie theatre to enhance people's level of learning and promote a healthy quality of life. Retrieved from: https://www.idrd.gov.co/centros-felicidad-bogota, December 13, 2019.

The Mayorship of Claudia Lopez (2020-2023) was marked by the 2020 COVID pandemic. At the beginning of her term, Lopez popularity soared as she dealt proactive with the pandemic, but at the end, disapproval rates increased as the city she left is more congested and unsafe than it has ever been. Analysts evaluate Lopez's legacy as one of contingency. She was the leader that Bogotá needed to act fast in times of crisis. Yet, the city's economy, like many other cities globally is still recuperating (Sánchez Cristo, 2023). Lack of economic stability creates uncertainties and social instabilities.

As Bogotá has grown to become a megacity, Bogotá's government has not been able to fully service its inhabitants despite the multiple urban projects and initiatives undertaken. Bogota is a city that is constantly trying to re-invent itself, to provide more and better services for its citizens, yet its efforts seem to fall short. Therefore, Bogotá's unique position as a city in an emerging economy debilitated by its national guerrilla conflict and struggling to overcome its urbanization challenges, with some successes and some failures, serves as a suitable case study to understand the relationship between the size of the city, and the challenges to effective urban governance.

1.4. Research Question and Conceptual Framework

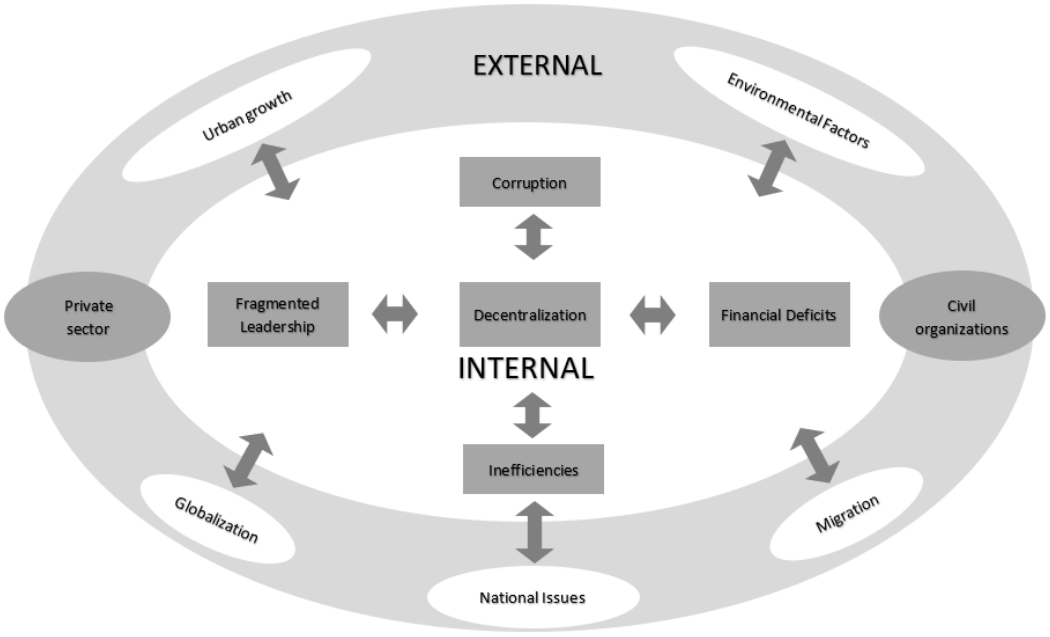
1.4.1. Research Objective and Research Questions

This master's thesis aims at contributing knowledge on the complexity of megacities. The literature review revealed the need to evaluate megacities from a contextual and institutional perspective. Consequently, the objective of this research is to better understand megacities as urban phenomenon utilizing the contextual and institutional lenses. Contextually, this research informs on the urban governance challenges experienced in Bogotá, while institutionally, this thesis evaluates the decentralization model that governs the city of Bogotá. Hence, the following research questions guided this research:

- RQ#1: How does Bogotá's urban context impact the effectiveness of its decentralized governance model?
- RQ#2: How does Bogotá's decentralization model impact the effectiveness of top-down institutionalized decision-making mechanism in governance?

1.4.2. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1-2: *Complexity of governing megacities*



Note: designed from interpretation of texts by Sassen (1991), Krass (2007), and X.Q. Zhang (2016) on megacities and global cities.

Urban governance is complex and multidisciplinary (Gilbert, 1996, p. 13), and so urban problems are often labelled as "wicked problems" (Bogunovich, 2016, p. 5). As Figure 1-2 demonstrates, running a city involves addressing a multiplicity of issues with a multiplicity of actors. Municipal governments need to provide solutions that require expertise in political, managerial, legal, economic, social, cultural, artistic, environmental, and security areas (Kraas, 2007, p. 82). Democratic governments are expected to produce results with the support not only of their citizens,

but of institutions and the private sector. Often, local governments are elected for terms of four to five years, and, in that time, they must prove their ability to manage multidimensional aspects of the city to effectively attract economic growth while reducing inequalities.

Urban governance in developing countries is much more complex than in developed countries (Zhang, 2016, p. 241). Systemic issues such as corruption, poor management, depletion of resources, natural disasters, poverty, and conflict aggravates the task of an urban government to successfully provide basic services to its inhabitants. Megacities in developing countries not only face the challenge of urban management within the systemic issues of developing countries but are also faced with exponential urban growth that profoundly incapacitates local governments from meeting the needs of their people.

Furthermore, globalization is transforming cities into megacities (Bogunovich, 2016, p. 4; Sassen, 1991). Global cities influence and are influenced by a multiplicity of factors on a global scale. Finance, culture, values, and trends dominate and are dominated by global cities (Sassen, 1991, 2002). Yet are megacities in developing nations global cities? Zhao, Guo, Li and Smith's study reveals two types of megacities: the mega-global city "with powerful and advanced business services sectors or international financial centers" and the mega-local city that does not play a significant global role. (S. X. Zhao et al., 2017, p. 257). The process of transforming from local to global depends on both the population and internal and external forces. The ability of the primate city to dominate the internal and external forces will determine the city's global impact. Internal forces such as governance and citizenship participation will impact external forces such as information technology, finance and business sectors, transport, and telecommunication networks (S. X. Zhao et al., 2017, p. 257).

The distinction between global and local megacities highlights the role of governance in making a mega-local city into a mega-global city. In this age of globalization, large and small cities in development ought to strive to become global to survive and attract not only national but also international markets and opportunities for their growing population. Zhao's findings also explain how the urbanization process differs for developed and developing countries. This is a valuable distinction, when trying to understand megacities, and as a tool for the future planning and governing of megacities.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1. Research Design

2.1.1. Philosophy - Critical Realism

Discovering my philosophical approach to research was a journey which I detailed more in *Appendix 2 – Philosophical Path.* At this stage I believe that critical realism aligns with my approach to research. "Critical reasoning seems to be a reconciliatory approach, which recognizes, like positivist, the existence of a natural order in social events and discourse but claims that this order cannot be detected by merely observing a pattern of events. The underlying order must be discovered through the process of interpretation while doing theoretical and practical work" (Walliman, 2011, p. 24). I think reality exists and can be known, not only through our sensory experience, but also through our critical reasoning. I believe both observation and analysis are necessary to comprehend a little better complex social phenomenon. I have conducted observation and applied reasoning to interpret and provide a better understanding of the situation civilians in Bogotá experience, with the hope that the findings are both meaningful and insightful on what type of cities we want to promote in developing countries.

2.1.2. Approach - Hypothetico-deductive reasoning

Critical realism invites both a deductive and inductive approach. I think there is true and value in the two approaches to research. Inductive reasoning starts from specific observations, and then develops a general conclusion from them; while deductive reasoning begins with general statements (premises) and through logical arguments come to a specific conclusion (Walliman, 2011, p. 17). This research uses the hypothetico-deductive reasoning or scientific method that combines inductive and deductive reasoning (Walliman, 2011, p. 19), with some variations. First a problem is identified - that is, some cities in developing countries are growing exponentially. Second, a hypothesis (testable theory) is developed – a megacity is not an ideal urban phenomenon for cities in developing countries. Third charting implications deductively by proposing specific and concrete research questions, and inductively by observing the phenomena through surveys and interviews. Fourth, practical or theoretical testing of the hypothesis – that is triangulation of the findings against each other (surveys and interviews) and with secondary research and analysis. Fifth, rejecting or refining the hypothesis considering results, in the presentation of the findings.

2.1.3. Research Type – Mix methods

Why did I choose to use mix-methods approach? I wanted to explain and interpret the situation for civilians in Bogotá and address the questions at different levels. For me, it was important to know how civilians in Bogotá were affected by the mobility in the city, what choices in size of the city they prefer, how much they knew and value the institutionalized mechanisms of decision making at their reach. At the same time, I wanted to understand what the governance structure at the various local governments is, and what are the structural or political challenges of those working in these institutions. Doing a survey and a semi-structured interview seemed to be necessary to fully answer the research questions and provide credible assessments of what megacities do for its inhabitants. The strength of qualitative research is the "ability to access personal experience and its meanings…respect for contextual factors… deep analysis of the issues, [etc.]" (Carrera-Fernández et al., 2013, p. 1590). The use of mixed methods seemed coherent with my philosophical stance, and my decision of using the hypothetico-deductive scientific method that combines both inductive and deductive reasoning.

There are various ways of using mixing methods as presented by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) and summarized in the Book Research Methods (Walliman, 2022, pp. 201–205). I used the pragmatic approach that gives equal status to different methods. For example, for my research proposal, I drafted the survey and interview questions in parallel, focusing the survey mainly about urban growth, mobility effects on civilians, and preferences for the size of the city, and the interviews focused on the challenges that individuals in local power encounter when governing the city of Bogotá, with an emphasis on urban growth and mobility. The revisions to my proposal suggested I focus more on the one aspect that my literature review had highlighted as the most relevant for assessing the viability of megacities, that is of urban governance. Therefore, I spent some time researching in more depth governance and adjusted both the survey and the interview to address the issue of local governance. The themes asked in the surveys and interviews are summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: *Survey and interview themes*

Survey Themes	Interview Themes
Demographic information of participants	Positionality of the interviewee
Urban growth	Bogotá's systems of governance
How mobility affects the daily life	Challenges addressing mobility
Likes and dislikes of Bogotá	Challenges addressing urban growth
Preferences on the size of a city	Urban governance challenges
Level of trust in governance systems	Level of trust of citizens in governance
Level of engagement in participatory process	Effectiveness of the participatory budget

There were no apparent problems of compatibility or limitations experienced while using the mix-method approach, rather the benefits were apparent, as utilizing the two methods simultaneously allowed for a deeper comprehension of some of the complex situational problems experienced by individuals in the city of Bogotá. Using only the data available in the public realm was not enough to answer the research questions, therefore conducting the survey and interviews provided answers to the questions, and insight to the problems of governance, mobility, and quality of life in the city of Bogotá. *Appendix 3 – Mix-methods Justification* provides more in-depth analysis in the use of mix methods for this research.

2.1.4. Research Process

This section aims at demonstrating how the theoretical aspects – the hypothesis and research questions – connect with the data gathered in the field, how I went from the abstract to the concrete to understand the research process and the validity of the methodology. For scientific papers, the levels of abstraction are not as complex as they are for the social sciences (Walliman, 2022, pp. 90–93), and in the mix-method approach creativity and suitability of the research process was even more necessary. I took the theory (hypothesis) and subdivided it into concepts (the research questions), and from these developed indicators – the survey and interview questions. In the survey, the options that individuals chose for their answers became the variables (measurable indicators), the individual responses to the survey became the values or actual units of measurements. Thematic analysis of the interviews provided quantifiable aspects to the most common themes mentioned by interviewees. Yet the greatest value of the interviews was the actual information provided by the respondents. Table 2-2 shows the connection between the theory and the data. Each chapter of the thesis answers one aspect of the two research questions. The indicators

show the content of the survey and interviews, and the variables and data column provide the corresponding number of the question in the survey or interview.

Table 2-2: *Research theory, indicators, and data collection*

Research Statement	Concepts/ Sub questions	Indicators	Variables and Data
RQ#1 Chapter 3	What are Bogotá's external governance challenges?	People surveyed born in Bogotá. Where people surveyed live and work. Means of transportation used. Income level disparity. Dislikes of living in Bogotá.	Survey – Q. 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20. Interviews – Q. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Secondary sources
RQ#2 Chapter 4	What is Bogotá's governance model like?	Type of urban Governance in Bogotá. Interaction between different levels. Efficiency of the governance model. Challenges of the governance model.	Survey – Q. 21, 22. Interviews – Q. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
Evaluation of Bogotá Chapter 5	What does Bogotá do for its inhabitants?	Likes of living in Bogotá. Choice of size of city. Bogotá's governance needs.	Survey – Q. 9, 18. Interview – Q. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

2.1.5. Research Strategy

2.1.5.1. Survey

Surveys are designed to "elicit a set of predictable responses that correspond to a set of uniform prompts or questions" (Trainor et al., 2013, p. 126). The Survey[7] with a total of 25 questions, was divided in five parts which cover the different topics addressed on this research. The first part, *demographics, and causes of urban growth* asked how long they have been residents of the city and the reason/s why they moved to Bogotá if they were not born there. The second part, *likes and dislikes of living in Bogotá*, aimed at finding out what aspects of the city such as access to employment, education, services, transport, or personal safety do civilians like or dislike the most, to understand the attractiveness and disincentives of megacities. Part three, *mobility effects on quality of life*, provided data on the income level and mobility effects on quality of life. Part four, *megacity vs mini city*[8] *preferences*, mainly aimed at finding out whether civilians would choose a large city over a small city if they were to have access to all economic and social benefits. The fifth part of the survey, *perceptions on governance and participation*, asked citizens for their opinion on their ability to influence local governments to provide essential urban services in Bogotá.

2.1.5.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews encourage an exchange of ideas based on open-ended questions that might be arranged or changed in response to interviewee answers (Trainor et al., 2013, p. 126). This approach allowed me to plan a set of questions in anticipation with the flexibility of letting

[7] See Appendix 4: Survey

[8] Word used to express the antonym of megacity or small city.

the respondent elaborate when answering the question and so, collecting relevant but previously unknown information.

The template[9] for the interviews was slightly modified according to the person being interviewed, but all the participants were asked the same questions. The interviews had a total of 16 questions, and these were divided in four parts. The first part was learning about the positionality of the person being interviewed. This helped to be aware of the perspective of the interviewee, and to keep that in mind when reviewing the answers. The second part, *Governance in Bogotá,* asked the participants to explained how they understood governance in Bogotá, did they think it was centralized or decentralized? Did the administrative structure change with the change of leadership? What were the roles and responsibilities of the organization or department they worked for, how is the working relationship between the different administrative offices, what are the competences of the local mayors and how much autonomy they have. This section helped making sense of the governance system of Bogotá. The third part, *Participative Governance*, asked about the participatory budget and other participatory mechanisms. The fourth part, *Urban Governance and Megacities*, asked about the impact multinationals, the private sector, NGOs, and migration had on the governance of the city, and about the challenges related to informal settlements and mobility. As the interview was open-ended, many other subthemes were often brought up by participants such as insecurity, corruption, and narcotraffic among others.

2.1.6. Sampling Strategy

2.1.6.1. Survey Sampling Strategy

The goal was to survey 100 individuals. To achieve this sampling goal 10 individuals were randomly chosen in the selected 10 different localidades. Table 2-3 shows the localities chosen based on their relevance to the city, and between a mix of different social stratum.

Table 2-3: *Localidades surveyed and income stratum*

Income Stratum	**Localidades Surveyed**	**Number of Localidades**
1 – Very Low	Ciudad Bolivar & San Cristobal	2
2 – Low	Bosa & Rafael Uribe	2
3 – Medium Low	La Candelaria	1
4 – Medium	Fontibon & Teusaquillo	2
5 – High	Suba	1
6 – Very High	Chapinero & Usaquen	2
Total number of Localidades Surveyed		**10**

Initially, the plan was to conduct the survey online and physically through fieldwork in Bogotá. The rational for selecting the online option, was to avoid the need to travel to two of the potentially dangerous localidades: Ciudad Bolivar and San Cristobal. I didn't plan to conduct all the survey virtually, as I wanted to ensure individuals were physically in the different localities of the study. Therefore, on November 11, 2021, the survey questions were uploaded to Survey Monkey and shared amongst contacts to request individuals to answer the survey. Only 3 responses were received within a week, and they were not from the localidades initially targeted for the online

[9] See Appendix 5: Semi -Structured Interview

survey. Therefore, I changed the sampling strategy and asked two family members to accompany me to the 10 different localities.

In the span of two weeks, I travelled to the 10 localities selected for the survey and spent 3-4 hours in each locality. For safety purposes, we selected open spaces in each of the localities to conduct the survey. Once at the specific location, individuals were randomly selected every 15 minutes, which was the time that took to complete a survey. A passer by was asked to participate in the study a few minutes after we had concluded a survey. To avoid street surveying biases, stratified sampling was used. I intentionally selected individuals with different demographics to ensure a more representative example. The different demographics selected were age range, gender and location. To avoid time of day bias, surveys were conducted at different times of the day. In some localities, I surveyed in the mornings (San Cristobal, La Candelaria, and Teusaquillo, Chapinero), some in the afternoon (Ciudad Bolivar, Rafael Uribe, Fontibon, Suba), and others in the evening (Bosa and Usaquen). To avoid the location bias, I interviewed in malls (Suba and Ciudad Bolivar), I walked into establishments where individuals where working (San Cristobal, Fontibon, La Candelaria) I stood in busy streets (Chapinero), I walked in neighbourhoods (Bosa, Rafael Uribe) and I walked in parks (Teusaquillo, Usaquen). This stratified sampling allowed me to survey as many different people increasing the probability of representation.

Initially, I gave the option of answering the survey either on their own phone or manually with pen and paper. Everyone chose to answer with pen and paper. My family members later commented that people in Bogotá are afraid of showing their smartphones in the street for fear of being robbed. The total of individuals surveyed online and on the street was 105, with only a few of them answered the survey virtually. Respondents took an estimate of 10-15min answering the survey, and some of them wanted the questions read out-loud. The only costs related with conducting the survey was the photocopies made, and the materials acquired for the survey – two clipboards and pens, all under $20 CAD.

2.1.6.1. Semi Structured Interviews Sampling Strategy

The initial plan was to conduct the interviews in person and to record them with the consent of the individual interviewed. As the Corona Virus C-19 pandemic was still affecting the city of Bogotá, it was decided that the interviews would be conducted online. This was approved by the University of Ottawa Ethics Board.

A total of 15 individuals were interviewed for 1.5 to 2 hours over the spam of three months. It took time to conduct the interviews, as when someone was interviewed, I asked if they knew someone else whom I could interview. If they fit the criteria to be interviewed for this study, contact was made, and an interview date was then arranged. The questions and the consent form were sent to the participants when they agreed to be interviewed, giving them some time to go over the questions before the interview. During the interview, there was flexibility to ask more in-depth questions related to the topic and as the interviewee felt comfortable and knowledgeable about the subject.

Each interview was transcribed, and assistance was sought to accomplish this task. A total of $100,000 COP was paid for each transcription for a total of $1,500,000 COP or the equivalent of $530 CAD. I covered the costs of the transcriptions of the interviews. After the interviews were

transcribed, these were translated and saved anonymously in my personal google drive. The individuals helping with the transcription received instructions on how to properly transcribe the audible files. Care was taken that the recording did not contain any information that could identify the participant. Zoom was the platform used to conduct the online interviews. The recording of the interviews was done directly to my phone, and the file was uploaded to my personal google drive.

2.2. Ethics

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) was consulted prior commencing fieldwork for this project. The methodology for this project was subject to an ethical review and was accepted with minor modifications, specifically to account for conducting research during the Covid-19 pandemic. The fieldwork took place in Bogotá, Colombia from May to December 2021. The research took place in accordance with the guidelines and advice from REB.

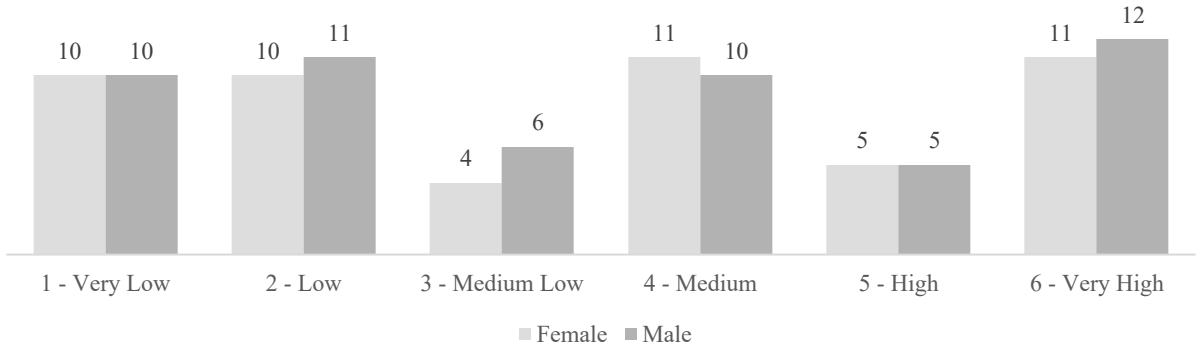
There were no ethical implications while conducting the fieldwork for this project. The benefits of carrying out this research outweighed potential concerns. None of the questions asked the participants for personal or compromising information. The surveys were anonymous, and the interviews were limited to questions related to their understanding of urban governance, participation, and mobility of the city of Bogotá. The likelihood of deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009) is very low, as the pool of individuals interviewed is minimal to the proportion of civil servants employed in the different administrative bodies interviewed.

2.3. Data Collected

2.3.1. Survey Data Collected

Figure 2-1 shows the social stratum of the localidad where the individual was when surveyed. As per the sampling strategy, the number of individuals surveyed per income stratum reflects the plan of surveying 2 localities of Very Low, Low, Medium, and Very High stratum, and only one locality of Medium Low and High stratum. The small increases of the Low (+1), Medium (+1) and Very High (+3) are from the five online respondents, otherwise, the numbers of individuals surveyed would have been 100.

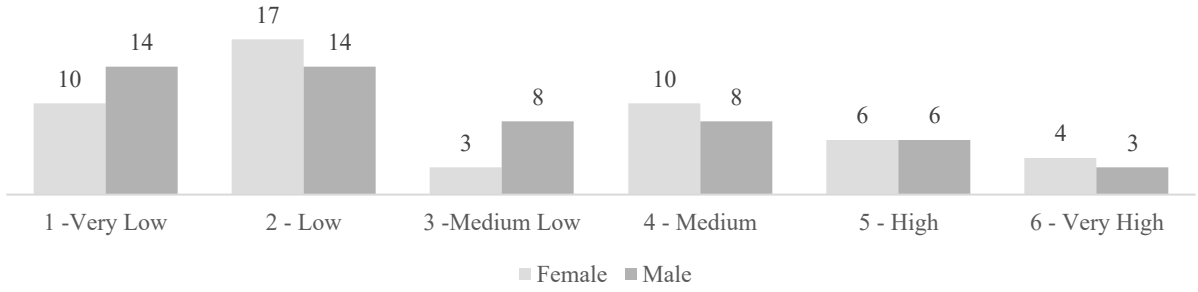
Figure 2-1: *Social stratum where individual was when surveyed*



Question 11 of the survey asked in which localidad the survey participant lived. Their response to this question was used to determine the respondent's strata. Figure 2-2 shows the responses to question 11, and hence the social stratum of the localidad where the individual lives. There is a significant distinction between the results of Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2. Even though efforts were

made to provide a proportional number of respondents in each of the six strata, most of the people surveyed live in stratum 1- Very Low and 2 - Low. Very few of those surveyed in strata 6 – Very High, actually live in strata 6. Care was taken when analysing the responses by income level, as the data is skewed to the left; that is, that the curb of the graph is not centered in the middle, but on the left of the graph, and so comparisons are only made within each income stratum and not between each stratum. This survey finding also corroborates with the difficult reality in the city of Bogotá – that most of its population are in low-income stratum. In fact, when analyzing the map of Bogotá by income levels, one can perceive that most of the city is classified in the income levels 1 – Very low, 1 – Low, and 3 – Medium low. The survey respondents in a way reflect this reality.

Figure 2-2: *Income strata of participants surveyed*



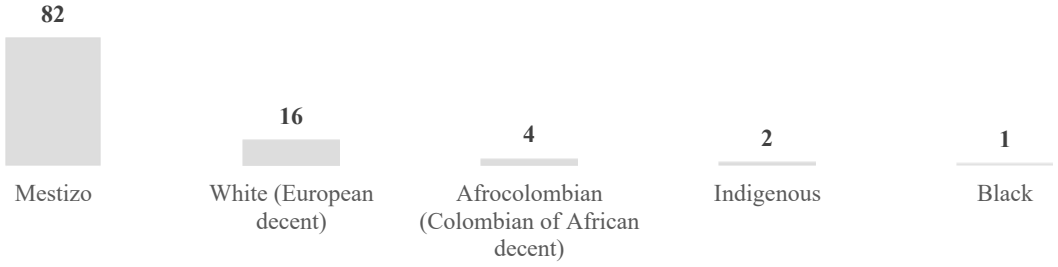
Survey Question 5 asked for the gender of the respondent, with the goal of understanding if there were significant differences in the responses by gender. Out of the individuals surveyed, 49% are females and 51% males. The individuals were asked to self-identify their gender.

Question 4 asked the age range. Sixty percent of the respondents were under the age of 45. As I was conducting the survey, I realized that some of the questions could not be answered by individuals who were 65 years-old or older, as many questions pertained to the mobility to and from work/school, and their reply often was that they were retired. To avoid having many responses invalidated, I intentionally selected individuals that looked under the age of 65. Therefore, when using the variable age-range, the distribution of the data is intentionally skewed to the left as most respondents selected were between the ages of 18-55. To accommodate for this skewness of the data, the subsequent chapters provide a comparison by age groups to the different variables being analysed in each sub-theme, rather than a generalized assessment of the preferences by age range. Figure 2-3 visually presents the age range and gender of the respondents.

Figure 2-3: *Sample surveyed by age and gender*

The variable of ethnicity, although asked in the survey (Q.6), was not further developed in the next chapters, as ethnic differentiation in the responses was not a specific target of this study. However, the results from the survey on ethnic background of participants in the survey is presented, as the surveyed population reflects the percentage of ethnic backgrounds of the Colombian people. Most people surveyed, as most Colombians, are mestizos, a mix between indigenous and European from the Colonial period, while other racial groups are minorities. Figure 2-4 shows the breakdown of surveyed respondents by ethnic background. See section 2.2.6. Site selection for ethnic background of Colombian people.

Figure 2-4: *Survey participant's ethnic background*



2.3.2. Semi Structured Interviews Data Collection

A total of 15 individuals were interviewed. Not all the planned interviews took place. As the Senate, Congress, and Presidential elections were months away during the interview period, individuals in power positions at the local level declined to participate in the interviews for fear of perceived potential leakage of personal stand towards candidates running for office and what would that mean for their future position. Therefore, there were no interviews conducted from the Mayor, the Consuls, or the Local Mayors. Table 2-4 shows the list of interviews conducted.

Table 2-4: *Individuals interviewed in proportion to available positions*

Government Level	# Positions	# Interviewed	% Population
Mayor	1	0	0
Consuls	45	0	0
Local Mayor	20	0	0
Secretariats	15	3	20%
Decentralized Organisms	25	2	8%
Ediles (JAL)	184	4	2.2%
Presidents (JAC)	1922	4	0.21%
Social Leaders	N/A	2	N/A
TOTAL INTERVIEWED		**15**	

The three individuals interviewed from the Mobility, Social Integration and Habitat Secretariats were able to explain from their government positions their understanding of the system of governance, its efficiency providing the services and the inclusion of citizens in their decision-making mechanisms. The two decentralized organizations interviewed were ARASID, an association for recycling workers, which reports the Environment Secretariat, and IDPAC which is an institute with the mission to enhance citizen's participation in decision making, and reports

to the Local Government Secretariat. The Ediles interviewed belonged to four different localidades: Rafael Uribe-Uribe, Engativa, Suba and Ciudad Bolivar. The Presidents (JAC) were from three different localidades: Rafael Uribe-Uribe, Martires, and Kennedy. The Social Leaders were both activist in the localidad Rafael Uribe-Uribe. Five of the fifteen interviews were from the same localidad, and this presents an over-representation bias from the localidad of Rafael Uribe-Uribe. The contact I had in Bogotá, is a social leader in this localidad, and he facilitated the contact of most of the individuals interviewed. This over-representation bias is a result of my sampling strategy. The political context and the COVID pandemic made it challenging to find individuals to interview.

2.4. Analysis Methods and Technics

When conducting analysis, I took care of not falling on the trap that Babones warns when conducting social science research. "The analytical approach to social science can often result in sophisticated but sterile research. Leaving aside the potentially catastrophic implications for qualitative research and qualitative sociologists' career, the unreflexively importation of methodological conventions from economics and the sciences, is simply inappropriate for most social sciences research environments" (Babones, 2016, p. 455). Therefore, I will be borrowing some of the terminology and concepts of statistical analysis, but I have decided to utilize analysis that suit the purpose of this research project.

2.4.1. Statistical Data Analysis

Data collected in surveys can be analyzed in different ways depending on its nature. Data can be recorded in nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio levels of measurement (Walliman, 2011, p. 73). Most of the data collected in the survey is of nominal and ordinal nature. For a full explanation of the type of data collected see *Appendix 6 – Type of Statistical Data Collected*.

Once the nature of the data was established, the next step was the preparation of the data before carrying out the analytical tests. When all the manual surveys were completed, the information was transferred to the Survey Monkey database, and the results of all 105 participants were downloaded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and saved on my personal computer. The first step was to translate the data from Spanish into English, without making any other modifications to the file. A copy of the file was made and named ORIGINAL EN DATA, and this was kept as a backup. The copy named RAW EN DATA was used to conduct the analysis. Then, I carried out an initial pivot table analysis to check the suitability of the data. After this analysis, I made some changes to the dataset. See *Appendix 7 – Changes to Dataset Prior Statistical Data Analysis* for details on the changes made.

There were three steps to the analysis once the dataset was ready for manipulation through pivot table function in Microsoft Excel. The first analytical step was to conduct *univariate analysis* that "expresses the qualities of one variable at a time" (Walliman, 2011, p. 135). In this analysis, I created tables and charts comparing the results from each of the respondents on each question asked. This type of analysis helped describe the basic patterns of the data and allowed me to see the average and percentages on each variable. It was in this univariate analysis that I realized that both the age range and the income stratum range were both skewed to the left, as explained in Section 2.3.1.

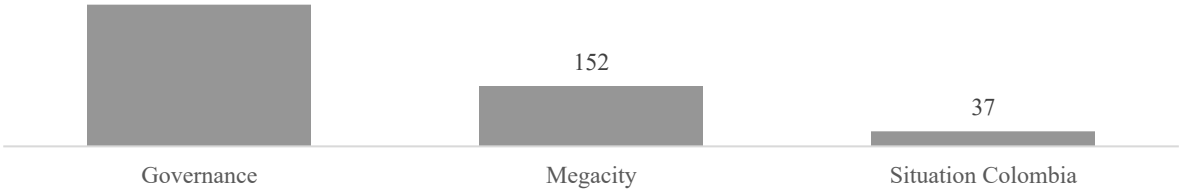
The second type of analysis I carried out was *bivariate analysis* which "considers the properties of two variables in relation to each other" (Walliman, 2011, p. 137). Using the pivot table function one variable was put in the Y axis and another on the X axis, and the record on the Σ value. This allowed me to disaggregate by gender or age along with a specific response from the survey, for example, I was able to relate the answer of where respondents live with the age or the gender of the respondents. Bivariate analysis allows for deeper examination of the data.

The third type of analysis used was the *multivariate analysis* which "looks at the relationships between more than two variables" (Walliman, 2011, p. 142). The pivot function on Microsoft Excel allows to do multivariate analysis by utilizing the filter function. With this feature, I was able to analyse the dataset in a more nuanced way. For example, I was able to see relationships between age, income level and their choices for likes or dislikes of the city. The different types of analysis of results are presented through the thesis in each of the corresponding chapters as sources of new knowledge in a better understanding of Bogotá as a megacity in the making.

2.4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

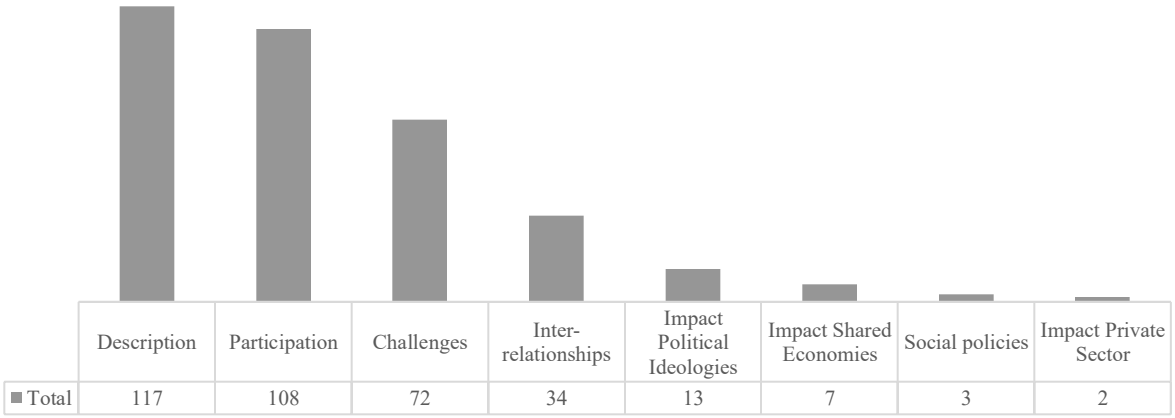
There are two types of qualitative analysis performed to the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews. The first one, was *thematic analysis*, a quantitative analysis of the text, and the second one, a *narrative analysis*. Once the transcription of the 15 interviews was completed, each of the interviews was uploaded into NVivo, a software that allows one to code and produce numerical evaluation of the themes of the interviews. There are two ways of doing thematic analysis: deductive and inductive. As my research approach is hypothetico-deductive, I used both methods. First, I used the deductive approach which involves having a pre-determined list of codes before commencing to code. The list was populated from words that comprised mayor themes in the interviews. Initially there were two major codes *megacities* and *governance*. Under these words, initial subcategories were included. For example, under the code of *governance*, subcategories on the description of each of the different administrative bodies was expected, such as *Secretariats, JAL, JAC, IDPAC, etc*. As I began to code, I kept an open mind to other most used words that could potentially inform me of deeper issues than those initially asked about. The list of codes increased and was continually revised as I continued to code each interview transcript. This openness to change the list of codes, and further categorize the data is what is also known as inductive thematic analysis (Walliman, 2017, p. 145). For example, a third major category was added: *situation in Colombia*, as often individuals diverted from the main question to speak about the current situation of the country. Other subcategories not expected but coded were *urban insecurity, corruption,* and *civic culture* amongst others. Once coding was completed, the list of codes was cross-checked, and changes were made where necessary. When data verification was completed, a list of codes and its subcategories was downloaded from NVivo to a Microsoft excel sheet and used for descriptive quantitative data analysis. Figure 2-5 provided the results of the thematic analysis:

Figure 2-5: *Number of coded text fragments by category*



Through the process of deductive and inductive coding, a total of 545 text fragments were subcategorized into 43 individual codes. The category of governance by far exceeded the number of text fragments from the other categories. This was to be expected as most of the questions in the interview were tailored to better understand how the city of Bogotá is governed, what are the different interactions between the administrative bodies, and what are the external and internal challenges to urban governance in Bogotá. This theme also contained information on the participatory budget mechanism used at the localities level. The breakdown of governance subcategories is show in Figure 2-6

Figure 2-6: *Number of text fragments in governance subcategory*



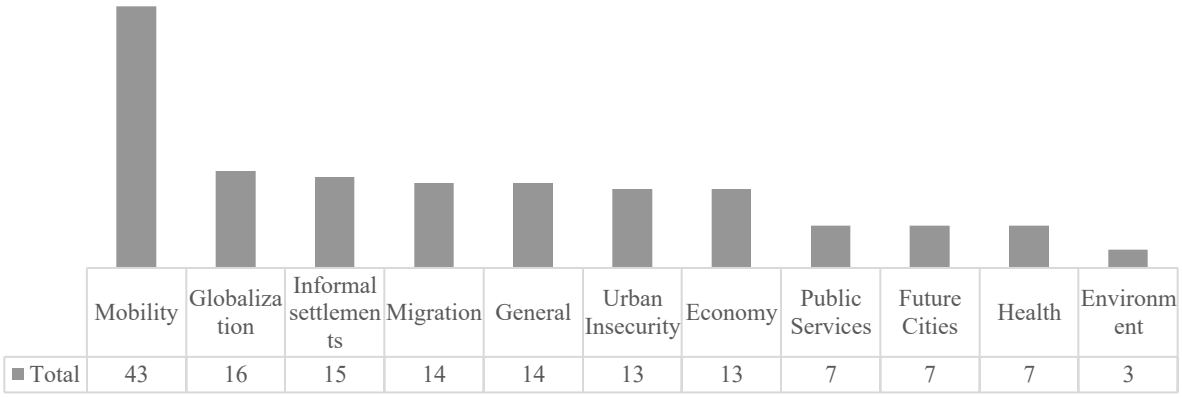
Further coding was made to the subcategories: *description, participation, and challenges.* The *description* subcategory was broken down in subthemes that described the type of government (including the debate between centralization or decentralization), as well as the description of the different administrative organisms. *Participation* was subcategorized into themes such as description, participative governance, participative budget, and challenges of participative mechanisms. The subcategory of governance *challenges* included subthemes on leadership, structural, vision, and citizenship.

The text fragments in the *megacity* category were also subcategorized into the codes on Figure 2-7. Only the *mobility* subcategory was further coded as there were several relevant text fragments. Subthemes identified under the *mobility* subcategory include a description of the situation of mobility in Bogotá, opinions on the Transmilenio and the future Metro, the mobility needs of the city, and the challenges of addressing mobility for those in office.

The 44 text fragments coded under the category *Situation in Colombia* are instances when the interviewee spoke about the difficulties the country is experiencing. The subthemes in this category are primarily on corruption and narcotraffic. While these themes were also spoken about at the municipal level, they were kept apart to try to differentiate the concrete issues that fall beyond the city level.

The results from this thematic analysis confirmed the mayor themes expected in the interviews but also provided new topics participants felt were relevant to the questions asked. For instance, the focus of the interview was to understand the governance structure of the city from top-down and bottom-up perspective, however, every person interviewed spoke about corruption, and many also diverted to speak about narcotraffic and the insecurity the city is experiencing. These results were key in providing guidance on the structure of the thesis, as well as determining the focus of the second type of qualitative analysis undertaken.

Figure 2-7: *Number of text fragments in megacity category*



The second type of qualitative analysis performed on the data collected from the interviews was narrative analysis. This form of analysis aims "at extracting themes, structures, interactions, and performances from stories or accounts of people used to explain their past, their present situation, or their interpretations of events" (Walliman, 2011, p. 162). Lyons and Coyle propose six steps to doing narrative analysis, as "[m]eaning is not just 'transparently' available within an interview, a transcript, or an autobiographical script. It has to be achieved through a process of interpretation and engagement with the text" (Lyons & Coyle, 2007, p. 139). I used the text fragments categorized during the coding exercise to conduct the narrative analysis. The transcripts were kept in Spanish while coding and so I reviewed the coded transcripts in Spanish classified by theme. The first step is to familiarize with the text by reading it multiple times. I read over the interview transcripts and tried to identify important concepts and themes. The interviewees shared with me their views and evaluation of the urban governance in the city of Bogotá, the tone in which they spoke was assessed between positive or negative, as it is suggested for the second step. Most respondents had a negative undertone when explaining the situation in Bogotá or in general about Colombia. You could tell their frustrations with the government and the political and economic situation of the country. Corruption was a theme that came out a lot, even though it wasn't asked, for example:

> *"Pero a ustedes si les digo el IDPAC es una Entidad corrupta, corrupta, corrupta, ahí se roban la plata, hay un despelote total." (COMLEA#1, personal communication, May 4, 2021)*

> *"But if I tell you, IDPAC is a corrupt, corrupt, corrupt entity, they steal money, there is a total mess" (COMLEA#1).*

For steps three and four, that suggest identifying both the narrative tones and themes, I printed out the coded transcripts, organized by themes, and in the right margin of the document, I made annotations on the content of the text, keeping in mind who said it, and whether they had a pessimistic or positive tone. Through introspection I tried to reveal the meaning beyond the simple narrative. This helped to analyse the content within its context and be more objective with the weight given to the arguments provided. For example, this exercise helped me realize that the respondent's assessment of the effectiveness of the administrative institutions also depended on the role they played. For example, individuals who either worked for the secretariats or IDPAC felt they were making contributions, and that things were improving in the city:

> *"Pues hablando desde el IDPAC, siento que pienso, que si ha sido bueno, si tener como ese apoyo como ese apoyo interinstitucional, sí porque por ejemplo eh nosotros hemos trabajado mucho; con secretaria de ambiente, con Jardín Botánico sí, y ellos ese apoyo que nos han brindado ha sido muy valioso, para poder desarrollarse diferentes procesos en las comunidades, sí y lo que pasa es que también al, al haber esa articulación, pueda que uno ya haya acabado su parte el IDPAC, haya acabado su obra y pare de contar. Pero como uno articulación, con esa otra entidad o esa otra entidad, se queda y sigue fortaleciendo la comunidad" (ORG#1, personal communication, May 17, 2021)*

> *"Well, speaking from IDPAC, I feel that, I think, that it has been good, if we have that support, that inter-institutional support, yes because for example, we have worked a lot; with the Environment Secretariat, with the Botanical Garden, yes, and the support they have given us has been very valuable, to be able to develop different processes in the communities, yes, and what happens is that also by, by having that articulation, one may feel that IDPAC has already finished its part, has finished its work and stops contributing. But as there is articulation between entity or that other entity, it stays and continues strengthening the community" (ORG#1)*

In contrast, individuals involved in the JAC (volunteers) or JAL (elected) for the most part tended to be pessimistic and feel very frustrated with how things were going:

> *"Si, en varias ocasiones he participado, si hay un presupuesto y yo necesito pavimentar algunas vías, yo las paso. Yo las priorizo con las direcciones, fotos de las vías que están en mal estado y también con firmas de la comunidad, pero realmente esto nunca se da cumplimiento, prácticamente es un requisito de la Alcaldía Mayor, para darle cumplimiento al 100%, en el año. Por ahí el 30% se cumple, pero que se cumpla al 100% eso es paja, eso es mentira. Yo he pasado muchos derechos de petición para pavimentar vías. Si he pasado 30 vías escasamente me pavimentan dos, es que no se sabe que hacen con la plata, existe mucha corrupción, esto está podrido cada día más" (EDILJAL#4, personal communication, May 2, 2021)*

> *"Yes, I have participated on several occasions, if there is a budget and I need to pave some roads, I will pass them. I prioritize [the roads that need paving] with the addresses, photos of the roads that are in poor condition and also with signatures from the community, but this is never really fulfilled, it is practically a requirement of the Mayor's Office, to give it*

100% compliance. In the year around 30% is fulfilled, but that a 100% is fulfilled, it's a joke, that is a lie. I have passed many petition requests to pave roads. I have passed 30 petitions for roads, yet they barely paved two, it is because it is not known what they do with the money, there is a lot of corruption, this is getting more rotten every day" (EDILJAL#4)

For the steps five and six, Lyons and Coyle suggest weaving into a coherent story and writing up the report the findings from previous steps. As this is a mix-methods approach, the results from the interview and survey are presented by thematic order in the following chapters, ensuring that each theme addressed provides the views of the respondents differentiated from my own assessment of the governance, participation, mobility, and overall assessment of what Bogotá does for its inhabitants.

Chapter 3: Challenges to Governing Bogotá a Megacity in a Developing Country

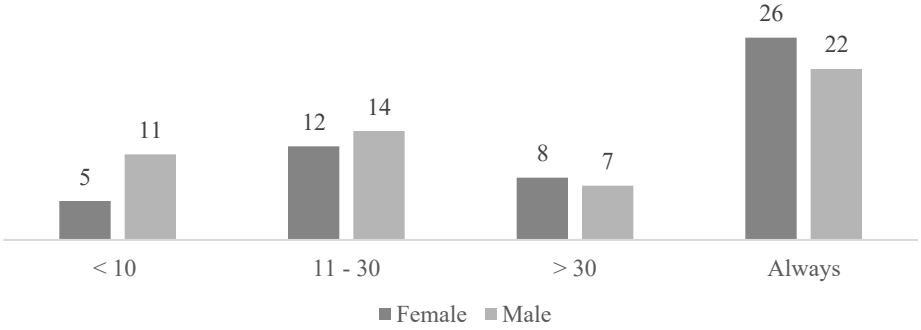
Are megacities ideal urban phenomena for cities in development countries? This question is exploratory with the aim at understanding if it is more, or less difficult to govern megacities. Are there advantages or disadvantages to governing megacities? If so, what are those; and does governance of megacities in developing countries experience differences from megacities in wealthy nations? Seriously answering these questions will require a comparative study on governance between small, medium, and large megacities in developing and developed nations. As this is an impossible task for a master level study, what is proposed in this chapter is to present the governance challenges experienced in Bogotá, a megacity in a developing country. Therefore, this Chapter aims to answer the first research question: "*How does Bogotá's urban context impact the effectiveness of its decentralized governance model?"*. Bogotá shares many of the same challenges as other megacities worldwide such as rapid urban growth, traffic congestion, crime, violence, and social inequality. These challenges are present in all megacities around the world, however, developing countries' negative experience is intensified. Corruption is endemic in developing countries and very much present in Bogotá. This chapter presents the specific context that make more difficult Bogotá's decentralized governance model.

3.1. Rapid Urban Growth

3.1.1. Urban Growth in Bogotá

Megacities are characterized by rapid urban growth (S. X. Zhao et al., 2017, p. 262). How much urban growth has Bogotá experienced? The survey asked individuals a set of questions to identify the rate of migration to Bogotá. Question 7 of the survey asked participants how long they had been living in Bogotá. Respondents were given 5 options to choose from a range number of years: *less than 10 years*, *11-30 years, more than 30 years but my family and I are not from Bogotá*, *all my life, my family and I are from Bogotá*. It was important to distinguish between those who have been living in Bogotá a long time versus those who are native from Bogotá. This helped shed light to the nature of growth of the city. As Figure 3-1 demonstrates, most of the individuals surveyed (48) had been living in Bogotá all their life, and their families are also from Bogotá. Only 15 of the respondents had been living in Bogotá for more than 30 years, but they are not native from

Figure 3-1: *Number of years survey respondents have lived in Bogotá*



Bogotá. In total, 63 respondents have been living in Bogotá more than 30 years, and this seems to mirror the demographic population growth of the city. When reviewing literature on urban growth of Bogotá, there is consensus that Bogotá has experienced exponential growth since the 1930's. The city went from a population of 300K in 1938 to 1.7M in 1964, to 5.5M in 1990s (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 205) to 11.6M in 2024 (Macrotrends, 2024). Moreover, Bogotá's growth during the 50s-60s experienced an annual growth rate of 7%, one of the highest of the world (Yunda & Sletto,

2020, p. 5). Although the demographic composition, of Bogotáns native of Bogotá is higher, urban growth seems to be constant, as 40% of those surveyed moved to Bogotá in the last 30 years, out of which 10% are from the past 10 years. These results mirror studies from other scholars experts in Bogotá, affirming that in the "last 30 years, Bogotá's population has doubled" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 202).

3.1.2. Nature of Bogotá Urban Migration

To better understand the motivations to move to Bogotá of non-native's respondents, the survey

Figure 3-3: *Place of birth of individuals surveyed*

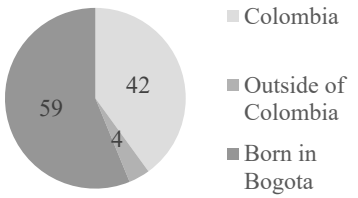
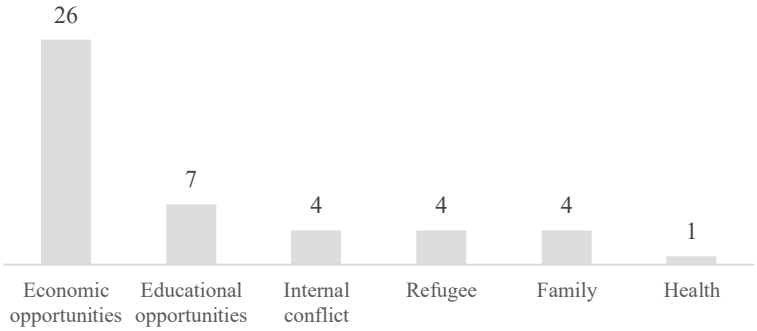


Figure 3-2: *Survey respondents' rationale for moving to Bogotá*



Question 9 asked if they were born or not in Bogotá. If the respondent answered no, they were subsequently asked where they were born, and why they migrated. The survey gave five options to choose from, but only allowed them to pick the one option they thought as the strongest reason why they choose to move to Bogotá. The four options given where a*) internal conflict b) international refugee c) economic opportunities d) educational opportunities*. The fifth option was "*other*", to which they could add their own response. As Figure 3-2 demonstrates, 26 individuals from the 46 who were not born in Bogotá moved to Bogotá in search for economic opportunities. Educational opportunities received the second highest selection, while internal conflict, international refugee, and family, received four. Only one respondent selected the "*other*" category, to which she explained that access to better health for a family members was the only reason why she moved to Bogotá. The survey results confirm what is found in the literature. According to Gilbert (1996) Bogotá in the 1990s was better off than in the 1970s as it scaped the economic recession and rapid inflation resulting from the debt crisis that swept through most Latin American cities. "Bogotá … is the one mega-city where living standards improved [in 1990], even though the city's population [had] been growing very quickly" (Gilbert, 1996, pp. xvii–xviii). Bogotá received the largest share of migrants from rural areas in the country amid the incipient process of industrialization in the 1990s (Leite et al., 2020, p. 71). Bogotá's economic growth spur urban growth, attracting individuals searching for better economic opportunities.

As Figure 3-3 shows, to the question if they were born or not in Bogotá, 59 respondents said yes, 42 said they were born in Colombia and 4 outside of Colombia[10]. The answers to Question 9 confirm that about half of the respondents are internal migrants, although those surveyed, not due

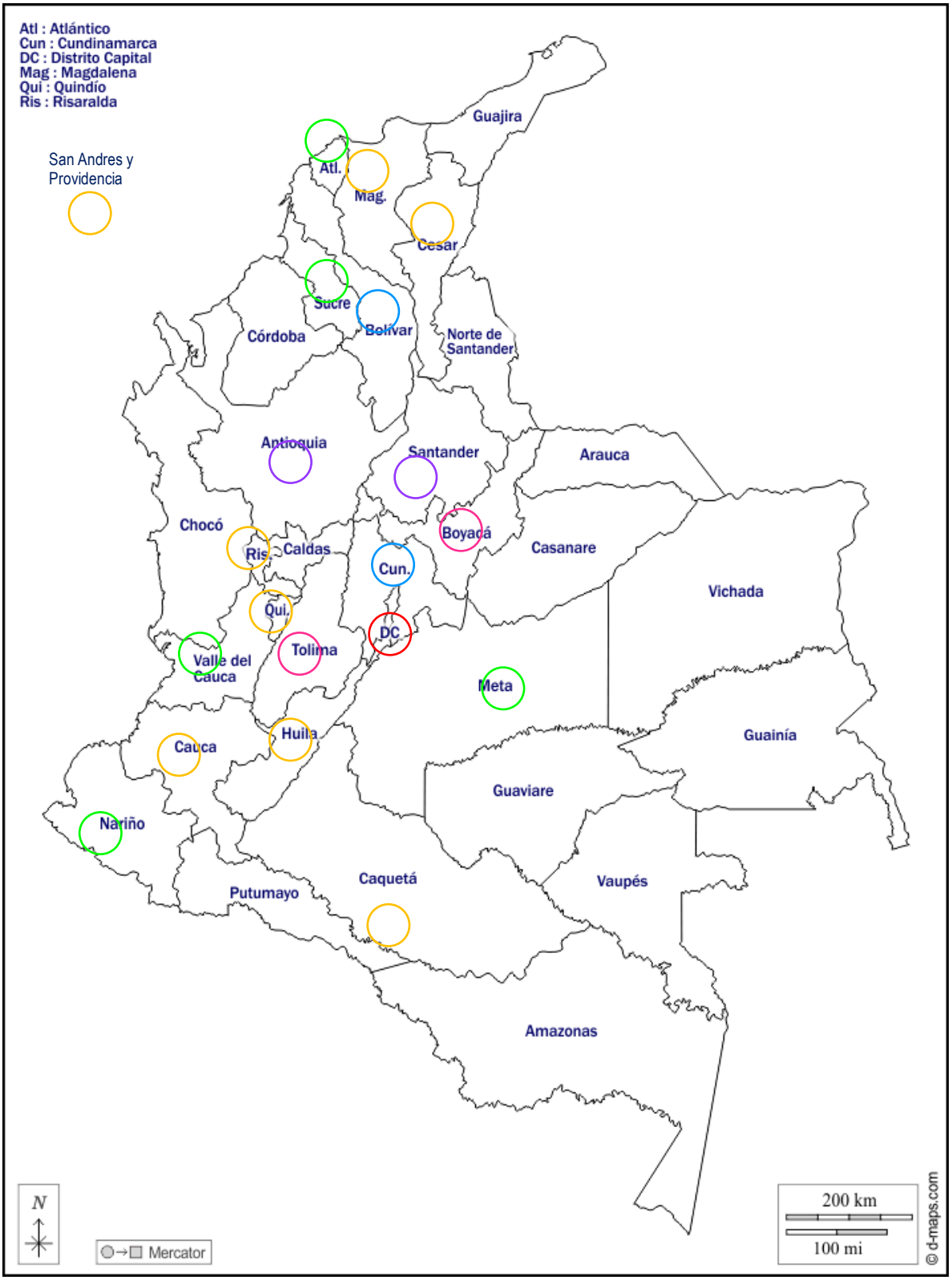
[10] The specific country where they came from was not asked, as it was not essential for this research. The growing sentiment of xenophobia made it seem more respectful towards those surveyed, to avoid asking the country where they were migrating from.

to internal conflict. This response is surprising, as Colombia has been marked by the internal conflict. "Over the past five decades, more than 7 million people have been victims of death threats, massacres, kidnapping, torture, property loss, forced displacement or forced recruitment in the Colombian conflict… between 1985 and 2016, approximately 6.9 million people were forced to leave their homes" (Saldarriaga & Hua, 2019, p. 1). However, this study from Saldarriaga and Hua revealed that internal migrants choose their destination based on their social network, distance from origin to destination, and population size at destination (Saldarriaga & Hua, 2019, p. 10). The data collected in the survey, although small population number, supports Saldarriaga & Hua's study, as respondents not born in Bogotá, were born in regions closest to the city. Table 3-1 and Figure 3-4 below show the number of migrants and the proximity of the regions they were originally from, to the city of Bogotá. In Figure 3-4, Bogotá at the center is circled in red. The departments from which respondents were born are color-coded based on the number of respondents from the specific department. One can observe that the greatest number of individuals surveyed who migrated to Bogotá were from adjacent regions (Boyacá, Tolima, Santander, and Antioquia). As Bogotá grew economically, it experienced rapid urban growth, and most internal migrants were likely from towns adjacent to the city of Bogotá.

Table 3-1: *Survey respondent's place of origin and proximity to Bogotá*

Department	Female	Male	Total
Magdalena		1	1
Huila		1	1
Cauca		1	1
Cesar		1	1
Caquetá	1		1
Quindío		1	1
San Andrés y Providencia		1	1
Risaralda		1	1
Atlántico	2		2
Nariño	1	1	2
Meta	2		2
Sucre	1	1	2
Valle del Cauca	2		2
Cundinamarca	3		3
Bolívar	1	2	3
Antioquia	1	3	4
Santander	2	2	4
Tolima	1	4	5
Boyacá	4	1	5
Total	**21**	**21**	**42**

Figure 3-4: *Survey respondents place of origin and proximity to Bogotá*



https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=66405&lang=es

3.1.3. The Governance Challenge of Rapid Urban Growth in Bogotá

Rapid urban growth poses urban governance challenges as governments are faced with difficulties providing the much-needed urban services of its inhabitants. Since its foundation, Bogotá positioned itself as a governmental, social and economic hub forcing the city to constant growth - with spurs of exponential growth –ultimately causing saturation of its urban infrastructure (Guzman et al., 2017). Rapid urban growth can be a positive phenomenon in cities with properly functioning institutionalized mechanisms of decision making; however, weak institutions and processes, and lack of rule of law make it almost impossible for cities in developing countries to catch up and provide urban infrastructure and social programs for its citizens. As one of the interviewees remarked: "with the demographic explosion, what the city needs is better infrastructure and that all the services be better, yet this is very challenging to keep up with population growth" (COMLEA#1). Rapid urban growth is not a negative phenomenon on its own, yet, in Bogotá, it has posed a challenge to governance, due to the increase in the demand of goods and services and the inability of local governments to provide those needs. This is manifested in the increase of inequalities as the city grows. The next sections in this chapter demonstrate the effects of rapid urbanization in Bogotá, and the consequences of a city not prepared to handle this rapid growth.

3.2. Traffic Congestion

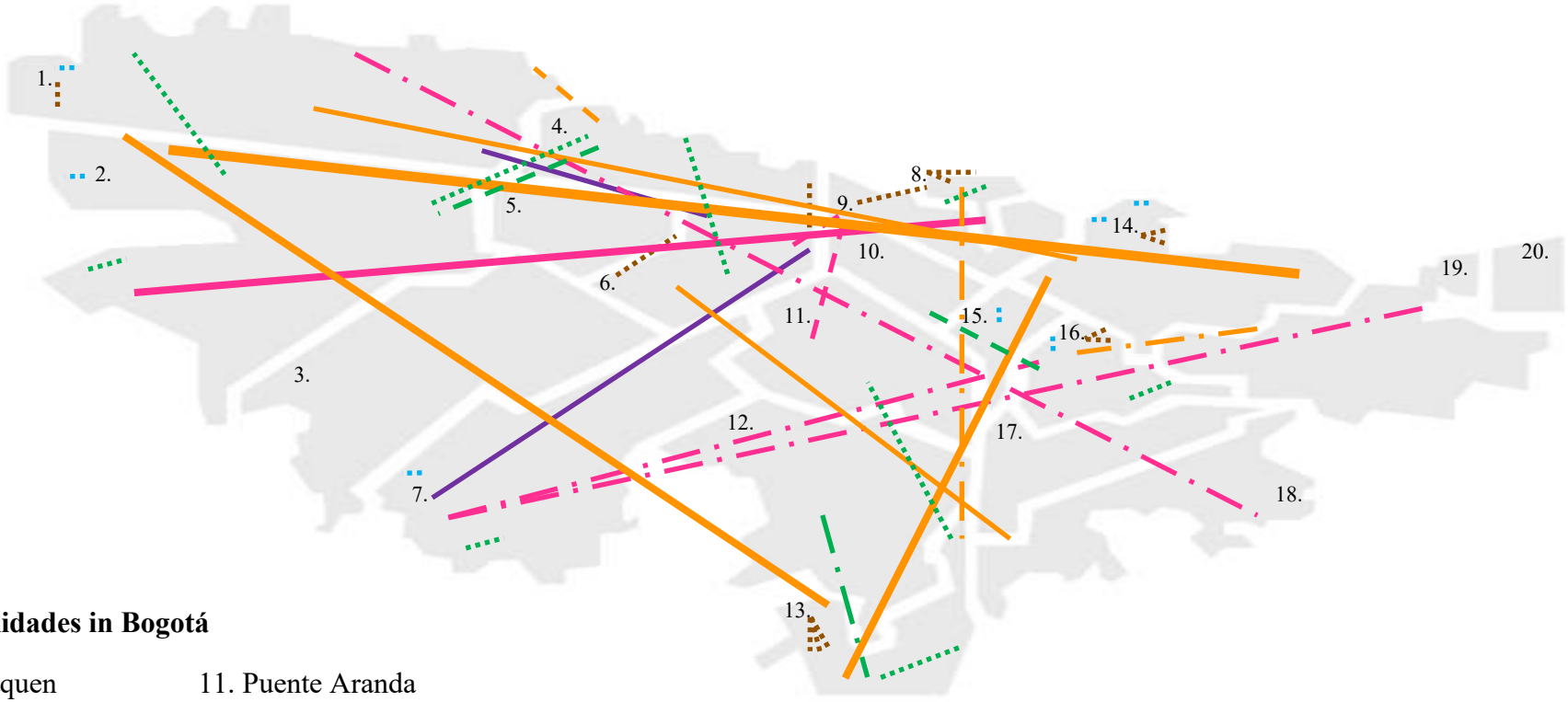
Traffic congestion occurs when the usage of a transport system approaches or exceeds its full capacity (P. Zhao & Hu, 2019). Efficient urban mobility has become a challenge in many cities around the world, but more so in megacities. Top-down institutionalized mechanisms of decision making in Bogotá have struggled for years to provide the urban infrastructure needed to meet the demands of rapid urban growth in the city. As of today, "Bogotá is one of the cities with the most traffic in the world[11]" (Gonzalez et al., 2019, p. 1) with an average transfer from home to work of 67 min (Gonzalez et al., 2019, p. 4) [34] and (Woetzel et al., 2018, p. 47) for a trip of less than 25 km. In the survey, 81% of respondents selected mobility as one of the things they dislike about Bogotá, while only one individual selected it as something they like about the city. This section presents the impact of mobility in the lives of those surveyed; some background on the history of mobility and the current plans of the city to address mobility; and a short section on the Transmilenio.

3.2.1. Urban Mobility in Bogotá

For this research, it was important to find out the impact traffic congestion had on the individuals surveyed, and the governance challenges of addressing mobility from those interviewed. Figures 3-5 and 3-6 show the mode of transportation, time and money spent of a single trip from home to work of all the individuals surveyed. Figure 3-5 displays the trips made walking, cycling, taking an Uber or a taxi, by car or by motorcycle. It also shows those individuals surveyed that telework. Figure 3-6 shows time travelled, and cost spent by interviewees that choose to travel by public transportation. These maps reveal the reality of citizens having to travel from extremes of the city just to get to work, and for some of them, of having to travel for many hours in a single trip.

[11] See article in El Pais: https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2023-07-12/ni-manila-ni-ciudad-de-mexico-bogota-tiene-el-peor-trafico-del-mundo.html and Table #: 10 Most Congested Cities in the World in 2018. In http://inrix.com/press-releases/scorecard-2018-us/

Figure 3-5: *Survey respondent's distance, time, and cost spent to work*



Localidades in Bogotá

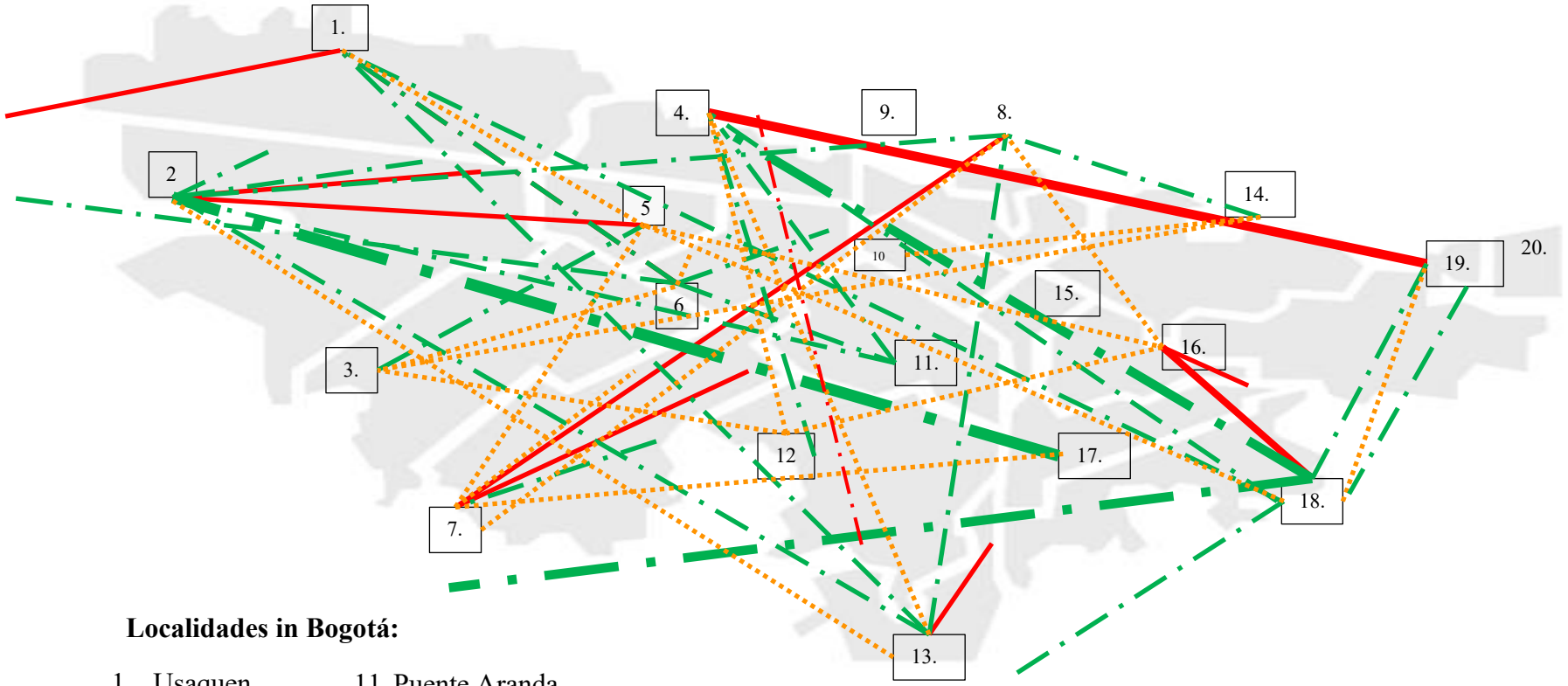
1. Usaquen
2. Suba
3. Engativa
4. Chapinero
5. Barrios Unidos
6. Teusaquillo
7. Fontibon
8. La Candelaria
9. Santa Fe
10. Martires
11. Puente Aranda
12. Kennedy
13. Bosa
14. San Cristobal
15. Antonio Nariño
16. Rafael U-U
17. Tunjuelito
18. Ciudad Bolivar
19. Usme
20. Sumapaz

Type of transport:
Teleworking
Walking
Bicycle
Uber/Taxi
Car
Moto

Time traveled one way:
0 min
15 min
30 min
1 hour
2 hours
3 hours
>3 hours

Cost of travel per day:
$ 0 COP
< $ 5.000 COP
< $ 10.000 COP
>$ 10.000 COP

Figure 3-6: *Survey respondent's distance, time, and cost spent to work by public transit*



Localidades in Bogotá:

1. Usaquen
2. Suba
3. Engativa
4. Chapinero
5. Barrios Unidos
6. Teusaquillo
7. Fontibon
8. La Candelaria
9. Santa Fe
10. Martires
11. Puente Aranda
12. Kennedy
13. Bosa
14. San Cristobal
15. Antonio Nariño
16. Rafael U-U
17. Tunjuelito
18. Ciudad Bolivar
19. Usme
20. Sumapaz

Time traveled one way:

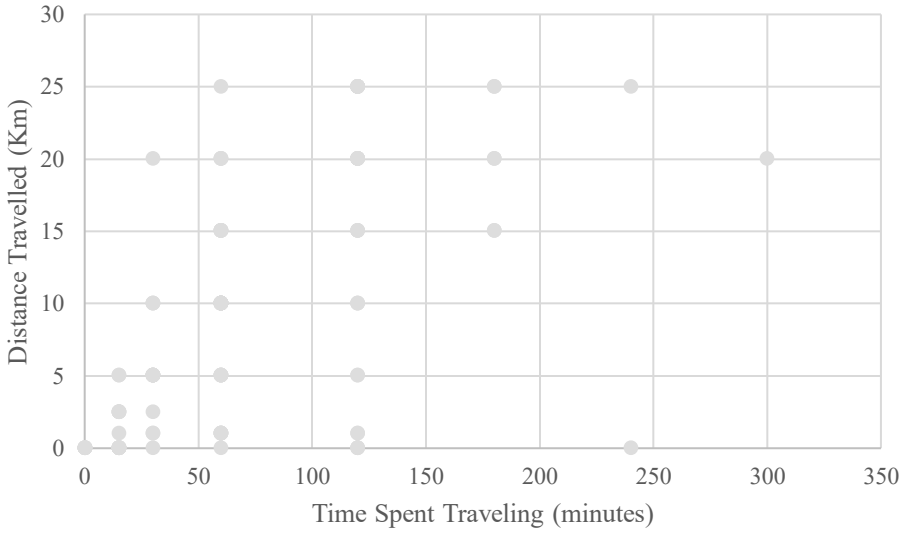
- 0 min
- 15 min
- 30 min
- 1 hour
- 2 hours
- 3 hours
- >3 hours

Cost of travel per day:

- $ 0 COP
- < $ 5.000 COP
- < $ 10.000 COP
- > $ 10.000 COP

Out of those interviewed, 33% spent more than 2 hours traveling one-way from home to work, and one of them said to have spent about 5 hours or 300 minutes in a single trip. Figure 3-7 shows the time (min) and distance (km) spent traveling of all those interviewed. It is important to note that the greatest distance travelled between the localidades at the extremes of the city was only 25km. If in in any given city the maximum speed was 50km/hour, those 25km should only take about 1 hour of driving, yet some individuals interviewed claimed that it would take them up to 4 hours on a 25km trip. Even those who travelled short distances, taking public transportation or driving claimed to have spent one hour traveling for about 7km.

Figure 3-7: *Survey respondent's time and distance spent traveling*



Congestion in the city affects young, old, male, female, and across all income strata. However, those living in localidades in lower stratum seem to be greatly affected. Most individuals interviewed living in higher stratum (6 and 7) claimed to spend less than one hour in their trips, with one instance of spending two hours per trip. While most individuals in strata 1 and 2 spent at least 2 hours per trip with seven individuals spending more than 3 hours, and one spending five hours. During my stay in Bogotá in the years 2020-2022, I meet a worker at the gym who spent 4 hours to get to work every morning. She slept, ate, listened to music and put on her make-up on her trips, as 8 hours of her day were spent on getting to and from work.

In Bogotá 80,000 vehicles make trips per day (Gonzalez et al., 2019, p. 6), yet Bogotá does not have the roads and intersections that needs to supply this abundance (EDILJAL#3, personal communication, August 3, 2021), nor the capability to control its streets, as it "it is impossible to have a policeman managing traffic in every corner of the city" (PRESJAC#3, personal communication, July 16, 2021). Bogotá every day is more congested. The roads are old and narrow. "Culturally, everyone wants to have a car in Bogotá, those who can, buy the latest models, but you also see 50-year-old cars, that should not be in use today, and that are the biggest pollutants in the city" (PRESJAC#3). In reality, private cars account for only 20 percent of motorized commutes in Bogotá (Woetzel et al., 2018, p. 47). Having a car in the city is not rentable, the cost

of gas is high, and there is the "*Pico y Placa*[12] that regulates mobility in the city, only allowing owners to practically use their car half of the year" (EDILJAL#4). The Transmilenio and conventional bus system account for more than 60 percent of motorized commutes in Bogotá (Woetzel et al., 2018, p. 47). Citizen's think that "sometimes is faster to use the Transmilenio, but it is also not the best option, everyone is so tight like sardines is hard to get in and get out" (DEPT#2, personal communication, July 17, 2021). Bogotá's excessive traffic congestion has a negative impact on the quality of life of citizens and the productivity of the city (Gonzalez et al., 2019, p. 34). Individuals in the city live with high levels of stress due to mobility (EDILJAL#2, personal communication, July 16, 2021, EDILJAL#4, & PRESJAC#3) and "waste so much time just waiting for the traffic light to change" (EDILJAL#4) as "one must move from corner to corner out of necessity" (PRESJAC#3). The Transportation Secretariat, mentioned that "[they] try to ensure that all vulnerable communities of the city are included and have access to public transportation, however, sometimes is complex, as some communities live in areas of the city where public transit cannot reach to protect natural resources. However, these people need access to transportation in an efficient way, as sometimes they need to take 4 buses to arrive to their homes from work" (DEPT#3, personal communication, July 1, 2021).

3.2.2. The Incidence of Traffic Congestion in Bogotá

Traffic congestion in Bogotá is the result of multiple factors. Some of the ones identified in this research study are rapid urban growth, inadequate urban planning, and political manoeuvring. As rapid urbanization occurred, adjacent municipalities were added over time (EDILJAL#3). In 1954 the municipalities of Usaquén, Suba, Engativá, Fontibón, Bosa, and Usme where annexed to Bogotá "by presidential decree as a response to the rapid demographic and urban growth the city was experiencing, and the inability of neighbouring municipalities to provide adequate utilities and essential services" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). The city's response to rapid urban growth has been perceived as unplanned (EDILJAL#3, PRESJAC#1, personal communication, May 2, 2021 & EDILJAL#4), and reactive due to the pressure to address the immediate problems of the city (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). However, it seems more like there was a plan for the city, but perhaps not the most suitable and holistic in its approach.

The urban morphology of Bogotá is the result of a zoning plan without a transit plan. Before the annexation of the adjacent municipalities as a response to rapid urban growth, Bogotá in 1923, had its first city design called Bogotá Futuro that was partially implemented in 1934 and aimed at placing buildings in convenient places, with ease of access, pedestrian in nature, and with emphasis in social housing (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 4). In 1948 Le Corbusier, a French urban planner was invited to create the Plan Director - the first and only comprehensive Master Plan of the city - based on wide avenues, the removal of settlements and building of high-rise buildings. This Plan was only partially implemented under the leadership of Gaitan who in 1961 gave flexibility to increase densification through the building of high-rise buildings (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 4), and prioritizing road infrastructure. "Some of the most relevant road corridors in the city today are a result of the implementation of this plan, of which 60% was completed" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). The plan also recommended the construction of an urban rail systems for public transport

[12] The Pico y Placa is a city-wide measure aimed at controlling the amount of traffic by reducing the number of cars in the road. The city imposes daily restrictions of cars on the road based on the last digit of the car licence plate number. This measure is heavily criticized as those with purchase power buy a second car with a different plate number allowing them to drive every day of the week.

that supported the dense development and improved connectivity, however, this was never prioritized (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203).

The regulatory history of zoning has made Bogotá a mono-centric city (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 208). This means that there is a single large core where most of employment and economic activity takes place. Bogotá has also been consolidated as the primary city in the region that supply employment (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 213). Being both the primary city and with a mono-centric core, makes Bogotá a type of an octopus city, with roads that bring individuals from the periphery into the core. Four of the individuals surveyed either lived or worked outside of the city, which corroborates with a 2011 mobility survey which showed that "86% of trips made in the municipalities involved Bogotá as origin or destination" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 207). This automatically puts high stress on traffic toward the center of the city. Guzman et al. has a map of Bogotá on page 210 which shows the areas of the city where the zoning rules allowed for industrial and commercial type of development, and where most employment is concentrated, an area of approximately 36km^2 (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 210). The lighter colors of that map show the lower density, and this coincides with the zoning for residential housing.

The last rationale why there is so much traffic in Bogotá, is the political influence on the morphological plans of the city. With every administration there is a change in priorities. The Bogotá Futuro plan implemented by Karl Burnner in 1934 was replaced by the Soto -Bateman Plan of 1944 changing from smaller scale development to policies of segregation and regulation (Yunda & Sletto, 2020). Le Corbusier Plan was not immediately implemented due to the dictatorship of Pinilla of 1953-57 (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 5). Gaitan's flex plan in 1961 introduced a new politicized player, the private sector, who through the 70s formed associations and monopolized urbanization. More recently, introduction of the Transmilenio in 2000 with Peñalosa and Mokus was stalled by Garzon's and Petro's different priorities that gave preferential treatment to the poor and saw the metro as a more viable option for Bogotá's congestion problems (Eaton, 2020, pp. 11–13).

3.2.3. The Collapse of Transmilenio

The challenges of governance in a megacity as best illustrated with the initiative of the Transmilenio. Transmilenio was an award-wining Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project that vowed to solve the congestion problems of the city with efficient resources and in a relative short-time period (EDILJAL#3 & EDILJAL#4). Transmilenio helped to dignify transportation to the 2 million daily passengers, but it was only a part of the solution, that fell short after 20 years (PRESJAC#3). The plan of Transmilenio was to provide public transit across the city, but this never materialized. Citizens grew frustrated as the normal bus routes were removed and never replaced as part of the modernization of the system. Many citizens are excluded from the mono-parental transport system. The only official transportation system is the Transmilenio, but the system does not provide transit coverage to the most vulnerable communities (EDILJAL#2). Entrepreneurs took advantage of this loophole and now you see individuals driving makeshift "carritos" or "bici-taxis" that bring individuals from urbanizations to the main Transmilenio station (EDILJAL#2). Yet, the system has been collapsing due to the delay in works. It was projected to be a multi-modal system, but it was never completed (EDILJAL#3). "Transmilenio has collapsed, those buses are too big for our streets, they get stuck! Transmilenio was a band-aid solution" (COMLEA#2, personal communication, May 8, 2021).

Transmilenio failed as it was never able to be self-sustainable. A private company runs the system, keeping the funds (DEPT#3). They are paid by kilometers ran and not by the number of individuals transported, discouraging efficiencies as they run empty buses (EDILJAL#4). Transmilenio owners, when confronted with efficiencies, argue that they are working hard, and they are not making ends meet, what they earn from a single trip doesn't cover the costs to run the buses. During the pandemic, about 60% of the travelers stopped using the system. In fact, a 2019 project aimed at financing the $1.1 billion (COP) deficit of Transmilenio. "When inaugurated, Transmilenio was amazing, but due to the many governments that had no clear vision and were not able to ensure it was maintained, led to the failure of the public transport system" (EDILJAL#3). Twenty years later, the economic system has radically changed, is broken, the partners, the consortiums, the owners of the system, practically have brough the system to bankrupt. "High operating costs, the pandemic, maintenance of the stations, and now the destroyed buses by the social disruption and protests" (PRESJAC#3). When it comes to profits, "only 7 families receive them, the city only receives 5%. All the roads have been privatized, the km/construction is very high, and already presented problems even before starting construction. The first-year profits were $67M of which $27M were operative, and the rest, was profit, very high compared to the investment made. It is not profitable for the city or the users" (EDILJAL#4). Lack of citizen culture, the high level of individuals who don't pay and other factors have led to the financial breakdown of Transmilenio (PRESJAC#3). The national government subsidies in Bogotá have prevented Transmilenio from collapsing (PRESJAC#3). People in Bogotá don't trust Transmilenio, they don't trust as they feel it was thought more as a private deal, for the large contractors and not thinking of what people really needed. What people want is a multi-modal system, bicycle, aerial carts, metro, buses (EDILJAL#2).

Transmilenio has also impacted the city in negative ways, as the natural pedestrian traffic of the city has been removed in some areas of the city, it has affected many small enterprises. These must relocate near the Transmilenio stations for survival. Transmilenio has also devalued the value of the houses, as the weight of the buses damages the infrastructure of the houses where the heavy buses pass (EDILJAL#4 and (Carrión & Cepeda Pico, 2023, p. 214). There have been many studies, but they don't reach an accord to start fixing this problem. Transmilenio was too small for a 10M city (COMLEA#1), but also it wasn't designed to meet the transport needs of the surrounding municipalities, as these were not even involved in the planning of the system (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 204). Some argue that Transmilenio was more of a fad, it made Bogotá's the city sexy and a model for solving urban problems across Latin America and the world (Montero, 2020, pp. 2271–2272). Montero's study reveals that the fascination of Bogotá as a model, was mainly due to the popularity of Peñalosa who spoke English well and with passion travelled the world to make his initiative known, and to raise funds (Montero, 2020, pp. 2274–2275). The failures of the system do not necessarily invalidate the initiative but demonstrates that governance and project implementation of the much-needed urban transformation is a more difficult challenge than simply lack of resources of poor planning. For some, Transmilenio shouldn't have been built at all: "Transmilenio was poorly planned because what we needed was a metro…It has been 50 years that we know that Bogotá needed a metro. Transmilenio only caused several problems in the city" (PRESJAC#1); and "Peñalosa should have used the funds of Transmilenio to start the metro" (COMLEA#1). Yet, Penaloza in 1998 convinced Bogotáns that a metro would not meet the needs of the city, however, the "BRT system [would] be both more efficient and economical" (Berney, 2010, p. 548)

Figure 3-9: *Survey answers to will the metro solve mobility issues in Bogotá?*

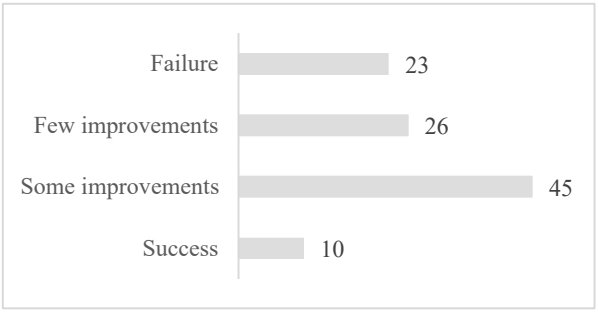
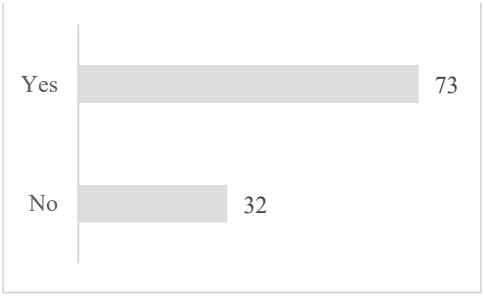


Figure 3-8: *Survey answers to will the of metro increase population?*



Currently, in Bogotá, the last two administrations agreed on the construction of a metro, as a solution to the mobility problems in Bogotá. When participants were asked about their perception of the metro as the solution, as Figure 3-8 shows, the responses were divided between those who think it will either fail or will create few improvements (47%), versus those who think it will complete solve the issue or create some improvements (53%), with most of the individuals being carefully optimistic. Most respondents also believe that the introduction of the metro in the city will increase population, although, many of them thought with or without the metro Bogotá will continue to grow (see Figure 3-9). Traffic congestion is a mess in Bogotá, and it is a real challenge for the city to find a viable, sustainable, and affordable solution. A metro, if constructed, might be another fiasco like Transmilenio. Something that can only be evaluated in the future. The next section presents the interconnectedness of mobility and spatial inequalities. Issues that should be evaluated together to comprehend the complexity of governing megacities in developing countries.

3.3. Spatial Inequalities

Rapid urbanization and the inability of governments to provide adequate transportation and urban services increases inequalities in megacities. In Bogotá, inequality ranks high, with a Gini coefficient of 0.51 in 2019; 0.56 in 2020-2021; 0.55 -2022; and 0.53 in 2023 (*Gini Coefficient in Bogotá from 2012 to 2023*, 2024). In context, "Colombia is the second most unequal country in Latin America after Brazil" (Duque et al., 2023, p. 2066). Amongst the regions of Colombia, Bogotá ranks lowest in poverty with only 24.4% of the population considered poor, yet Bogotá ranked highest in inequality in comparison to other smaller cities (Duque et al., 2023, pp. 2066–2071). To raise out of poverty, individuals need access to essential public services, basic education and economic opportunities as a minimum. Megacities attract individuals looking for ways to improve their living conditions, however, many rural and foreign migrants arrive in Bogotá with

very little means, having to locate in precarious areas of the city. The mix of the constant waves of migration with the design of urban plans by local governments, has created both polarization and fragmentation in the city of Bogotá. Although the majority of the poor live in the south and west of the city (polarization), there are many pockets of informal settlements all around the city (fragmentation), providing challenges for governance in megacities.

3.3.1. Urban Planning and Polarization in Bogotá

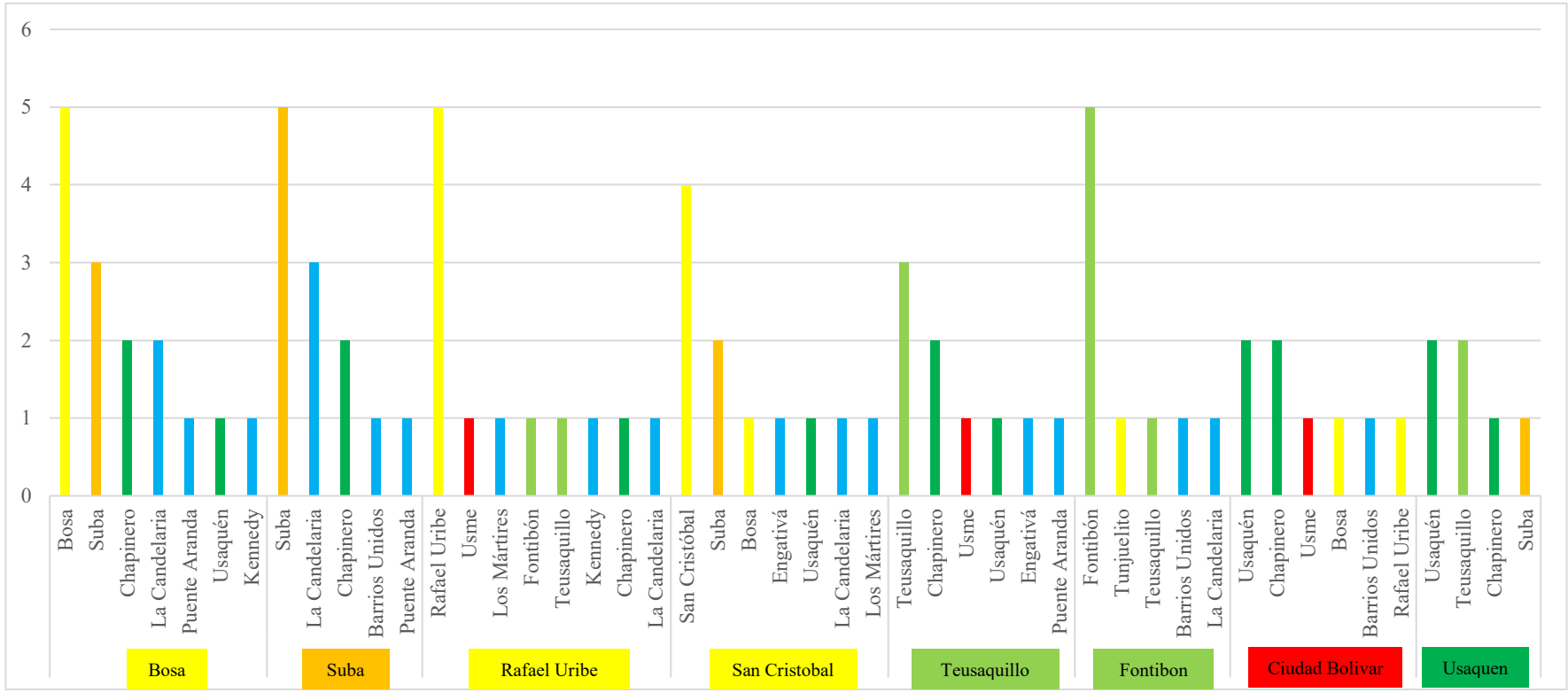
Spatial polarization in Bogotá was planned by city officials. Since Plan Soto-Bateman of 1944 the city had decided to implement a zoning code that separated the city into three different areas. Accord 21 delineated between commercial/institutional/industrial, and housing zones based on their morphology and social composition, including "*Residencial Transformable* ("incremental residential") in middle-income central areas; *Estrictamente Residencial* ("strictly residential") in the wealthier areas in the north; and *Residencial Obrero* ("working-class residential") in the lower-income areas in the south and west" (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 5). This regulation was the first step creating polarization and fostering inequalities in the city. This plan divided the city into three mayor areas, two of them residential – one for the wealthy in the north of the city and one for the poor in the south of the city – and one middle class in the center of the city, where most of the economic activity took place. At the same time, according to Guzman et al., the poor were crammed in smaller lots, while the in the wealthier zones the lots were more sparsely divided. This design created spatial inequalities, as low-income zones, had high densities reaching up to 55,000 inhabitants/km2, versus 15,000 and 6000 inhabitants/km2, in the medium and high-income areas (Guzman et al., 2017, pp. 210–211). Polarization increased as the city changed its urban planning strategies. In 1961 construction projects began to be regulated by market demand, instead of by the city, encouraging property investments primarily in the areas of the city *Estrictamente Residencial* and *Residencial Transformable.* If construction projects were carried out in *Residencial Obrero*, these were precarious without connectivity to electricity, water, utilities, or infrastructure (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). The decision of dividing the city by economic stratum intended to charge property taxes in proportion to the income of individuals, yet this measure, invertedly made land more valuable and therefore attractive for investment in wealthier areas, decreasing the supply and quality of affordable housing in the poorest areas of the city.

The decision to designate specific zones for urban development in the city not only polarized and labelled individuals with different stratum, but also was the beginning of sectorizing economic development in a single area of the city. Today, people live and work in opposite ends of the city primarily due to the zoning implemented over the years. The localities of Usaquén, Chapinero, and Suba, in the north of the city, are mostly high income residential while affordable housing has been restricted to the localities of Ciudad Bolivar and Usme, and the neighboring municipality of Soacha, in the south of the city (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 2). Research has shown that in Bogotá, labour income is the main "factor explaining overall inequality, accounting for almost 70% of total inequality" (Duque et al., 2023, p. 2072). Individuals that need to spend hours traveling to their min salary job, are unable to spend time in activities that could improve their quality of employment. Spatial inequality means that individuals do not have the luxury of time to obtain better education and raise themselves out of poverty (Carrión & Cepeda Pico, 2023, p. 206). In fact, studies reveal that inequality in educational achievement has increased in all cities in Colombia, but the increase is greater in more developed cities, such as Bogotá. (Duque et al., 2023, p. 2073). The poorest in Bogotá have less time than in other cities, as they spend much of their

time traveling to work. This was evidenced during the interviews and the literature: “Many individuals that work in construction live in Bosa or Ciudad Bolivar, Soacha, and they often need to move to the north where all the construction and jobs are found, these people have to cross all of the city” (EDILJAL#3), and: “jobs are concentrated in the northern part of the city where the most affluent residents live, requiring low-income workers living mainly in the south and west to endure tortuous daily commutes in a clogged transit system” (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 2). In addition, studies have shown that in Bogotá firms discriminate in their hiring process based on how far they live from the location of work, and on the reputation of the neighborhood of the potential employee (Díaz & Salas, 2020, p. 1).

The survey revealed similar patterns. The survey was designed to have representational feedback from different stratum, by intentionally interviewing 10 individuals in 10 different localities with various income stratum. When asked in which locality they lived many of the individuals surveyed in stratum 5 and 6 were actually from stratum 2 and worked in the locality where they were surveyed. Figure 3-10 shows the result of the survey comparing the locality where individuals live and work in contrast with their income status. None of the individuals surveyed who live in Ciudad Bolivar, stratum 1 (low-low) work in their own locality. Those surveyed who live in Usaquén, stratum 6 (high) only work in stratum 4, 5, and 6. Most of the individuals surveyed live in stratum 2 (low) and they work all over city, in all different statuses, but mainly also in 4, 5, and 6. The interview, the survey, and the literature, show that there is a link between poverty and spatial inequality. The city of Bogotá is polarized and the poorest bear the greatest brunt, as the majority live in areas where there is lack of employment making them travel across the city, because historically, zoning permits did not allow commercial construction to occur in the *Residencial Obrero.* The morphology of a city can perpetuate inequalities and divide those who have away from those who do not have.

Figure 3-10: *Income strata comparison between where surveyed live vs where they work*



Stratum
1 Low-Low
2 Low
3 Medium-Low
4 Medium
5 Medium- High
6 High

Bogotá's rapid urban growth and its inability to supply affordable housing pushed individuals to occupy unplanned informal settlements (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). "People arrive in Bogotá without anything, and they start building a home where they can, in parks, in natural reserves. Sometimes they use cardboard, metal, asbestos, or material, and without proper public services, they contaminate the environment" (EDILJAL#4). Urban settlements are often located at the outskirts of cities and far away from access to essential public services. Moreover, informal settlements are illegal settlements in Bogotá, and if they are not legalized the city will not provide public services. Legalization of land tenure is not a blanket approval from the city by locality, rather, unbuilt areas that used to be forests, hillsides, privately owned or by the state, are sometimes small lots or areas where individuals re-locate. "In many localidades in Bogotá there are areas that are not legalized" (EDILJAL#3). Depending on the space available these areas grow to become large slums. Most of the poorest localidades of Bogotá, used to be informal settlements. "Informal neighbourhoods with inadequate urban services have emerged on the outskirts of the city, and most of the poorer areas had an informal origin" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 208).

The city and communities have implemented actions in the legalization of informal settlements or in the betterment of the living standards of those most vulnerable. Communities need to gather and put together all the paperwork required for legalization, and this process is tedious and onerous (PRESJAC#3). Some organizations and students from universities have helped communities to acquire legal status and be able to receive public services (EDILJAL#3 & PRESJAC#3). Once the city approves the new settlements, the neighborhood reaches out to the service providers companies to install water, energy, gas, sewage, garbage collection, etc. (PRESJAC#3). The nation has also provided first time home buyers, non-reimbursable subsidies since 1991 through a program called the *Fonvivienda* (Ministerio de Vivienda, 2023). These subsidies help the poorest access new homes. Unfortunately, some people have taken advantage of the programs the city has to help individuals living in marginalized communities. "People take advantage of the system. I have personally meet people who receive up to 4 subsidies. People live in houses that are falling apart, and when they fall, the city gives them an apartment for them to live in, and what do they do? They sell it or rent it, and return to the falling apart houses, and they receive more subsidies after, and share them with their families. What they want is that they are given the land they illegally inhabited, or that they are given subsidies, and this is how they get to multiple subsidies in the same land" (COMLEA#2). People that abuse the system are always a minority, and the reality is that there is a big problem of poverty in the city. The people living in informal settlements are protesting. "We need to see the issue of informal settlements as a global problem. We need the national state to be the one that formulates a concrete solution of development" (PRESJAC#1).

3.3.2. Fragmentation and the Failure of the Bronx

Fragmentation became more common by the 1990s as fragments i.e. "islands populated by different social groups that live in proximity to one another, but each enclosed by man-made security borders such as fences or gates" (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 4), became the norm. Fragmentation can have both positive and negative repercussions in a city. From strengthening community ties and giving access to the poor to things such as diverse employment, urban services to a rise in crime and violence, land prices, therefore further excluding individuals (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 4). As Bogotá grew, it grew fragmented and polarized, the elite moved away from the traditional core, "el Centro" (the Center) toward the north of the city, and so did the jobs and commercial services. The Center of the city has been transformed and apart from the historical La

Candelaria, most areas are derelict. In the south of the city, some development has occurred, improving access to hospitals, schools and parks in the poorest localities. In the north of the city, fragments of illegal settlements have spurred. There are several areas of the city that have been illegally occupied (PRESJAC#3). In some localities, street inhabitants set up makeshift housing, with cardboards, and entire families live there (COMLEA#1). Persistent inequality has created pockets in the city that are very unsafe, such as the now defunct "El Cartucho" and "Bronx", however, the networks of criminality persist. A study from Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza in 2002 demonstrated a strong correlation between the Gini index and crime (Godoy et al., 2018, p. 4). Spatial inequality leads to income and education inequality, and over time, to increased insecurity in the city.

Bogotá since the 1980s has had streets, and full neighbourhoods where criminality ruled (El Espectador, 2011). The local government efforts to eliminate these streets continues to be a challenge. The first big attempt was the demobilization of "El cartucho" and the building of the "Millennial" park in the year 2000 under Mayor's Peñalosa. By 2011 however, there were four "cartuchitos" and about eight "ollas" already being formed (El Espectador, 2011). The most powerful, the Bronx, was also dismantled in 2016 under the leadership of Peñalosa. The operation that rescued 76 children that were being sexually exploited, also claimed to have dismantled three of the biggest narcotraffic groups in the city (Cabriera, 2016). Two of the individuals interviewed were from the localities where the Bronx used to be located. Their first-hand experience provides insight on the complexity of local governments to handle criminality in Bogotá.

The famous Bronx in Bogotá was an entire area in the Locality Mártires full of drugs, prostitution, gangs, and criminals, a very scary place that is now recuperated (PRESJAC#2, personal communication, July 9, 2021). However, there was lack of planning and foresight. "When it was dismantled, all the individuals spread through the city and through our locality making the streets even more dangerous" (PRESJAC#2). Mártires is one of the oldest localidades of the city, it has a mixture of neighborhoods in the traditional sense and high-rise buildings for multi-family dwellings, so there are no illegal settlements as everything is recognized by the city, yet it hosts the biggest formation of drug pots "ollas" sites of consumption (PRESJAC#3). "The Bronx lasted 20-30 years. About 2000-3000 people lived there. During the weekend, visitors could arrive to 15,000 to 20,000 people. They would go in to buy drugs, sell and buy stolen objects, sell weapons, all expressions of criminality were found. Is a myth that all of this disappeared, maybe physically speaking it did, as all the four blocks were demolished, cleaned up, and a now they are constructing a cultural and creative center, and a technical educational center (National Learning Center (SENA)). The 1,8000 meters terrain, that has the approved designs, and the contracting, will be completed in 5 years. But the social myth is still walking, the homeless are still in the locality, it has been more than 30 years that this social phenomenon developed in the city. There is another small Bronx (Bronxito) that is starting to form in Calle Septima between Carrera 17 and 18, with the same characteristics of the former Bronx, and growing each day, because the social problem has not been dealt with" (PRESJAC#3).

There is no consensus amongst academics, the public and politicians, about the middle and long-term results of dismantling the Bronx (Godoy et al., 2018, p. 11). As this increased the fragmentation of illicit drug market, and displacement and dispersion of the homelessness all around the city (Godoy et al., 2018, p. 11). The problematic of homelessness was aggravated

during the pandemic. “With the pandemic, many homeless started to make their own homes. In our localidad, coexisting with the homeless was difficult. Many of them did not care about anything, they burned cars, dirty the streets, one had to be very careful with them for our own security. This situation was inevitable, as the pandemic further marginalized us. The pandemic regressed the little economy that we had. People had to buy food, find shelter, individual shelter to be better protected” (PRESJAC#2). Many individuals try to help those in needed, for example, “every Sunday, a truck of volunteers arrives in our locality with food, and all the homeless lineup, yet the problem, is that they start taking over more and more territory, and is complex, as it is good that they are being feed, and the police cannot, should not stop them” (PRESJAC#2).

The city also has some initiatives to help individuals in marginal situations. For example, the Social Integration Secretariat in 2020 started a program to bring public servants to the streets to look for vulnerable individuals and families, providing food, any basic need, and mitigate extreme poverty (DEPT#2). “We started to do focal groups to understand the needs of the localidades, in an integrated way, to integrate the different sectors. For example, we meet a family, and one the kids were not in school, then we liaison with the Education Secretariat. We met and decided which areas we needed to visit, what is pending, and like this we are reaching out the most vulnerable in the city, with the support of the local mayor” (DEPT#2). Staff working in different secretariats are aware of the needs of the city, but sometimes are not able to specifically target those needs, they are limited to helping specific vulnerable individuals, rather than promoting structural lasting changes. Fragmentation in Bogotá seems to be more negative than positive, as there are no long-term effective mechanisms to reduce inequalities, making every citizen more vulnerable due to high levels of insecurity.

3.3.3. The Governance Challenge of Inequality in Bogotá

Why does inequality in the city poses a challenge to governance? Inequality is both a cause and a consequence of poor governance. Bogotá’s unjust urban plans in the 1950’s led to inequality, exacerbated by rapid urban growth. Spatial inequality is a direct marginalization of some inhabitants excluding them of proximity to economic opportunities and forcing them to spend more time in less valuable activities, and ultimately impeding them from lifting themselves out of poverty. Individuals that need to spend most of their time caring to meet basic needs, have less time to think about spending time on higher needs, such as self-actualization, etc. For many individuals, political involvement is a luxury that they cannot afford. One of the complains heard through the interview process, was how only retired older men, were interested or available to join meetings for the JAC, where they could voice and push for better public services. An unequal society leads to further marginalization, and poor governance, as not all the stakeholders are able to be meaningfully participate advocating for their individual and community needs. Amartya Sen in Development as Freedom, explains how inequality limits people’s capabilities, ultimately affecting governance (Sen, 2001). An unequal society, where individuals do not have access to basic needs cannot properly be governed, as this portion of society is automatically excluded as their concerns, time, and energy is spent solely in meeting basic needs.

Inequality is also a consequence of ineffective governance. A city that is unable to meet the needs of its inhabitants, as in the case of Bogotá, will deepen inequality. Population density, unemployment rate, homicide rate, and land concentration seem to be negatively associated with inequality (Duque et al., 2023, p. 2067). The historical discriminatory urban plans and exacerbated

rapid urban growth, has led to the proliferation of informal settlements, and pockets of marginalization in Bogotá. Affordable housing, if available, is poorly constructed and lacks access to basic services. Keeping the poor away from commercial areas, increases poverty. Years of inequality has also brought crime and violence to some areas of the city. Fragmentation can aid to making Bogotá more inclusive, but more needs be done to spur growth in derelict areas of the city while increasing security for inhabitants all over the city. Everyone in Bogotá is afraid of transiting in some localities such as Ciudad Bolivar, Mártires and other low-income areas. Individuals who assisted with the survey collection in the different localidades were not comfortable with the idea of going to some of these areas. I befriended a Venezuelan migrant who had become homeless and was afraid of going to her shelter in the Center area. I went to pick her up and realized how scary and forgotten the Center of the city had become, an area that I used to transit as a kid with freedom and sense of belonging.

3.4. Crime and Violence

Crime and Violence is a constant challenge in the city of Bogotá (PRESJAC#2). Commonly referred as "delincuencia comun" translated as common delinquency is a term that encompasses street robberies, either with a weapon or without, and often leaving the individual assaulted with a serious or not serious wound, and not orchestrated by criminal groups ("Tipos de Delincuencia: ¿cómo Reconocerlos y Diferenciarlos? [Types of Crime: How to Recognize and Differentiate Them?]," 2024). Bogotá is known to be an unsafe city, yet, in the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the crime and violence. "Delincuencia común" was chosen as number one dislike of individuals surveyed for this research. There were no significant distinctions in demographics between those interviewed, male, female, living a short-time or a long time in Bogotá, or different income level, almost all selected violence and insecurity in the city as a huge current problem. From the interviews, information gathered provided insights on the type of crimes seen in Bogotá, some of the rationale of why there is much violence in the city, and the failed attempts by the local government to ameliorate the complex issue of security in the streets of Bogotá. Individuals interviewed believe that Narcotrafic in the nation and the city is one of the causes of crime and violence in the city of Bogotá.

3.4.1. Delincuencia Común in Bogotá

Security is a big theme in Bogotá. People live afraid and stressed (ORG#1). The city is more dangerous day by day, robberies and armed robberies occur at night and day (COMLEA#1). Not only there has been an increase of incidents in the city but also, the weapons have changed. From using bricks/rocks, knifes or "navajas", to now using fire weapons. "We have crimes with all types of weapons, there are many aggressive people. We have multiple conflicts in which knifes, and firearms are used" (EDILJAL#4). There is intrafamily violence and feminicides. "In our locality, we are known for the high number of femicides" (EDILJAL#4). To avoid insecurity or "dar papaya" (provoking), people don't leave their cars in the streets, or show their cellphones, or anything of value in public spaces (PRESJAC#2). Everyone in the city lives with fear. Social inequality overtime brings social and political instability. "In Bogotá, inequality is robustly correlated with higher homicide rates (Martinez, 2014 in Muggah & Tobón, 2019, p.255).

In Bogotá, walking in the streets at any time of day can be dangerous, but so it is taking a taxi. One of the interviewees provided a detailed description of a common practice by some "taxi-drivers", so common, that I personally knew of a few people in Bogotá who were robbed in this way. "Taxi

drivers are also known to steal in different ways. A practice that was common a few years ago, was the famous *Paseo Millonario* (Millionaire's Trip). When you call a cab in the street, the driver takes you to an empty road and a motorcyclist arrives. An individual jumps into the passenger seat and rob their belongings, asking for all your credit and debit cards. You need to provide the passwords. Then they drive you to different ATM machines and withdraw as much money as they can. Once the criminals ensure they have taken everything they could, they leave you in a random and often dangerous part of the city and run away" (COMLEA#2). This same interviewee, claimed that now taxi drivers, are "robing in a more civil way, by saying they don't have petty cash, so they keep whatever bill you use to pay, even sometimes paying 4 times the price of the ride. When you have a $20,000 COP bill and they don't have the $15,000 COP to return, they keep it, straight in your face" (COMLEA#2).

A few of the respondents from the survey said that what they liked the least of Bogotá was the xenophobia. None of the individuals interviewed were migrants, yet it was common to hear them speak negatively about Venezuelan people, especially in the context of the insecurity of the city. For instance, one of the interviewees said: "There are many beggars that are setting up tents, and there are entire families living in these tents, many also migrants from Venezuela, they are stealing, robbing and even killing people. A problem that Bogotá and all of Colombia is not handling" (COMLEA#1). Others claimed: Venezuelan migrants have also increased insecurity in the city (EDILJAL#4, COMLEA#1), or "they have been found to be committing crimes using weapons, taking over public spaces, removing street vendors to install themselves. Other migrants have means, and have bulletproof cars, and illegal weapons and kill to steal" (EDILJAL#4), and "in one locality, they experienced 70 deaths in 2020, and most of them were linked to migrants" (EDILJAL#4). Surprised by these claims, I investigated further, and it seems that it is true. The records of crimes at the police stations identify most offenders as native from Venezuela. However, further investigation would be needed to ensure this identification is not intentionally discriminatory.

3.4.2. Why is Bogotá so Unsafe?

Individuals interviewed claimed that lack of employment, and institutional weakness were the reasons why insecurity was so high in Bogotá. People in Colombia and in Bogotá are living in fear. "As there is no dignified employment, people recourse to what it is easier – to steal" (ORG#1). What people need the most in Bogotá is work and security. When people have jobs and are not afraid to go out in the streets, the rest is surplus. With stable work, people can pay for heath, transportation, food, have a better quality of life. People often rob because it is easier and more rentable than to work, also because there are not enough opportunities (ORG#1).

Weak institutions enable crimes to surge. Interviewees provided examples of situations in the city where institutions and lack of rule of law are failing civilians. "Many yellow cab drivers are delinquents, there are no controls for them. How is it possible that a taxi driver has been in jail 6 or 7 times, has a huge number of arrest warrants, doesn't have their paperwork completed, and they are driving in the city?" (COMLEA#2). "Venezuelans are labeling houses to rob them, and the police knowing about these issues doesn't do anything" (COMLEA#2).

The police is an institution created to enforce laws and justice. In Bogotá, the behaviour of the police is questionable. "Community leaders and local governments work with the police to make

the localities more secure, however, depending on the locality, the police sometimes helps or sometimes it doesn't" (PRESJAC#2). "One of the most dangerous localities in Bogotá, has more than 800 policemen, one police per every 5 inhabitants. It's the most insecure yet most secure locality, it has the highest number of police officers. They are inept, unable to collaborate and protect citizens. How is it possible, that these police are guarding a supermarket, yet they don't help when they see in front of them a girl being robbed? They only ask her what they robbed her, but do not prevent or go after the robbers? There is no point of having high numbers [of police] when they are not helping the community" (COMLEA#2). "So many police officers, and violence still rampant, every day someone is killed" (COMLEA#2). The police excuse themselves as they are protecting banks, shops, but not the streets. Individuals are safe entering or leaving condominiums, banks, etc., but not transiting between them (COMLEA#2). The police are taking care of private institutions (COMLEA#2 & EDILJAL#4). "They take care of private supermarkets, when we only have 56 police bodies in our localidad and these are stationed in Transmilenio stations, supermarkets" (EDILJAL#4).

The local mayor is the maxim authority for controlling the police, and "he needs to coordinate and ensure safety of the territory" (EDILJAL#4). Yet, individuals feel that the government is not doing anything to solve insecurity problems. "Local mayors do not commit to the problems of the locality. To address insecurity, it is imperative that projects are developed to tackle insecurity. There needs to be more work between competent authorities and delegated participatory institutions such as the JAC. The community needs to be able to reach out to the police in front of irregularities, and these to be able to do something when they arrive" (PRESJAC#2). There needs to be more articulation between the different secretariats, and specialists, with more resources. To improve Bogotá's security, Gonzales et al., propose strategic objectives such as strengthening the institutional capacity of the police, articulate the institutional and social participation for the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies and strategies, articulate the formulation and execution of guidelines, strengthen relationships between the police and social political actors, increase the capacity to respond to conflict, integration of different tools and transparency, and ensuring access to information (Gonzalez et al., 2019, pp. 5–6). These institutional changes can benefit Bogotá, yet they need to include the complex issues that go beyond the borders of the city, such as narcotraffic. Lack of job opportunities and rule of law leads cities into the hands of criminality, and in Bogotá, the most challenging one, is that of narcotraffic groups that work at national and local levels.

3.4.3. Narcotraffic

How does narcotraffic poses a challenge to governance in Bogotá? Cities are interconnected, they are affected by what happens in their shared national contexts (Eaton, 2020, p. 3). "Narcotraffic is not only a national but international and local issue in Colombia… the national guerrillas are all funded with narcotraffic money… money laundering from narcotraffic is also a huge business in the country" (PRESJAC#1). Bogotá is a big corridor for narcotraffic, money laundering, and micro-trafficking. Most of the drugs leave the country through Bogotá's international airport, but Bogotá doesn't have plantations, therefore, there is a corridor in the city that moves tons of illicit drugs. "In the localities, they often know where the hubs for trafficking are located yet, they seem to be protected, if individuals denounce them, nothing happens, if they catch a few, the system perdures. These are dangerous individuals are they are armed and well connected with some elites, with authority powers" (PRESJAC#1).

Micro-traffic also affects the city, as the presence of drug cartels increases local consumption. "Local drug dealers are often paid with drugs rather than with money. It is more profitable, as they are given the equivalent of $1 million COP in drugs, but they can monetise it and sell it for $5 million COP" (PRESJAC#1). This creates a huge social problem, as drug addictions are almost impossible to complete cure from (PRESJAC#2). There are several youths in Colombia whose lives have been destroyed as they start consuming drugs as early as 7 years old. They become both a social and economic burden, as they require costly treatment and professional support to help them stay out of trouble, and many of them are unable to produce income for themselves or contribute to the society. "The mafias have also taken over the public spaces, those working in the informal sector, cannot just stand in a corner to sell as they used to do. They need to pay a fee to the mafias if they want to be street vendors. The mafias have also taken advantage of Venezuelan migrants, as migrants charge less for work, and with the lack of legal jobs in the city, they are left with no alternative other than illicit practices" (PRESJAC#1).

Narcotraffic is connected to political corruption. Since the political scandal of President Samper's administration (1994-1998) it became publicly known that narcotraffic was funding political campaigns. "The war with terrorists is being financed with narcotraffic moneys" (PRESJAC#1). Money laundering of illicit drugs is hidden under the number of "good deeds" – government like actions of the cartels. Powerful dealers build supermarkets, buildings, invests in homes. The local dealers also buy homes for the elderly, taxis, and generate informal employment (PRESJAC#1). "The estimated volume of money laundered from the illegal drug trade in 2010 accounted for 3% of the country's GDP, or roughly $16 billion yearly" (Gutiérrez, 2013, p. 5). The problem of drugs is real, and those creating havoc in the city are often victims of the big network of narcotraffic. "Community leaders are often trying to address these problems, by speaking with the police and with the local mayor. Yet, this is a problem that is beyond what the local mayor can handle. It's beyond their administrative capacity, of their role as local administrators, it is rather a problematic at the district level, that should be dealt by the central mayor. Yet, it seems that this issue wants to be delegated to the local mayors, and this is a big mistake. The city is full of homeless and consumption of drugs, and crimes. The local mayors don't have the capacity for decision making, nor the economic resources needed to handle this issue in the localidad. What the central government and the secretariats are doing regarding this theme is minimal" (PRESJAC#3).

Some have proposed legalization of drugs to eliminate illegal businesses and provide tax revenues to the state. Yet, some argue that the "strong opposition to legalization in Colombia comes from the same politicians who are financed with drugs which will not personally benefit from the legalization" (PRESJAC#1). Transparency International's report on Corruption and Drugs states that "drug trafficking threatens good governance and fuels corruption, creating a vicious cycle where criminal justice institutions falter, and the drug trade grows. Ordinary people become caught up in violence, extortion and drug addiction. Money laundering from drugs reduces economic growth and reinforces income inequality" (McDevitt et al., 2021, p. 2). This is what is happening in Bogotá. Bogotá's long-standing inequalities have brought violence, crime, narcotraffic and fuelled corruption.

3.5. Corruption

Corruption damages governance (McDevitt et al., 2021, p. 2). No matter how specialized, community oriented, whether centralized or decentralized a government structure is, if there is corruption, citizens are robbed, and inequality is increased. The interviewees were not asked directly about corruption, however, most of those interviewed highlighted corruption as a serious problem in Bogotá. These are a few of the comments directly taken from those interviewed on corruption: "Corruption has made this country 50 years behind in development" (COMLEA#1). "Corruption is the worst bacteria that can exists, worse than the pandemic" (PRESJAC#2). "Decentralization has become a synonym for misappropriation, patronage, corruption, and nepotism" (Castro, 2011, p. 265). "In Colombia, decentralization turns into a power grab for personal benefits. Without corruption, and ensuring posting is given due to merit and not personal connections, decentralization could be very effective" (PRESJAC#4, personal communication, April 29, 2021). "Money? There is money, but it's being stolen, and this is why we are 50 years behind" (COMLEA#1). Bogotá is behind in public transit systems, inequality, unemployment, healthcare, etc., not because there isn't the money, but because of corruption (PRESJAC#1, COMLEA#1 & ORG#2, personal communication, July 19, 2021). The response to the lack of investment to the needs of the community - for example paving roads – is that there are "insufficient funds", however this is just an excuse (COMLEA#1). "We are resource rich country, very rich, we border two seas, lots of water, but due to our leaders, each day we are poorer, because we do not know how to manage our resources" (COMLEA#1). "Lack of provision of public services will continue to be a huge problem in the city if it's not solved at the root of the problem, which is poor planning and corruption, so that the projects proposed are efficient" (PRESJAC#1). "Corruption is eating us away. Doesn't allow people to work. There is a lot of inconformity in the society, because of the high levels of corruption" (ORG#2). "The youth of today dream of becoming good politicians, and with education things will change, also because there is currently a social outburst of the current situation with corrupt leaders who do not want to let go of their power" (PRESJAC#2). "Caution is needed, as they silence by killing those who seem to be potential good leaders" (PRESJAC#2). "When one sends a petition to the mayor's office, one must be careful and do it anonymously. The Fiscalia, Procuraduria, everything is at the service of the government in power. But this will all change because the social outbreak already happened, and there might be people who die, as this is a war" (PRESJAC#2).

3.5.1. What is Corruption like in Bogotá?

The question of "What is corruption?" is complex and beyond the scope of this research. Interviewees however presented different types of corruption occurring in Bogotá, and in summary, these phenomena are best described as "as the abuse of public roles or resources for private benefit" (Johnston, 2005, p. 12). The complaint presented by those interviewed were various forms of vote-buying, patronage, nepotism, cronyism, embezzlement, and fraud. While there might be other types of corruption and at different levels, the following sections only present the types most spoken about when interviewees were asked about the challenges to governance in the city of Bogotá. Further studies could investigate in depth the presence of these practices, providing insight on how to overcome these challenges impeding good governance, while increasing inequalities.

3.5.1.1. Electoral Fraud

Corruption during the election period is manifested in candidates using different tactics to get elected. Often candidates who want to be elected go to poor neighborhoods and give free lunch for the day, make tons of promises, and once elected the community never sees them again" (COMLEA#2). Candidates pay as little as $20,000 COP ($7 CAD) for a vote (COMLEA#1). The problem lies in ignorance, as individuals sell their votes too easily to candidates, they vote depending on the individual who could secure them a job, or to one of their family members (ORG#1). Individuals need to vote conscientiously (ORG#1& COMLEA#1). If people sell their votes, they will never elect leaders that will represent them (ORG#1). Yet, this is changing, people are starting to think about how they vote (ORG#1). People do not believe in the government; they have very negative perceptions. People feel the leaders always wash their hands, they are not responsible and accountable. "I ask people to think twice before voting for anyone, they review their history, what they have done for the community, and not to sell their vote for a meal" (COMLEA#1). "People need to think, who will make a difference in my neighborhood. Only in this way things will improve. I have seen JAC's that truly do everything for their neighborhood and do not use the JAC with a double intention" (ORG#1). In Bogotá vote buying occurs at different levels of governance, and unfortunately, in the poorest areas of the city, individuals sell their vote out of necessity, and do not realize that without a conscious vote, they will continue to live in marginalization.

3.5.1.2. Patronage

Patronage is a complex concept as in some cases it can be seen as something inevitable and not condemnable in society. It is a political tool, "in political science, 'patronage' is a particularistic exchange that takes place between patron and client, where the object of exchange is that of public office" (Varraich & Rothstein, 2017). However, in the eyes of individuals interviewed, patronage is seen as a fraud. "Election fraud is no news in Colombia. As candidates obtain their posts due to the help received from different groups, once in office, they ought to pay political favours, and they use the city's budget to do so, and create pirate foundations to transfer funds" (COMLEA#2). Patronage increases inefficiencies, as those hired lack the necessary qualifications or experience. "Contracts to engineers, architects, lawyers, and bureaucratic posts are given as a favour for winning elections but not based on merit or abilities to govern" (PRESJAC#4). Patronage is a form of distributive politics, yet this type of behavior is condemned when the distribution rules are not made in public, and are contingent on voter's behaviour (Stokes et al., 2013). Interviewees highlighted that the political favours were paid using the city's budget, yet citizens expect equitable distribution of city's funds. Patronage creates inefficiencies in governments as paying salaries to unqualified workers stalls development and makes room for other types of corruption.

3.5.1.3. Nepotism and Cronyism

Nepotism occurs when someone in authority gives preference in hiring to friends or family members. Nepotism is problematic as it increases inequalities giving options only to a few, well connected and or with family relationships in office. "The mayor of the city is often seen only with their own group of wealthy individuals, and he doesn't meet with commoners" (COMLEA#2); or "there are people, who achieve power, and they don't want to let it go. They appoint family members, and it's only a few families that run the show" (PRESJAC#2); and "I can tell you truthfully IDPAC is a corrupt entity, they steal all the funds, it is a complete mess. The director if IDPAC is appointed by the mayor, they usually appoint a friend, a family member, this is wrong.

If the director of IDPAC was elected by the people, it would be better, is a sought-after position, pays well, covers trips, travel, we all support it through our taxes" (COMLEA#1). This situation is particularly hard in cities where there is job scarcity, and individuals are desperate to find dignified work. For a "public competition for *Gestores de Convivencia* [*Community Living Managers*], more than 10,000 individuals applied for 200 positions. This competition caused rage as those who applied never heard back and felt that those positions were staffed before they even applied" (COMLEA#2). "If we were good at planning and had no corruption, instead of arriving to meet needs of only 7% of the population we could arrive to 25%, the other 75% is because of actual lack of resources" (PRESJAC#1). Unfortunately, corruption practices seem necessary to some, as that is how they ensure flow of resources to their own families and connections.

Different initiatives have spurred in the city trying to address nepotism. A program called Talento No Palanca (Talent Not Connections) was well thought out but not properly executed. It was designed to fight against corruption (PRESJAC#1 & EDILJAL#4). The idea was that individuals who wanted to work as public servants could upload their resumes to the system, and they would be selected based on their experience and capabilities, and not based on a recommendation (EDILJAL#4 & PRESJAC#1). "When you signed up on the website and uploaded your resume, the criteria for selection was never clear and this resulted in many feeling wronged as they were never selected and just saw the same individuals always being offered different jobs. When inquiries were made with regards to the selection criteria, one of the entities responded saying that 60% were hired through the platform, 35% through a tender offer, and the 5% they could not account for it" (PRESJAC#1). Hiring based on recommendations and not on merit, creates resentments, excluding some individuals from the system, deepening already existing inequalities.

3.5.1.4. Embezzlement

Misappropriation of funds entrusted to local officials is common in Bogotá, and it occurs in various forms and at various levels. Some embezzlement practices are explicit and others more implicit. Sometimes projects are overpriced, such as charging $30,000 M COP (10,000 CAD) to fix a neighbourhood road but only spending $5,000 M COP (1,500 CAD) while using poor quality materials and stealing the rest (COMLEA#1). For example, one of the community leaders shared a situation when a contract was signed for instalment of security cameras in different spots in the city, but these cameras only worked well for a few days, and when an incident occurred, the cameras could not aid in identifying the culprit. It was later found out that the company contracted individuals without proper qualifications and paid them minimum salaries while stealing the rest of the funds (COMLEA#2).

Community leaders are aware that some contracts are signed with paper companies, garage companies, and not actual recognized companies. This behaviour creates mistrusts in governments, as many inhabitants have many unmet needs. Active community leaders lose hope as for years they submit unsolicited proposals, with details and signatures of the community, and rarely any of those proposals are carried out. "I have sent about 30 *derechos de petición* (proposals) to fix roads and out of those only two roads have been pavemented. We do not what they do with the funds, there is a lot of corruption" (COMLEA#1). More implicitly is that of creating multiple positions unnecessarily as a way of indirectly stealing funds. An activity planned in one of the localities only ended up receiving $1/5^{th}$ of the funds after the association entrusted wired funds to multiple intermediaries, that not only kept the money but created huge inefficiencies (ORG#2). Another practice seen is paying three or four individuals per position (ORG#2). Even international funds

for development are stolen in indirect ways, as witness have seen material donations for the poor being received by foundations and re-sold to make profits (PRESJAC#2).

Embezzlement occurs at different levels of government. The failure of Transmilenio – or the inability of district level officials to complete the phases pre-designed and with funds pre-allocated – was mainly blamed due to the corruption of the Mayorship of Samuel Moreno in 2008 (Guzman et al., 2017, pp. 204–205). It was later found out, that Moreno and his brother received commissions by private contractors, while he promised the construction of the Metro (Guzman et al., 2017, pp. 204–205). Individuals interviewed, claimed that the same organizations that were established to encourage community participation, were corrupt "the IDPAC is corrupt and has abandoned the JACs. In some communities JACs don't even have a space to work, or have any desks, chairs, computers, etc., which are necessary for them to do their job" (COMLEA#1). JAC members have complained, and, in some cases, minimal help was received, even after writing letters to the local mayor, the mayor and the IDPAC. As corruption has been rampant, the JAL was institutionalized a local oversight mechanism to ensure the local mayor's office does not "steal" the funds allocated for development projects in the locality. Yet corruption also occurs at the most basic community level – the JAC. Although the JAC is a good system for community participation, corruption, mismanagement, and lack of institutional support limit the effectiveness of this instrument. "*La gente no cree en las Juntas de Acción Comunal* (people don't believe in the JAC)" (PRESJAC#1). JAC leaders have used their position to gain personal favours for themselves, their relatives or those closest to them (COMLEA#1, PRESJAC#1 & ORG#1). Corruption is present not only in the aspiring members of the JAC, but also in other organisms that are supposed to support and strengthen the JAC. Embezzlement occurs at various level of government in the city of Bogotá and it is deeply damaging the governance structures, rule of law and trust of the citizens in its institutions.

3.5.2. Why Corruption in Bogotá?

Some of the causes of corruption in the city of Bogotá were identified in the conversations with individuals interviewed. First, low wages, as when positions are not well remunerated, individual's creativity and malice is spurred in front of necessity. When leaders don't even make the min wage, they turn to stealing (ORG#2). How they steal? "By one person keeping the job of president, secretary, accountant is all the same person receiving the salary for the three postings" (ORG#2). Second, is the perception that everyone is doing it (ORG#2). When corruption is normalized, it becomes part of the practices. In Colombia, there is a running joke that translated could mean "he who doesn't take advantage, is because he is dumb". This idea that whenever you have a chance to steal, or to take more than your share, is not only good but expected, makes citizens feel comfortable with corrupt practices, and laugh about it. Third, lack of protection to whistle blowers. Some individuals are courageous to denounce wrongdoing. Yet, they need to denounce with facts, and proof, as false accusations can lead the whistle blower in a juridical problem, even jail (COMLEA#1). Norms in Colombia don't protect or encourage whistleblowing, but rather complicates the process, and those that persist sometimes pay with their lives. "Sadly, this is a country where you speak up and they shut you down. It is complicated, the leader that seems that will be able to do something, gets killed" (PRESJAC#2).

There are many other manifestations of corruption and rationale of why corruption exists in Bogotá and in Colombia. This thesis does not aim at exploring in depth the vast issue of corruption, rather

it aims at presenting specific examples of the challenges the city experiences to governance. Colombia doesn't rank the highest in corruption in Latin America, and the nation have made strides to improve their institutional practices (Gutiérrez, 2013, p. 2), there is still room for improvement, in particularly in trying to ensure inequality is reduced, and that individuals in the city have equal opportunities and access to basic and essential public services.

Chapter 4: Distribution of Power in Bogotá

Chapter 4 presents the existing top-down institutionalized mechanism in the city of Bogotá, from the perspective of those interviewed, while trying to make sense of the type of governance structure Bogotá has designed for the decision making and the delivery of urban services to its inhabitants. The first article of the Colombian Constitution of 1991 describes the type of government by which Colombia is to be ruled by:

> "ART.1 Colombia is a social state under the rule of law, organized in the form of a **unitary republic**, **decentralized**, with **autonomy** of its **territorial units**, **democratic**, **participatory**, and **pluralistic**, based on the respect of human dignity, the work and solidarity of the individuals who belong to it, and the prevalence of the general interest" (COL Const. art.1)

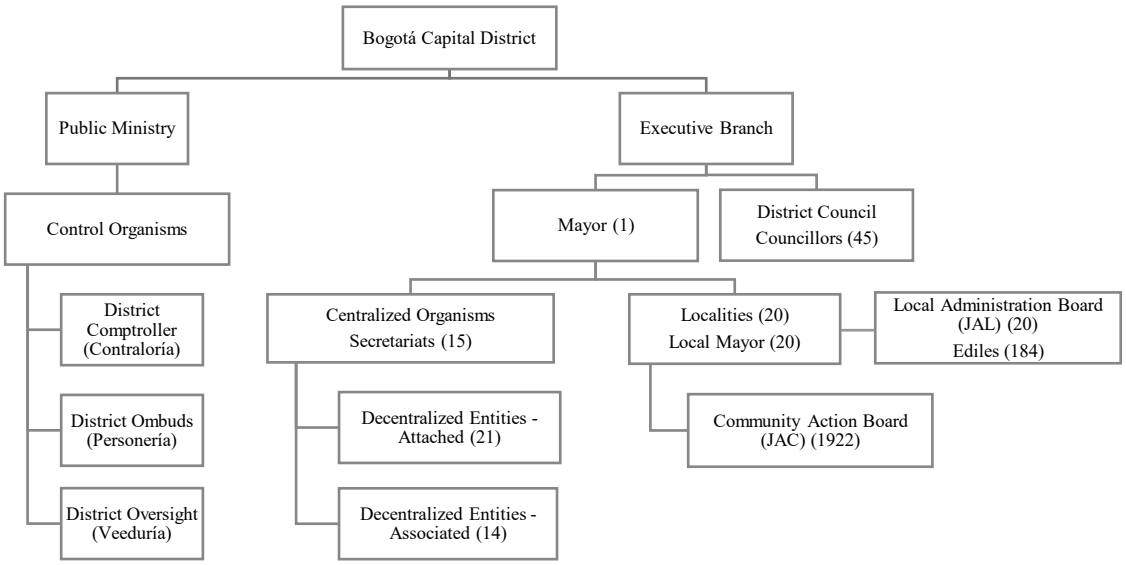
Colombia is a Republic with a President that is both the Head of Government and the Head of State. The decentralized political division gives significant autonomy to the departments, and these to the municipalities. Bogotá as the Capital, has a special regulatory framework also described in the Constitution. Bogotá's government is composed of two tiers that simultaneously provide services, enact bylaws, and provides oversight to their own governance. Decree 1421 of 1993 dictates the special regime for the Capital District of Bogotá, also called *the Estatuto Organico de Bogotá* (Organic Statute of Bogotá - EOB)[13]. Article 5 of the EOB organizes the specifical hierarchy of the following institutionalized mechanisms of decision making:

- Consejo Distrital (District Council)
- Alcalde Mayor (District Mayor)
- Secretarías (Secretariats) and other district entities
- Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) (Local Administration Boards)
- Alcalde Local (Local Mayor)
- Juntas de Acción Communal (JAC) (Local Community Boards)
- Personería (Ombuds)
- Contraloría (Comptroller)
- Veeduría (Oversight)

Figure 4-1[14] is a visual representation of Bogotá's administrative organization.

[13] Organic Statute refers to a type of legal framework or set of laws that regulate the structure and functioning of public entities or administrative regions. In the case of Bogotá, the Statute defines how Bogotá is governed.
[14] The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of positions or entities at each level presented. For example: Local Mayor (20) means that there are 20 local mayors.

Figure 4-1: *Government structure of Bogotá*



Note: Designed by author. The number inside the parenthesis () represent the number of entities.

4.1. Institutionalized Mechanisms of Decision-Making in Bogotá

4.1.1. The District Council

The District Council is the supreme authority in Bogotá (the Capital District). The Council is a political-administrative corporation of 45 councillors elected by the citizens every 4 years responsible for monitoring and controlling the management carried out by the district authorities. The 1991 Colombian Constitution and Decree 1421 of 1993 regulates the District Council, and in administrative matters, its attributions are of a normative nature (COL Const. art. 312 & Decree 1421, 1993, art. 8).

4.1.2. The Mayor of Bogotá

The Mayor of Bogotá is the head of government and administration and represents the Capital legally, judicially, and extrajudicially (Decree 1421, 1991, art. 35). The mayor is also directly and secretly elected by the people every 4 years, without possibility of re-election for the next period (COL Const. art. 323). As the supreme authority of the city is the District Council, the mayor's responsibilities are to enforce the Constitution, the law, the decrees of the National Government and the agreements, ordinances, and resolutions of the District Council (COL Const. art. 315 n.1 &Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 1 & 5). The mayor is to preserve public order in accordance with the law and the instructions from the President (COL Const. art. 315 n.2 &Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 2). To achieve this, the Constitution invested the mayor as the highest police authority in each city, making the National Police accountable directly to the mayor (COL Const. art. 315 n.2). The mayor must also coordinate and monitor the national entities for the proper provision of services in the city (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 7). The legislative competencies allows the Mayor of Bogotá to either sanction or veto the resolutions which the Council may have approved (COL Const. art. 315 n.6), to issue decrees, orders and resolutions (approved by the Council) (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 4), to collaborate with judicial authorities (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 17), and to take the measures authorized by law and municipal agreements in cases of emergency and inform the Council on the rationale of the measures taken (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 18).

4.1.3. District Entities - The Secretariats and Other Organisms

The district entities[15] contribute with the mission of the government (Decree 1421, 1993, Preprint 54). They are created by the Constitution, law, ordinance, agreement, or by authorization of the legislator to the executive (Funcion Pública, 2022). The mayor of the city counts with 15 Secretariats, also called centralized organisms, and 35 decentralized district entities in Bogotá, out of which 21 are attached and 14 are associated[16]. The Secretariats are divided into the different areas of the management of the city such as urban planning, economic development, education, health, social integration, culture and recreation, mobility, public services, security, and justice. The decentralized entities are entities with legal personality linked to one of the Secretariats, and can be institutions, foundations, corporations, etc. The 21 attached decentralized entities have administrative and financial autonomy, legal status, and their own assets, to perform administrative functions or provide a service (Función Pública, 2022a). The 15 associated entities also have administrative and financial autonomy, legal personality, and independent capital but their purpose is to carry out productive, industrial, or commercial activities for the sale of goods and services (Función Pública, 2022b). Three individuals interviewed worked at different of Secretariats, while two of them worked or were members of the attached decentralized entities - the IDPAC and ARASID. These entities focus on administrative functions or provision of services rather than the sale of goods and services.

4.1.4. The Board of Local Administrators (JAL) and the Edils

The Junta de Administradores Locales (JAL) or Board of Local Administrators, is an institution established to be the voice of their constituents and to make the local mayor accountable for their actions. The JAL is like the District Council as the Council oversees the actions of the district mayor, while the JAL oversees the actions of the local mayors. The JAL began to be regulated by the law decree 1421 of 1993 (EDILJAL#2 & 3). There is one JAL in each locality. The JAL is composed of 7 to 11 Ediles (larger localities have more Ediles). The Ediles are local level councillors, who reside or carry out some professional, industrial, commercial, or labor activity in the locality in which they run for office. The Edil's task is to identify the problems or needs in their locality and propose solutions (El Tiempo, 2021). Ediles are elected by their communities every 3 years. At the national level, only a few JALs have honorariums for the Ediles, but as Bogotá is the Capital, Ediles are remunerated which gives them greater stability, but their salary is conditioned to their assistance to the sessions (EDILJAL#2). The JAL is organized in five commissions: Budget; Education, Culture, Recreation and Sports; Social Welfare; Health and the Environment; and Government and Development Plan. Each commission has a President and a Vice-president. These commissions guide and control in each one of their areas of responsibility (EDILJAL#1, personal communication, September 30, 2022).

4.1.5. The Local Mayors

The local mayor's office is a purely administrative figure in the governance system of Bogotá. They are not elected by the community as they are appointed by the district mayor from a trio pre-selected[17] by the Ediles of the JAL (COL Const. 1991 art. 323). Local mayors belong to the staff

[15] See *Appendix 8 Detailed Description of Governance Structures in Bogotá* for more information.
[16] See *Appendix 9: List of Centralized and Decentralized organisms in Bogotá*, for a comprehensive list.
[17] Any civilian can apply to become a local mayor, and there are no pre-set qualifications, they don't even have to have completed high school. They do need to pass a written exam. The individuals with the highest exam results are

of the District Government Secretariat (Duque Cante, 2015, p.14, and DEPT#2). Their responsibilities are to move projects ahead, such as education, improving roads, parks, provide financial aid to the elderly, children, and less favored individuals, all in accordance with what was predetermined by the approved centralized Development Plan (PRESJAC#4). Local mayors need to be creative to find ways to accommodate the needs of their localities without moving away from the capital district plans (EDILJAL#2).

4.1.6. The Board of Community Action (JAC)

The Junta de Acción Comunal (JAC), or the Board of Community Action is the bottom-up mechanism for citizen participation, at the neighbourhood level, institutionalized for in local governance and decision-making in Bogotá. Although these organisms have existed for about 60 years, they were only constituted in 2007 by Law 743 (PRESJAC#3). The JAC is composed of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Fiscal, and other members that are part of working groups, totaling10 -15 members (PRESJAC#4). There are about 6000 JACs in all of Colombia. In Bogotá they represent the neighborhoods, but they are also present in rural communities and in municipalities (PRESJAC#3). The directives hold their positions for 4-year periods. The mission of the JAC is to identify and raise awareness of the different types of needs of the community either by fundraising events or bringing issues up to higher levels of government. The JACs are the most direct mechanism citizens have in their localities, to make their voices heard to the local mayors, Ediles, secretariats, and even the district mayor.

4.1.7. Control Organisms

These organisms of control are the institutions by which the citizenry and the organized community can monitor and control the administrative exercise of all district entities (Decree 1421, 1993).

4.1.7.1. District Comptroller (Contraloria)

The 1923 Kemmerer Mission promoted the foundation of the National Bank (Banco de la República) and recommended the creation of the Comptroller General of the Republic. It was also decided to institute Bogotá's Municipal Comptroller Office to provide the city with a control office (Contraloría de Bogotá, 2022b). The mission of the comptroller is to be an independent overseer of the city's fiscal affairs, so that every peso spent by public organisms reflect the welfare of Bogotáns. Decree 658 of 2016 and decree 664 of 2017 outlines the functions and responsibilities of the comptroller's office. The objectives are to, on behalf of the community, exercise surveillance of the fiscal management of the administration of the Capital District and the individuals who manage assets or funds of the Capital District, evaluating the results and the ethics of their actions, and contributing to audit reports for the improvement of the administrative and fiscal management of district entities (Contraloría de Bogotá, 2022a).

4.1.7.2. District Ombuds (Personería)

The Ombud's office or Personería is also an organism of control at the district level to protect, defend and promote the rights of people, and to monitor the official conduct of public servants in the capital district (Personería de Bogotá, 2022). The District Council appoints "el Personero" for

called for an interview with the Ediles of the locality and each Edil votes for the candidates they deem more suitable for the job. Candidates' professional competence and political affiliation are considered in the interview, as the Ediles also represent a political party.

the period determined by law (COL Const. art. 313 n.8). The Ombud's office protects the rights of those most vulnerable such as the elderly, women, migrants, and the internally displaced; assist citizens with juridical matters and conciliation and resolution of conflicts; carries out prevention and control/corrective actions, to district entities and public servants to ensure compliance of the Development Plan and of their roles and responsibilities respectively; strengthen institutional management through the use and appropriation of information and communication technologies; and incorporate a culture of knowledge and innovation, among others (Personería de Bogotá, 2022).

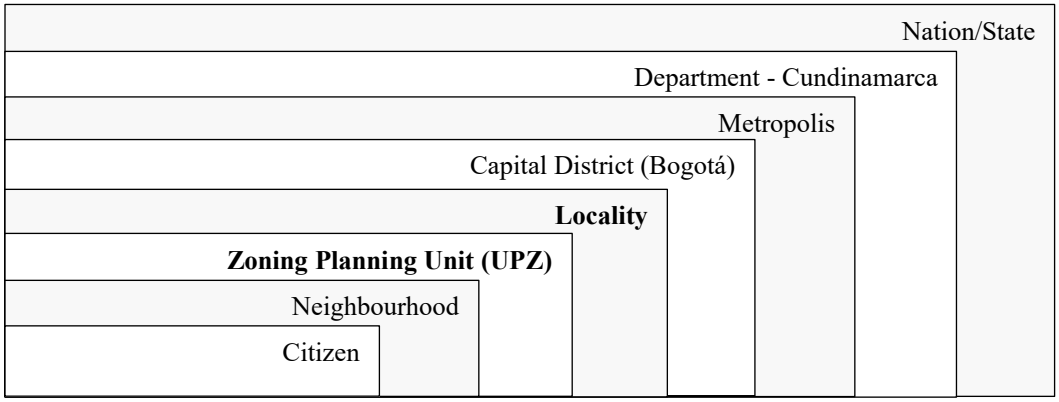
4.1.7.3. District Oversight (Veeduría)

The third organism of control at the district level in Bogotá, is the District Oversight or Veeduría. The Veeduría was erected as an institution run by citizens, to oversee the proper functioning of all the other district entities, including the Comptroller's office and the District's Ombud (El Tiempo, 1997). Their mission is to defend citizen and public rights through preventive control and the promotion of active citizen participation, with the purpose of guaranteeing transparency for the benefit of improving district public management and citizen coexistence (Veeduría Distrital, 2022). Decree 1421 of 1993 and Agreement 24 of 1993 outline the roles and responsibilities of the Veeduría. They ought to investigate complaints presented by any citizen, and establish whether the conduct of officials and workers is contrary to probity, discriminatory or openly violating of the current legal system; intervene before courts and tribunals in defense of district interests; denounce criminal actions found in investigations; collaborate to ensure criminal proceedings charged to officials or former officials, are carried out regularly; and request competent authorities to adopt necessary measures to prevent the improper use of district assets and resources (Decree 1421, 1993, art.119). Agreement 24 adds the functions of promoting the fulfillment of the commitments acquired by the administration with the community; identifying corrupt administrative practices; and promoting citizen participation to monitor, evaluate and control the design and execution of public policies, administration contracts, and performance of public servants, among others (Consejo de Bogotá, 1993).

4.2. Governance in Bogotá as a Megacity

Applying the literature to megacities like Bogotá, requires making a distinction between the different levels of government beyond the national, regional and municipal concepts. Figure 4-2 shows the added layers of authority in megacities. The **bolded words** in Figure 4-2 highlight the extra levels of territorial subdivision that exist in Bogotá. The geo-political division of Bogotá into 20 localities automatically adds an extra layer of governance. This extra layer of governance might explain the lack of certainty from participants when stating Bogotá's governance system as centralized or decentralized. For example, one of the Ediles responded: "Bogotá's administration has components of both centralized and decentralized governance. District norms and decrees push towards decentralization" (EDILJAL#2). The history of decentralization in Bogotá confirms this confusion, and to my understanding, it proposes two levels of decentralization. The first level, the transfer of power from the nation/state to the Capital District and sanctioned by the 1991 Constitution, and the second level, the transfer of powers from the Capital District to the localities, which was never properly defined, and has created a void and inefficiencies in the management of the city. This extra level of governance is particularly important in megacities, as larger cities tend to create sub-municipal organisms to better manage their territory. The need of megacities to create extra levels of decentralization is what gives these cities extra levels of complexity in governance.

Figure 4-2: *Territorial organization and political authorities in Bogotá*



Note: Designed by author

4.2.1. First Level of Decentralization

The first level of decentralization refers to the powers conceded from the national government to the municipality and in this case, to the Capital District of Bogotá. This process of first level decentralization began in the 1980s, was reinforced in the 1991 Constitution, and was generally considered a success.

> *"The case of Bogotá is an interesting story of political and structural change that provides empirical evidence for literature concerning (good) governance and decentralization." (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 21)*

> *"Using Colombia's legal framework for decentralized development, Bogotá has been able to achieve a remarkable level of community engagement, measured urban growth, financial stability and the highest levels of education, health and public utilities coverage in the nation. Indeed, Bogotá has become an international example of how development can be fostered in an increasingly urbanized world." (Eslava, 2009, p. 284)*

> *"Through an improved decentralization framework, the capital city Bogotá was able to tackle its severe public finance problems and position itself as one of the best-performing subnational entities in Colombia." (Fedelino, 2010, p. 53)*

> *"Colombia took its first steps toward decentralization in the mid-1980s. The process was considered coherent and daring at the time. It was also considered comprehensive, concerning political, fiscal, and administrative matters, both regional and local." (Castro, 2011, p. 263).*

The excitement over Colombia's first-level decentralization programs was preceded by a time of economic stagnation under the centralized system. "In the late 1980s, Bogotá was plagued by low tax revenues, limited investment spending, and a high debt burden, which translated into financial strain and low coverage and poor quality of basic services" (Fedelino, 2010, p. 53). Yet, under decentralization initiatives, Bogotá was given tax autonomy to increase rates and expand tax bases. Fiscal autonomy brough optimism and with it several positive changes such as the introduction of anti-evasion programs, improved institutional structures, upgrading budgetary management

through performance budgeting, increased fiscal transparency, etc., which ultimately led to reduce debt, and increase the provision and quality of public services (Fedelino, 2010, p. 53).

Today, Bogotá as a Capital District has more independence in the running of its own affairs than any other municipality in the country (PRESJAC#1). In writing and in practice, decentralization occurs from the national government to the district level, following what is defined by Rondinelli, as devolution or the "creation or strengthening - financially or legally - of subnational units of government, the activities of which are substantially outside the direct control of the central government. Under devolution, local units of government are autonomous and independent, and their legal status makes them separate or distinct from the central government" (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p.24). However, this devolution is not perfect, as some aspects of the city continue to be influenced by the national government. As sometimes top-down city planning intends to project national agendas at the municipal level (Salazar-Ferro, 2007 as cited in Guzman et al., 2017, pp.203-204), or national intervention in local politics, as it occurred during the mayoralty of Petro, when "national authorities retained District Council powers, to thwart [him]" (Eaton, 2020, p. 3). Nevertheless, Bogotá's autonomy to run its political, fiscal, and administrative affairs independent from the national government is far more developed than other capital cities in other countries in development, and this is a positive experience.

4.2.1.1. Political Decentralization in Bogotá

Democratic decentralization includes election by secret ballots of persons in authority within institutions at national, intermediate, or local levels (Manor, 1999, p. 19). Political decentralization understood as electoral decentralization exists in Bogotá's first level of decentralization. The national government does not interfere in the election of the District Councils or the district mayor. Elections occur generally at the stipulated times and with a fair level of transparency. The national government only intervenes appointing a mayor in the cases where the incumbent mayor ceases his administration 18 months prior the next election. Even then, the president must respect the political party or coalition in which the previous mayor was registered under (COL. Const. art.314 & 323). First level political decentralization in Bogotá contributed to the success of fiscal decentralization as "reformist politicians skillfully took advantage of various reforms to improve fiscal outcomes" (Fedelino, 2010, p. 51). Yet, the debate about Bogotá's effective decentralization becomes more complex when moving beyond the national-municipal dichotomy.

4.2.1.1. Fiscal Decentralization in Bogotá

Fiscal decentralization means that local governments can determine tax base, rates, fees, collect revenues, and access financial markets (Resnick, 2021, p. 142). The 1991 Constitution and the EOB provided first level fiscal decentralization in the form of devolution, to increase financial efficiencies. "Fiscal decentralization in Colombia has been driven by a belief that subnational governments are better positioned to deliver effective services, and therefore should receive commensurate resources" (Fedelino, 2010, p. 50). Financial autonomy at the district level, allows the District Council to establish taxes, eliminate taxes, contributions, surcharges, make exemptions, and create systems that guarantee the effective collection of taxes and other charges (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.3). The collection of property taxes including housing and vehicle ownership are two examples of district level taxes. Bogotá is mostly finally independent as it only receives 10 percent of its budget from national transfers (Castro, 2011, p. 264).

4.2.1.1. Administrative Decentralization in Bogotá

Administrative decentralization is demonstrated when local governments have clarity and predictability of the funds received, as well as no restrictions in the administration of the funds (Resnick, 2021, p. 142). The mayor of the city and the District Council share administrative powers delegated from the national government. The national government prepares annual budgets with specific allocation for the city of Bogotá and the mayor ensures the collection and administration of revenues and treasury flows and decree their investment (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 14). The District Council creates the investment plan, issues annually the budget, authorizes the mayor to make contracts, and the indebtedness quota of the district and the centralized entities (COL Const. art. 313 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12). However, Bogotá is not completely administrative autonomous as the Constitution also establishes that municipalities, and Bogotá, as Capital District, must adopt the *Plan General de Desarrollo Económico (*General Plan for Economic Development)*, Plan Social y de Obras Públicas* (Social Development and Public Works Plan), which is part of the *Plan General de Desarrollo* (General Development Plan) and contains the multiannual budgets for the programs and the financial resources required to execute them (COL Const. art. 313 n.2 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.2). In the first level of administrative decentralization, a deconcentration and devolution is found. The alignment to national development plans, provide unity in the nation in terms of the direction that the president in office wants to provide.

4.2.2. Second Level of Decentralization

The second level of decentralization in Bogotá refers to the transfer of political, fiscal and administrative powers from the Capital District to the twenty localities in Bogotá. Each locality has its own local mayor, a board of local administrators (JAL) with its own Ediles, and multiple boards of community action (JACs). This second level of decentralization is what makes Bogotá's urban governance so complex to understand and difficult to frame as a centralized or decentralized system. Some have called Bogotá a puzzle within a puzzle (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 21), as from the time that decentralization was introduced, critics would call Bogotá the most successful model of decentralization, but for others it was a process that never begun (Jiménez Benítez 2001; Moreno Ospina 1997 as cited in Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 21). For Muñoz et al. decentralization in Bogotá is a process, as only administrative functions have been delegated to the localities, and decentralization per se, necessitates also the transfer of financial resources, and responsibility (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 613). Yet, the best explanation found on the type of second-level decentralization was provided by Jolly and Gisbone (2020), as they argue that the national assembly of 1991 paved the way to a hybrid decentralization, deconcentration, and delegation in Bogotá (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 2) From the interviews conducted for this research and the literature on Bogotá's decentralization, I believe that Bogotá's second level of decentralization continues to be a puzzle, that perhaps it's still a process in progress in the minds of civilians, while the normative has established strictly a deconcentration and delegation model of governance.

While Bogotá's first level of decentralization from national to district, can almost generally be qualified as devolution, the second level of decentralization is normatively a type of deconcentration, and delegation as defined by Rondinelli. "Deconcentration is the handing over of some amount of administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within central government ministries and agencies." (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 18); and "delegation transfers managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations that are outside the

regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government." (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 19).

4.2.2.1. Political Decentralization in Bogotá

The second level political decentralization is a hybrid between devolution, and deconcentration. Devolution exists, as Ediles are elected by secret ballot in each of the 20 localities of the city. However, the figure of the local mayors is proper of deconcentration, as they are purely an administrative figure, execute ordinances from the Capital District, and rather than being accountable to their constituencies, they report to the District Government Secretariat, an agency of the Capital district. This hybrid political decentralization

4.2.2.1. Fiscal Decentralization in Bogotá

Fiscal decentralization also involves a redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government in the conduct of fiscal policy (Fedelino, 2010, p. 3). Redefinition of the fiscal roles and responsibilities has not been accomplished at the second level of decentralization. Articles 87 to 95 of the EOB established the norms for the Local Development Funds (FDL), yet in 2018, a sentence was issued that nullified articles 87, 88, 90, 92, and 94 of the EOB, as it declared that these articles were unconstitutional. These five articles had originally given more fiscal autonomy to the localities. Article 87 read:

> *"En cada una de las localidades habrá un fondo de desarrollo con personería jurídica y patrimonio propio. Con cargo a los recursos del fondo se financiarán la prestación de los servicios y la construcción de las obras de competencia de las juntas administradoras. La denominación de los fondos se acompañará del nombre de la respectiva localidad* (In each of the localities there will be a development fund with legal status and its own assets. The provision of services and the construction of works under the jurisdiction of the administrative boards will be financed from the resources of the fund. The name of the funds will be accompanied by the name of the respective locality)" (EOB, 1993, Article 87, declared null).

The other articles nullified, provided further clarification on what it is meant by its own assets (art. 88), efficiencies of the fund (art.90), legal representation (art. 92), and ability to contract using the local funds (art. 94). Therefore, although the original plan for the localities was to have more financial independence, over time, the faculties rendered have been taken away, making the second level of fiscal decentralization a form of deconcentration and delegation.

Fiscal power has not been fully devolved from the capital district to the localities. The local mayor's office has no authority over the provision of urban services in their locality as these are the competence of the secretariats (PRESJAC#1) by delegated power. "Localities have low available resources and do not have the power to generate and reinvest resources through the implementation of taxes, a power that only depends on the central level" (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 623). The localities' income depends largely on the transfers made by the district administration, and these incomes are linked to the Local and District Development Plan (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 614). The only autonomy the local mayor has is to spend or not the budget allocated to his locality, with some minor changes. Local mayors without much managerial experience can delay projects and under expend, reducing their budgets for the next administration (PRESJAC#1). The JAL in

their localities ensure that the local mayor follows the guidelines of the district mayor, by reviewing and approving the annual budget allocated to the locality. In their review, Ediles can shift, if needed, the amounts allocated in the budget lines, but they cannot add a single line to the budget, as they must follow the directions of what was indicated in the Development Plan (EDILJAL#1). Once the budget is approved, the Ediles oversee that the projects, and the contracts are both in line with the budget, and the contracting requirements by law. Both local mayors and Ediles are limited in management and planning of finances in their localities. "Localities do not have the autonomy to carry out investment projects or obtain their own resources, due to the guidelines of the Mayor's Office of the city" (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 611). The fact that the district mayor gives some of his functions to the local mayors, without giving financial autonomy is proper of deconcentration (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 8).

4.2.2.1. Administrative Decentralization in Bogotá

The second level of administrative decentralization is a form of delegation and deconcentration. The district mayor delegates some its powers to the secretariats and heads of administrative departments (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 15). From the administrative point of view, these secretariats (centralized) and Attached and Associated (decentralized) entities are strong and are carrying out functions previously corresponding to the central government, such as health, education, and domestic public services; with the participation from both the private sector and the Capital District (Castro, 2011, p. 265). The administration of resources in the city follows a local centralization pattern and this seems to be working to certain extend in Bogotá. A "centralized government is good because it allows channelling management, resources, and better control of procedures for transparency" (EDILJAL#1). The district mayor, with the help of the secretariats and the District Council centralize planning, resources and decision making to increase efficiencies (PRESJAC#4). The provision of Natural gas, water, sewage, garbage and recycling, electricity, in Bogotá is completely centralized and provided by semi-public companies (EDILJAL#3 & PRESJAC#1).

Authority and responsibility for specific administrative functions from the capital district to the localities is present in a form of deconcentration; as powers remain within the capital district (Rondinelli et al., 1984, p. 23). Local mayors only provide administrative support to the plan of the secretariats (PRESJAC#1), manage municipal expenditures in accordance with what is approved by the District Council (COL Const. art. 315 n.9 & EDILJAL#1), oversee adequate provision of public services (EDILJAL#3), and are involved in some contracting (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 630). The approach to budget planning is also centralized, although there is a small percentage (10% of the total budget) allocated to the 20 localities for the participatory budget (PRESJAC#3). The local mayor's office ought to coordinate institutions and maintain their locality in good order, keeping records of use of land for example, and other administrative affairs (EDILJAL#4). The JAL, an important administrative figure in the localities, was institutionalized to ensure the local mayor's office does not "steal" the funds allocated for development projects in the locality. The JAL also oversees all the government entities that work in their locality, such as the Secretariats of Health, Infrastructure, Recreation, etc. (EDILJAL#1, 2 & 3). When the Ediles find irregularities, they can raise their concerns to higher district levels of control such as the Personería and Contraloría (EDILJAL#2). There is a form of consultation that occurs from the secretariats to the localities for the proposal and execution of projects. Secretariats are encouraged to engage with local mayors to best carry out specific activities in each locality, but without

delegation of competencies to local mayors (DEPT#1, personal communication, July 10, 2021 & DEPT#3). Secretariats benefit from working with the local mayors as they form alliances for specific projects of mutual interest. However, sometimes these projects end up being funded with the participatory budget (DEPT#2 & 3). This practice is critiqued, as secretariats asking back for funds from participatory budgets pushes the system back to centralization, reducing citizen's already delimited autonomy.

Studies on the governing structure of the localities have revealed that they have the institutional ability to carry out the projects proposed in the Local Development Plans (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 630). The local mayor office and the JALs in each locality have the administrative capacity, the financial performance, the human resources, and technical abilities and as territorial entities can carry out programs, projects, and plans in their localities (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 617). The constitutional arrangements have not fully delegated decentralization at the second level of government in Bogotá, creating ambiguities and complexities in the system. To properly understand the complexity of the of the introduction of the second level of decentralization, it's important to briefly take a step back into the historical development of the current model of governance.

4.2.3. Historical Trajectory of the Organic Statute of Bogotá (EOB)

In 1954 the municipalities of Usaquén, Suba, Engativá, Fontibón, Bosa, and Usme were added to Bogotá "by presidential decree as a response to the rapid demographic and urban growth the city was experiencing, and the inability of neighbouring municipalities to provide adequate utilities and essential services" (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203). With Decree 3640 of 1954, "the city was administratively divided into zones, with a deconcentration scheme, in which each zone ha[d] a minor mayor, with the functions of police inspector, and to fulfill the task of being subordinates and representatives of the mayor in their respective territories" (Botero y Suárez, 2010, as cited in Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 2). Overtime, the figure of minor mayors in Bogotá started to acquire more autonomy. By 1982, there were already 19 localities, and by 1986 the figure of the JAL was introduced which gave more responsibility to the localities, but at the same time the JALs were left in a juridical limbo, as the Department (Cundinamarca) did not approve electoral voting of the Ediles of the JALs (Botero and Suarez, 2010, as cited in Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 2). Bogotá found itself in a context of political ambivalence at the time that the national government began to work on the 1991 Constitution.

The new Constitution consolidated the nation as a decentralized unitary state and gave Bogotá's leaders two years to draft the law that would rule Bogotá. This law is what is now called the *Estatuto Organico de Bogotá* (EOB) (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 4). During the constitutional assembly of 1991, heated debates developed between two opposing visions for the EOB. On one hand, the then Mayor Castro (1992-1994), considered the father of the EOB, had envisioned greater political and fiscal autonomy for the localities (Nieto, 2008, as cited in Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 3). This included their ability to be financially independent, to administer their own resources, and to have local mayors be elected by popular vote. The opposition led by Ramirez Ocampo believed that total autonomy to the localities would create disunity in the city of Bogotá, as having twenty local mayors from different political parties, governing Bogotá, would be utterly inefficient and could lead to political and economic chaos. The opposition wanted local mayors to be appointed by the district mayor (Nieto, 2008, as cited in Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 3). The two

opposing visions for Bogotá's internal governance, in essence were wrestling between a more participatory Bogotá versus a more united Bogotá.

To appease the debate between maintaining unity and fostering participation, the EOB created a hybrid governance system (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 3). This hybrid model is evidenced in the way that the local mayors are selected. As explained in section 4.1.5, the Ediles in each locality, who are themselves elected by their constituents ought to provide a trio of candidates for the district mayor to select one between them. Fiscally, article 89 of the EOB established at least 10% of the district budget for the localities to administer, and this would be assigned based on the needs of each locality, under the figure of the *Fondos de Desarrollo local* (Local Development Funds) (FDL) (Contraloría de Bogotá D.C, 2012, as cited in Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 616). Administratively, the creation of the localities aimed to decongest the central government of the city, giving faculties to the localities to provide public services and to better meet the economic and social needs of their territories (Muñoz et al., 2016, p. 616). Implementing this hybrid system was not only novel, but also complex, and subsequent mayors introduced norms to clarify and regulate areas of vacuum, giving or removing autonomy to the localities.

4.3. Critiques of Hybrid Decentralization in Bogotá

The expectation of decentralization is greater political, administrative, financial, and legislative autonomy at the localities level. While conducting the interviews for this thesis, there was a common frustration among participants that decentralization wasn't fully implemented. This interview excerpt demonstrates this:

> *"A real decentralization, at the political, fiscal, and administrative levels, is far from a reality at the local level. In fact, citizens in other municipalities and cities of the country have a better chance to get involved in the decision-making of their own territories, than those living in Bogotá" (PRESJAC#3).*

Decentralization is not a fix political tool that once it is introduced, it remains and maintains the original objectives. The institutions and norms are ever evolving and over time processes that were seen as necessary, and all-encompassing begin to fade in the lost memory or as a defeated initiative. In Bogotá, the introduction of decentralization as a process is now critiqued and we are left with some uncertainty on its future. "Results from the first 10 years of the decentralization process in Colombia were encouraging, even if imperfect. But in recent years the country seems to have begun to turn back in the wrong direction. The process is becoming unnatural, and therefore citizens are becoming less aware of its importance" (Castro, 2011, p. 265).

4.3.1. Political Disempowerment

One of the criticisms to the hybrid decentralization is that citizens do not have direct access to their constituents at the district level and the elected members in their localities do not have the ability to enact change. "Colombia's current situation can be defined as decentralization without people, without citizen participation. This is one of the most serious difficulties of the process." (Castro, 2011, p. 266). There is the little connection between the District Council and the JAL, as the Council mainly works with the centralized bodies and not the decentralized ones (EDILJAL#2). The Council is key player in communication between the citizens and the mayor, as the mayor's ability to do or not is determined by the Council (COMLEA#1). This incongruence intervenes in

the official's ability to understand the needs of the localities, and at the same time, it gives the impression to citizens that their voices are unheard when dealing with localities. Participants want that the District Council serves as a community voice - they are elected by the people - however, the current governance structure does not encourage a direct connection between the District Council and citizens.

Interviewees also noted that local mayors have minimal autonomy in the running of their territories (PRESJAC#4), as any initiative the local mayor proposes for his locality, must be approved by one of the central organisms. For example, if the project is related to improving culture, the locality needs to consult Culture Secretariat for approval, if it's related to mobility, then to the Mobility Secretariat (EDILJAL#4). Some interviewees commented that there have been some improvements, as now localities can manage contracting within their competencies (EDILJAL#4). However, financial decentralization at the localities level is minimal. As the budget is handed down to the localities, this delimits the types of projects localities can decide on their own, making very difficult for local authorities to be accountable to their constituencies. This is unfortunate as local mayors are closest to their constituency, much closer than the district mayor is, but local mayors are accountable to the mayor, and not to the citizens, creating difficulties in governing, and accountability to citizens.

Another limitation to the urban governance system in Bogotá, is the centralization of public services. A centralized government makes difficult the provision of public services (PRESJAC#1). The secretariats work at the city-wide-level for provision of services and larger infrastructure projects, often not attending to specific local needs, except in situations where there is a strong political power. This occurs when the political party in the central administration coincides with the local political power of the Ediles (PRESJAC#1, EDILJAL#1). For example, one locality has had a project planned more than 30 years to improve the roads to increase the development of the locality, but nothing has advanced due to the lack of political will (PRESJAC#1). Often the district mayor's office makes decisions without consulting local authorities. In one locality "gangs took over public spaces, and the city gave them money to reduce the violence during soccer games, but these gangs pick up the violence again until the city pays them to behave. All this is done without consulting the local mayor" (PRESJAC#1). Some of the individuals interviewed seemed to think that decentralization of public services would allow localities to focus on the priorities of their territories in a more effective manner.

Some question the current hybrid model, as the goal would be that government structures be conducive to the "dreams" of Bogotáns (EDILJAL#2). Ediles feel that when working with higher levels of governance, such as the secretariats, they often feel ignored as they do not really have a stake in what happens in their Localities. Secretariats are more inclined to talk and arrange things with members of the District Council (EDILJAL#2). There is no autonomy in decision-making at the JAL, as everything they want to do in their locality, needs to be consulted. Even when drafting local accords, the Government Secretariat, and the local mayor ought to approve them (EDILJAL#4). Ediles inability to enact meaningful change, leaves with the uncomfortable answer to their constituents: "Sorry, the law doesn't permit me to go any further" (EDILJAL#4).
However, communities have higher expectations of what their local mayors are doing for them. According to one of the community leaders interviewed, local mayors are the bridge between the district mayor and the Public Service Entities, be water, electricity, or gas. They have the obligation

to advocate for the good of the community. “Local mayors are appointed to work for their locality, for their community, to attend to the inhabitants of the area, to their requests and complaints” (COMLEA#1). Yet, even when local mayors have the best intentions to help their communities, they themselves feel frustrated due to their inability to do more, as they are handed down the plans from above, if the community doesn’t agree to these plans, or they see other priorities, there is very little the local mayor can do to change these plans (PRESJAC#1). The only autonomy the local mayor has is to spend or not the funds allocated to his locality, with some minor changes. This type of centralized approach to local mayors reduces the accountability of the local mayor towards the citizens in the locality. The local mayor’s job security depends on their performance as evaluated by the district mayor and not the community. Some think that it would greatly improve local mayor’s accountability if they were elected by the people (EDILJAL#2).

Individuals interviewed also noted that the JAL could be more effective if it was strengthened and improved (EDILJAL#2). If Ediles had more of a say in the definition of the budget, in the formulation of the plans of development, and the social and political life of the localities. However, the current laws that regulate this mechanism create obstacles for these changes, as everything that arrives to them is already defined and structured at the central level, which weakens the social and political influence of the JAL (EDILJAL#2). Yet, it is the Ediles who know the territory, the needs of the locality, and the city development plan, so their input could be more effective if they were able to propose or be involved in the decision-making, but all they can do, is to enforce accountability of what has been proposed at the central level (EDILJAL#1).

4.3.2. Over-Bureaucratization and Inefficient Use of Resources

The cost of decentralization is huge as well. Large cities with decentralized governments can fall into the trap of over-bureaucratization. Twenty localities might not be as many as other local authorities as in other megacities, but that is still twenty local mayors, and support staff for each locality, increasing the cost of administering urban governments. Currently, a new form or organizing the territory is being proposed, which will impact new decision making at administrative and financial levels, and it is different from the current territorial organization into localities or the UPZ (EDILJAL#2). During my stay in Colombia, I was invited to a small event for the inauguration of community latrines for dogs, in one of the localities. There were many more civil servants from multiple secretariats than community members. This was easy to spot, as civil servants wore official city of Bogotá’s merchandise and lanyards, that distinguished them from civilians. One is left to question if such initiatives are imposed on civilians, explaining the lack of participation, and the overspending of high salaried staff in a locality where hunger, and housing needs were evident.

According to individuals interviewed, secretariats tend to work in silos. District entities carry out central mandates, and due to the lack of articulation between secretariats, they end up promoting similar projects in the localities. “Secretariats have similar objectives, but they work in silos, so there is repetition of activities, wasting resources and exhausting communities” (PRESJAC#1). Some efforts have been made to counteract this challenge, for example, in 2017 an inter-institutionalized alliance was made between Integration Secretariat and the District Institute for Risk Management and Climate Change to assist homeless that sleep in water canals, sharing the costs of the project and best meet the needs of the community (DEPT#2).

Bottom-up mechanisms of decision making, like the JAC, are not well remunerated, weakening its effectiveness. If elected members are capable, then they lack time, as these positions are on a volunteer basis (COMLEA#1). Often, JAC members must contribute from their own pockets to be able to do their job right, such attending different meetings organized by the government entities (COMLEA#2). The poorest neighborhoods require more state support to maintain the JAC's properly working, as in the wealthy communities JAC members can fundraise their salaries and are supported by the neighborhood (COMLEA#2). There are some JACs that are more effective than others, and this greatly depended on the acceptance of this mechanisms at the community level. In some neighbourhoods, the JAC matters a lot, and the members receive a lot of support to voice community needs to their local mayor. Other JACs are very inactive, and do absolutely nothing for their neighborhood, and rather use the JAC for political gains and/or personal benefit (ORG#1). The solution to ensuring this mechanism is not abused by corruption, is that the state strengthens these institutions (ORG#1). However, lack of resources and corruption at other levels end up controlling those JAC's where the communities are not very involved, often out of ignorance or dissatisfaction with the historical failure of some of these institutions.

4.3.3. An Inconsequent and Incomplete Law

The difficulties of governing a megacity lie in the complexities of the process of governance. Since the 1991 heated debates of the constitutional assembly, Bogotá's legal framework has been 'incomplete' and 'mistaken'. Academics have considered that "the EOB is incomplete in its design or that its application is not consequential with what the norm has established" (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 3) The historical giving and taking away of fiscal responsibilities to the localities have created a confusion in the type of structure the localities have. The decentralization model established after the 1991 Constitution, aimed at giving the localities sufficient autonomy to the authorities to design development strategies in their localities, however in practice, the different administrations in the city have taken measures that nuanced the original idea of the decentralization model (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 6). The law deconcentrates some of the responsibilities of the central administration to the localities, but without transferring the decisional power, that is without decentralization (Bromberg & Medellín, 2001, p. 93). The rationale for taking away some of the powers from the localities, was to avoid and control corruption and the mismanagement of resources. Therefore, it was decided to remove local mayors as legal representatives of the Local Development Funds, and this responsibility was centralized back to the district mayor (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 5). Despite the hopes for a decentralization at the localities level, most of the functions are delegated to the district entities, and the localities do not have any specific functions that allow them management of affairs in their own territory (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 12-13). This instability leaves Bogotá in a constant effort to balance between the political reality and the administrative reality and its fight for redistribution of power (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 10).

4.4. Evaluation of Hybrid Decentralization in Bogotá

4.4.1. Localities are Not Territorial Entities

In the case of Bogotá, "localities are not territorial entities, but decentralized units" (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 9). Duque Cante argues that the heated debate of decentralization in the city is an issue of misinterpretation of the nature of the localities. He argues that it is incorrect to view the localities as a synonym of territorial decentralization, rather than an administrative phenomenon such as deconcentration and delegation (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 3). Seeing the

localities as territorial entities leads to an incorrect demand for a decentralization model that allows their development as territories, yet territorial decentralization is not a viable phenomenon in the city, at least, in the way that it has been designed by state law (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 3). In fact, the localities are *unidades administrativas desconcentradas territorialmente* (territorially deconcentrated administrative unites). This means that they lack juridical personality, don't have their own financial resources, and their functions are framed inside the entity that they belong to, that is the Capital District (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 11). Duque argues that it is impossible to conceive the localities in Bogotá as territorially autonomous, as they vary in size, some localities are as big as medium size cities in Colombia, and have important characterizations such as residential, commercial, industrial, too different that impedes them to have complete autonomy over their territories (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 6)

Duque also distinguishes between territorial decentralization and functional decentralization, both with juridical personality but of different type (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 10). Bogotá's existence is not subjected to smaller territorial entities, therefore is incoherent to speak about territorial decentralization within the city of Bogotá. Functional decentralization is more plausible, as entities under this juridical personality, have an end and oversee administrative functions. These are created to guarantee meeting guidelines set out in the Constitution for the different levels of government (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 10 - 11). The purpose of introducing localities in the Capital District was to increase participation of the communities in decision making, execution of projects, and oversight. These objectives are like the introduction of territorial decentralization, and this might be source of the confusion of thinking of localities as territorial entities (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 11). The goal of decentralization is to strengthen democratic participation, delegation of functions from the district mayor to the local mayor and the strengthening of the technical, administrative, and fiscal capabilities of the localities with the aim at improving the provision of public services. According to Duque, none of these objectives aim at territorial decentralization, nor is territorial decentralization necessary to achieve them (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 12)

4.4.2. Economic Efficiencies vs Political Participation

Gibsone explains that that the rationale for the hybrid system, stems from two valid propositions, an economic perspective that aims at the efficient use of resources, and a political perspective which wants to give more autonomy to communities and voice to the people, and the EOB was focused more on the perspective of efficiency versus a real exercise of local power (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 6). Since the creation of the EOB, there have been 34 motions to reform it, 18 of them to increase decentralization, and only 2 of them made it to the first round of debate in the national congress (Jolly & Gibsone, 2020, p.10). The result of trying to marry economic effectiveness with participative democracy has led to a system, that is decentralized, in some respects, while in others power is deconcentrated and delegated.

4.4.3. Proposals to Decentralization in Bogotá

It is evident that the second level of decentralization in Bogotá continues to present a challenge in the normative and in practice. Proposals to improve the governance system vary and are sometimes contradictory. Bogotá should be understood as sum of many cities, as some localities are larger than other national cities (PRESJAC#3), and for some re-thinking the division of the city could help improve the administrative organization of the city, such as dividing the city in 4 big localities or in 70 with a maximum of 100,000 inhabitants (Secretaría Distrital de Gobierno, 2011, as cited

in Duque Cante, 2015, p. 5). Another proposal is of articulating Bogotá with nearby municipalities and revert the localities in the peripheries back to adjacent municipalities, while maintaining clear coordination between the capital district and these municipalities (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 31).

Others think that maintaining the current system, could work, if there is an increase of articulation and citizen's participation. "If the government intends to continue with the current mixed system, it is important that it is articulated**,** and that the different organism coordinate to prevent community exhaustion and overspending of resources" (ORG#1). There needs to be a space for dialogue between the district and the localities that strengthen the voice of the people (Jolly & Gisbone, 2020, p. 2). This is seen as a more practical approach, to continue the path already forged, to put into action the norm already established, by assigning clear and distinct functions to the localities, different from the district competences, strengthening their administrative and political dimensions (Duque Cante, 2015, p. 31).

On the opposite spectrum, the expectation is to continue moving towards greater decentralization. In 2021 there were intentions to pass a study to reform the EOB to give Bogotáns greater decision-making powers (PRESJAC#3). There is a heavy debate about the type of democracy we have, as it implies mayor autonomy to the territories, to the communities, to the decisions about budgets (EDILJAL#2, PRESJAC#4). If there was more decentralization, Bogotá would be better off, increasing efficiencies when providing services to the citizens (EDILJAL#4). The localities should have more autonomy, capacity of decision-making in political, administrative, financial, cultural, commercial, industrial matters (PRESJAC#3). The localities have their own vocation. The Candelaria is the historical center of the city, national and international tourists love visiting this locality and Monserrat. Other localities also offer opportunities to the city, but Bogotáns would greatly benefit from having access to necessary services in their own localities to reduce the need of transport from one extreme of the city to another. Often "legal or specific public services are only available in the center of the city. This could be better organized so that administrative procedures could be done in all localities" (PRESJAC#3).

Greater decentralization is seen as a move towards greater autonomy in administrative, and financial powers to the localities. However, the recurrent demand of localities for more autonomy, could difficult articulation between local mayors and the district mayor. Efficient delivery of projects could be impacted if elected mayors were from distinct political parties from the district mayor. What is certain, is that the future of decentralization in Bogotá is uncertain, complex and lacks efficiency. There is no clear path of a viable solution, confirming that governance in megacities is very complex.

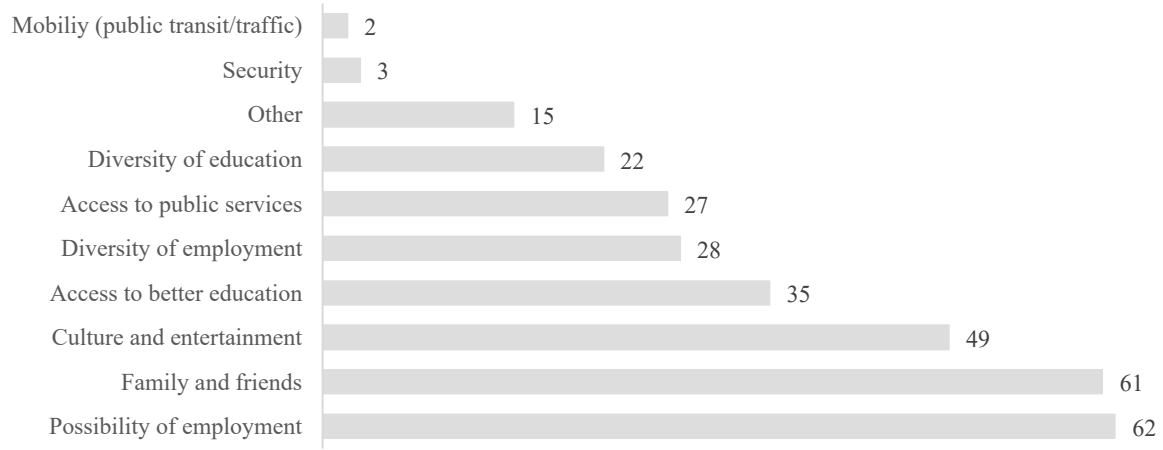
Chapter 5: Evaluation of Bogotá a Megacity in the Making

Despite the challenging governance issues megacities need to deal with, they are not entirely a negative urban model for cities in development. Megacities should be studied within their own context to be able to thrive. This chapter presents the survey and interview results on what Bogotáns want, proposals for more effective governance, and discussions. Bogotáns want the advantages of megacities, such as the possibility of employment, but also, they want a city without massive traffic and less insecurity. The size of the city matters to Bogotáns as most individuals surveyed did not selected a city the size of Bogotá, if they had all they like about Bogotá in smaller cities. The process of decentralization is evergreen and requires frequent fine tuning to reap the benefits it promises and reduce the potential inconsistencies. Leadership, vision, and civic culture are aspects of urban governance rarely studied and harming governance and urban development. The final discussions invite to rethink megacities and they way we conceive democracy, as potential avenues of making cities work in developing countries.

5.1. What Bogotá's Citizens Really Want

The survey Q.9 asked, "*What do you like the most about living in Bogotá?*" and individuals were able to select multiple answers out of nine options, including "*other*" for them to provide as many reasons as possible about what they like about living in Bogotá. The selection of options for this question was based on what the literature review demonstrated as the things that individuals, in general, find most valuable about living in megacities, and those expected to be more common in Bogotá. As individuals were able to select multiple options, the number of entries in this category is higher than the number of respondents, for a total of 306 entries. Figure 5-1 shows that what most respondents value about Bogotá is the *possibility of employment*; *family and friends*; and

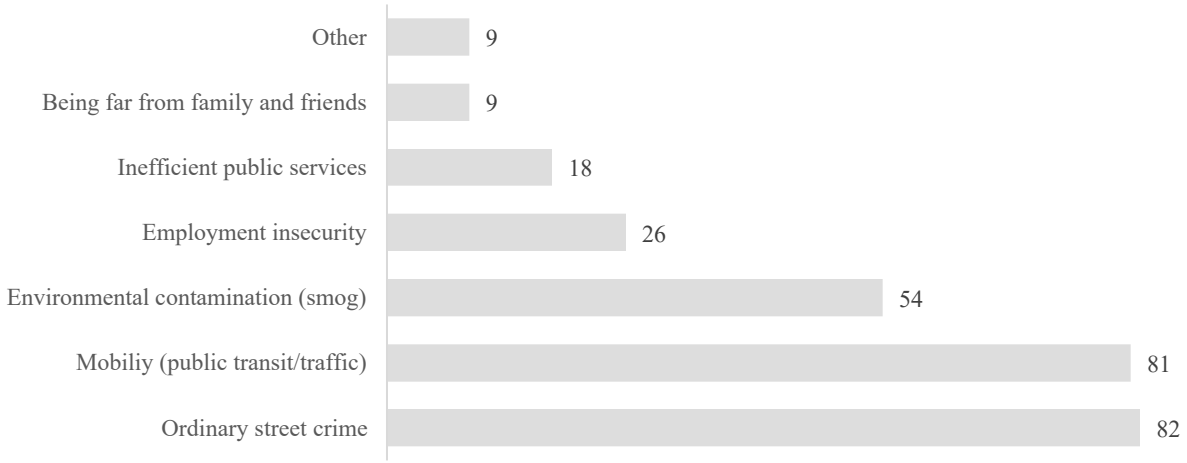
Figure 5-1: *Survey responses to what they like most about living in Bogotá*



culture and entertainment. *Access to better education* and *diversity of education* were picked as fourth and seventh most important. *Security* and *mobility* were hardly picked as a like but were top choices as a dislike. In the "*other*" category, individuals were given a choice to write what else they liked, and things like the *weather*, *being proud of their city*, *access to better health*, *access to parks*, and *better human quality* were provided as reasons why they like to live in Bogotá. One individual said he did not like anything about the city. In fact, many respondents only chose *family and friends* as they said they did not like anything else about living in Bogotá.

When asked about what they don't like about living in Bogotá, 78% and 77% of the respondents selected *ordinary street crime* and *mobility* as the things they dislike the most (see Figure 5-2). *Environmental contamination (smog)* was third, while *employment insecurity, inefficient public services* and *being far from their family and friends* were selected much less as a disklike. In *Other* dislikes, things such as *lack of civic education* was written by five individuals, while *Xenophobia*, *the government*, and *stress* were suggested once. Chapter 3 explored in more depth the dislikes of mobility and ordinary street crime. The following sections will try to make sense of the things that Bogotáns like the most – employment and their ideal size of a city.

Figure 5-2: *Survey responses to what they dislike most about living in Bogotá*



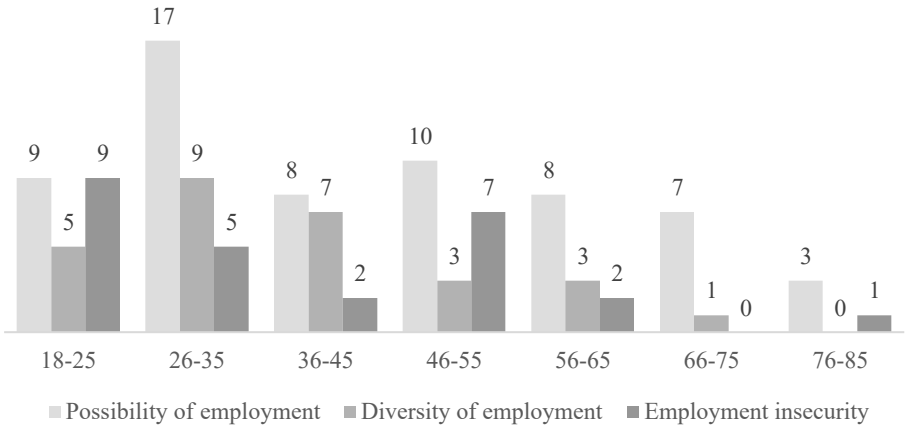
5.1.1. Employment

What citizens like the most about living in Bogotá is the possibility of employment. The economic behaviour of Bogotá is intimately related with the national economy and in some instances (1990-2000, 2005 and 2012) Bogotá's economy outperformed the GDP's growth of the nation (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 207). The path towards economic growth started with the new Colombian Constitution of 1991 which gave the city of Bogotá more autonomy to "organize its finances and collect local taxes" (Leite et al., 2020, p. 69). Bogotá's economic growth spurred rapid urban growth. Q.9 and 10 of the survey asked individuals what they liked or disliked the most about living in Bogotá. *Possibility of employment* was selected the most, with 62 respondents choosing it as their first option. *Diversity of employment* was chosen as highest fifth like, while *employment insecurity* was only chosen by 26 respondents as a dislike about living in Bogotá. There were little differences in the answers disaggregated by sex although more males selected employment related choices than females. For *possibility of employment*, thirty-three males versus twenty-nine females selected it as an option. Sixteen of the males surveyed choose *diversity of employment* versus twelve females. For *employment insecurity*, fifteen males selected more often than females with 11 instances.

The data demonstrated differences in responses disaggregated by *age range*. Figure 5-3 shows how every age range respondent selected *possibility of employment* as a like of living in Bogotá, with the highest number being those in the age range between 26 to 35 years old. This age group consistently responded to *diversity of employment* and *employment insecurity*, just as the age groups of 36-45 and 56-65 years old. The consistency referred to is that *possibility of employment*

was selected more times than *employment insecurity* and *diversity of employment* was selected often but not as often as having a job. The age group of 18-25 presented inconsistencies as *possibility of employment and employment insecurity* were selected equally as often, while diversity of employment was less times selected in this age group.

Figure 5-3: *Survey responses answers to employment likes and dislikes*



A possible explanation of the differing answers within this age group, is that during the year that the survey took place, in all of Colombia, but particularly in Bogotá, youth went to the streets to protest (Vega, 2021). During the 2021 pandemic, the restrictions were so severe, that the poorest were dying more out of hunger than from the virus, and some argue that although the government tried to propose social and economic responses to the crisis, the needs were greater than the resources, and the "budget fell short to provide basic needs especially during crisis" (EDILJAL#3). When it came to *diversity of employment,* almost every age range, except for those 76 to 85 years old selected it a reason of why they live in Bogotá, with the highest group being those between 26-35 years old, and the second highest those in between 36 and 45 years old. It makes sense to me, that between the ages of 26-45 individuals are not just looking for employment, but for employment opportunities that fit their development and/or income goals.

Figure 5-4: *Survey responses on employment segregated by time lived in Bogotá*

As Section 3.1. showed, Bogotá's growth has been characterized by waves of migrants in different periods of time, affected by the internal/external political context, and the economic growth Bogotá experienced. Figure 5-4 shows the perception of economic opportunities disaggregated by the number of years spent living in Bogotá and the choices of the respondents on *possibility of employment, diversity of employment* and *employment security.* This analysis aims at presenting the experiences of the different migration groups. "Bogotá is the capital and the center where every other Colombian citizen and foreigners arrives to look for opportunities, for work" (DEPT#3). Participants living in Bogotá 11 to more than 30 years but not being from Bogotá, seem to be more optimistic about employment opportunities versus insecurity of employment. Individuals who have been living in Bogotá less than 10 years, seem to be optimistic and care less about *diversity of employment*. Those living in Bogotá all their life, selected *employment insecurity* relatively more times than the migration groups. A comment from one of the interviewees might shed light to this difference in the results: "The economy is key for national development. Twenty years ago, Bogotá had strong industries, but today it has shrunken. People from all over the country, and [international] migrants relocated to Bogotá looking for economic opportunities, however, today, the industries that used to employ 800 to 1000 employees only employ 200 or 300, this creates less opportunities for work, of work well paid, of having the good quality of life that many desire" (EDILJAL#1). Bogotá mainly attracts individuals to the city because of the economic possibilities, corroborating the literature that support megacities as engines of economic growth.

5.1.2. Ideal Size of City for Bogotáns

It was important for this research to understand individuals' choices with regards to the size of the city. Do people like big cities or do they like the benefits of living in big cities? Therefore, survey participants were asked in Q.18: *"If you had all the services you need (health, school, work, social life) in a much smaller city with everything you need within 15 min travelling distance, would you rather live in a small city or town or would you prefer a large city?* To which they were given the option to pick the size of the city based on the breakdown of Table 5-1. The selection of answers provided examples of common cities for each size for participants to be able to visualize, with an example, what each of the size meant. The results from Q.18 are presented in Figure 5-5.

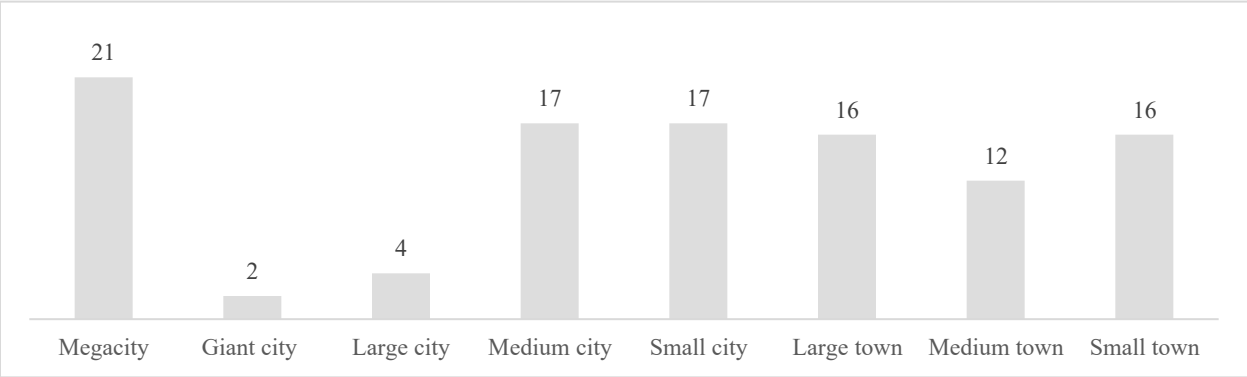
Table 5-1: *Type of city and number of inhabitants*

Type of City	**# Inhabitants**
Megacity	10 - 30 M
Giant city	7 - 9 M
Large city	3 - 7 M
Medium city	1 - 3 M
Small city	500K - 1 M
Large town	100K - 500K
Medium town	25K - 100K
Small town	10K - 25K

The highest single choice was megacity with 20% of the respondents selecting it as their preferred size of city. However, small city to small town was selected by 58% of respondents. What is most enlightening of these results, is that 80% did not chose a megacity. These results might be hinting that perhaps individuals in Bogotá do not like to live in a city as large as Bogotá, but they don't have many options, as Bogotá gives them the possibility of employment, a greater desired good

than the city of the city the y live in. The interviews also reflected these sentiments: “Bogotá is a very attractive city, there are many opportunities, a great cultural exposure, it’s the best place to be to mobilize the economy, there are education opportunities, all of this makes Bogotá a very attractive city” (EDILJAL#1); and at the same time: “people in the rural areas live very happily, there is a lot of peace, you can produce and consume, it is sustainable, you have your land, your house, a few animals, and exchange among neighbours. Why would all these happy farmers will want to live in Bogotá? Especially in some the poorest localities? This is not what they want, they don’t want to relocate in the city to live with needs” (PRESJAC#1).

Figure 5-5: *Survey responses to the question of the size of city they would like to live*



The survey answers presented on Figure 5-5, might be telling us that there is a type of lifestyle in smaller cities that individuals prefer, where perhaps they not only have the much-needed services, but where their quality of life improves. Urban development in developing countries should go beyond providing basic services but also arriving to a much higher quality of life. This means that the poor can have a choice of living in peaceful and quiet spaces with dignified work, and not feel forced to move to large cities to make ends meet. According to the survey results for Q.18. the ideal size of the city for 78% of respondents are cities of less than 3 million inhabitants.

5.2. Beyond Good Governance in Bogotá

The concept of good governance has been hijacked to comprise a set of specific regulations, with promises for economic development. “Emerging from a paradigm shift in international development and economic scholarship during the 1990s, ‘good governance’ is understood as a standard set of governance reforms focusing on the reduction of market distortion caused by political rent-seeking (Krueger, 1974; Acemoglu et al., 2004; Rodrik, 2004; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013, as cited in (Franz, 2019, p. 1). However, good governance here is understood more as it has been defined by Whittingham Munevar as “the capacity of a social and political system to create the minimum consensus required to organize and act based on a collective will.” (Whittingham Munevar, 2006, p. 6). This section provides context specific observations collected during this research that might aid at improving governance in Bogotá. Leadership, vision, and civic culture are identified as novel contributions to the subject of governance, yet these are often missing in the discourse on decentralization.

5.2.1. Leadership

Good governance necessitates good leadership. Yet this important aspect of governance is often less emphasised than other important development theories such as the role of formal institutions,

the rule of law, property rights, etc. (Montero & Chapple, 2023, p. 8). In Bogotá, the District Mayor, Counsellors, Local Mayors, and Ediles are in positions of leadership and their level of commitment, political affiliation and skills impact the effectiveness of the governance in the city.

5.2.1.1. Committed leadership

"Leadership roles should be like a vocation, to want to facilitate things for the common good" (PRESJAC#2). According to one of the organizations interviewed, the difference in outcomes is mainly due to the commitment of the mayor. Local mayors, although they do not have much of a decision-making role, they are key to the successful competition of projects, and at the same time, they can create havoc or simply utilize their position for their personal benefit. Some individuals interviewed noted that they don't feel connected with their leaders. "I have asked multiple times to meet, in different occasions, and I never find him [Local Mayor], he never shows up" (COMLEA#1). Community leaders find it difficult when the local mayor is not from their locality, as it seems that it lacks understanding of the needs of the community and/or sense of belonging which nurtures the desire to help their community (COMLEA#1 & 2). Yet, local mayors that are truly interested in their communities, can do a lot, even within the structural restrictions imposed by governance system (ORG#1). For example, during the pandemic, there were some localities such as Rafael Uribe-Uribe and San Cristobal in which the local mayors were able to identify the most vulnerable people and provide them with emergency subsidies effectively, while this was not the case in other localities (ORG#1). One of the community leaders interviewed thinks that the position of Edil should be extinguished as he doesn't believe they contribute much to the community. He affirms that the $7 M COP paid monthly to the 11 Ediles could be better spent in projects for the community. If there are good political intentions, Ediles, can speak about the needs of the community at the local mayor's debates, and able to provide answers to the needs (EDILJAL#1). Yet, it can also be a detriment to governance, when the leaders close their political intentions to only a few issues and disregard others, which might be of importance for the community (EDILJAL#1). Also, there might be the case that they receive the request but decide not to table it or do anything with it (EDILJAL#1). Local mayors and Ediles are as effective as they want to be, within their powers.

5.2.1.2. Depoliticized leadership

In some cases, elected mayors can depoliticise urban governance, this depends on the individual elected and his leadership style (Sweeting & Hambleton, 2020, p. 1083). For a short time, the 1991 Constitution gave the district mayor authority over the Council. Some mayors (Peñalosa and Mockus) took advantage of this loophole to remove the influence of political parties and made appointments based on the grounds of ability rather than political affiliation (Gilbert, 2015, p. 677), allowing them to develop competent administrations, raise taxes, and finance public services. Gilbert argues that Bogotá lost its shine, when in 2004 under mayor Garzon, and later with Moreno, there was a return to councillors and traditional politicians' practices to influence public appointments (Gilbert, 2015, p. 677).

How centralized or decentralized the urban government system is in Bogotá, is also something that changes according to who is in power. Progressivists politicians try to decentralize giving more participation to the community, and regressivists tend to centralize decision-making in projects and budgets. This fluctuation occurs due to loopholes in the norms (PRESJAC#1). The secretariats' approach is heavily influenced by the political beliefs of the mayor in office

(DEPT#1). For example, under the administration of Claudia Lopez, the push was to increase the articulation among the different centralized, decentralized, and local entities to work together to "stabilize the community" versus the silo-style of former administrations (DEPT#1). When the interviews took place, some participants felt there was a move towards centralization. "Just recently, Presidents of the JAC were gathered by the central administration asking if for the contracting of projects, they could do a macro agreement between all the localities with the IDRC Secretariat. What they want, is that all the decentralized funding be returned to central organisms for the execution of projects. This makes no sense, is as if they were saying, giving democracy to the people didn't really work, so let's go back" (PRESJAC#1). Taking away the local participatory budget and contracting is seen as regressive democracy.

How much the local government integrates other actors in the decision-making process depends on the district mayor in charge. It changes in each administration (PRESJAC#3). For example, under Petro's administration there were talks about water governance in which he united the public and private sectors to arrive to consensus to improve these services (PRESJAC#3). During the Peñalosa administration, inclusion of other sectors was abandoned in the name of effectiveness, yet he did attain multiple impressive projects (PRESJAC#3, ORG#1). Lopez's administration, vouched for more inclusivity of marginalized communities in the decision-making but with little success either in negotiations or in achieving results, partly due to the emergency to counteract the 2020 Covid pandemic (PRESJAC#3, ORG#1). How proactive the local mayor in place is, determines how articulation occurs and that the projects are for the community (ORG#1).

5.2.1.3. Skillful leadership

Individuals in positions of leadership also require technical skills and adequate education. "Those who are working in these positions need to be honest, have good ideas, be competent, and be able to carry out projects" (PRESJAC#4). It's all about skillful leadership. Leaders who have a vision and can project it to propose it for the community, is because they have clarity of what they want to attain while in government. Yet, this is not sufficient. Leaders need to carry out their proposals, otherwise the community is affected, not only because of the project wasn't completed, but because it affects their trust in political leadership (EDILJAL#1, COMLEA#2). For example, Petro's administration had tremendous opposition to his good but overly ambitious goals and combined with his difficulty appointing effective administration (Gilbert, 2015, p. 677), made him highly unsuccessful and unpopular mayor. Local mayors without much managerial experience can delay projects and under expend, reducing the localities' budgets for the next administration (PRESJAC#1). Local administrators often complain that they do not have the competencies to meet the requests and needs of their inhabitants (EDILJAL#1, & #2). Leaders with experience, tend to perform better as they have accompanied someone and understand how things work. Synergy with corporations is key, as experience has shown that poor emotional connection with the different corporations can create barriers to their governance (EDILJAL#1). One of the worst problematics is the lack of communication between the leader and the community. Individuals aspiring for government positions cannot only show up to the community during elections (COMLEA#2).

Good leaders also listen to the needs of the citizens. Mayors with good intentions, who have tried to find solutions, but lack understanding of the real cause of the problems, create more problems. Citizen's protest. Good leadership is about listening to all the different interests, to the

communities, to the job generating entrepreneurs, etc. (EDILJAL#1). To be able to perform well, those in leadership positions need formation. It often happens that Ediles, Senators, Consuls, are elected by popular vote, but they do not even know how to interpret the budgets they are to approve (EDILJAL#2). In some localities JAC members elected lack the knowledge and ability to fulfill their functions. "Some JAC members don't know how to use a computer, how to do the accounting, keep track of meetings, and some don't even know how to read" (COMLEA#1). The capacity to govern is determined by the level of education. Also, interviewees complained of the lack of accompaniment from the central government, as local governments feel they need better administrative, political, financial, public policy training. There is no formation for Ediles on their job, and this lack of educational investment from the district demonstrates the little importance these local institutions are given (EDILJAL#2). For good governance, what it is needed, is a good educational system, a technical methodology that evaluates the impact, works towards political credibility and good practices" (PRESJAC#1). This is particularly important for vulnerable localities. These communities often end up with local mayors not resident in the localities, as rarely a candidate from their own community meets the requirements to be selected as a local mayor.

The effectiveness of good governance is impacted by good leadership. Good leadership as defined and expected from those interviewed encompasses several qualities and skills. No matter how well thought out an urban governance system is, without consistent good leadership, the likelihood of effective governance decreases. This is no small statement in the case of Bogotá, as the challenge is how to ensure good leadership in a country where political corruption continues to be rampant? Individuals who seek positions of power for their personal benefit are unlikely to have good intentions to serve the community. Education is not only necessary for leaders but more so for civilians, as many of them, skeptical of politicians, willingly sell their vote for immediate recompense, and often do not realize that this behaviour is what continues the cycle of poor leadership. "Good leaders need a measure of autonomy to introduce less than popular initiatives" (Gilbert, 2015, p. 677). Good leadership necessitates education, and skill, and to be depoliticized.

5.2.2. Vision

The city's success derives from the vision of the mayors and its implementation. Bogotá's transformation in the early 2000s demonstrated the importance of planning, design, and good administration (Berney, 2010, p. 539). Unfortunately, Bogotá's success wasn't long-lasting, and this demonstrates the importance of focusing on needs, a long-term vision and a unified vision. Yet most important, is to have a vision, as a city without a vision, is a city without direction, left to the whims of whoever is in power.

5.2.2.1. Focus on Needs

Interviewees complained that the district, through the secretariats, who have the biggest budgets do not seem to focus on what citizens need. The biggest need of Bogotáns is employment, especially among the youth (ORG#1). Employment well remunerated will improve the quality of life. "If buses break down, I have the money to use a taxi or an UBER to where I want to go, or if I don't have health insurance, with good employment, I can just pay to see a doctor when I needed it" (ORG#1). Yet, funds in the city are allocated to less urgent issues. Some district entities, aware of the needs, try to create employment while fulfilling their tasks "For one of the projects - to build a park for dogs - we hired someone from the community to install the fence, it wasn't long term, but it did help that individual economically for a few months" (ORG#1). Another pressing need

of the city is the shortage of housing forcing individuals to live at the outskirts of the city. The most vulnerable, and emerging business class conformed of young professionals with desires to buy property cannot afford it unless its outside the city (EDILJAL#1). “We should have projects that provide dignified housing to those in stratum 1 and 2, but also to all the other stratum 3, 4, 5, and 6, to everyone in the city” (EDILJAL#3).

Even during the most successful recent years of Bogotá, the vision of the city was in the hands of the district mayor. The positive transformation Bogotá experienced from 1995 to 2003 was under the leadership of Mockus and Peñalosa. The vision of these mayors focused on the public space, Peñalosa worked on creating and expanding the physical territory (building parks, and the BRT network), while Mockus focused on citizen’s use and behaviour in the public space (Berney, 2010, p. 541). A city with a vision based on needs has been in the agenda of some mayors, but usually the projects are short-term band-aid solutions at best and worst, a waste of much needed resources.

5.2.2.2. Long-term Vision

A city with a short-term vision, is a city that is constantly changing “priorities” causing exhaustion of resources and of communities. Bogotá was developed through the vision and initiative of their leaders, which have brought some improvements but few with lasting impacts to the city. The past administrators were elected based on specific proposals. Lucho’s administration promoted community dinners, Petro, public policies to bring health to the homes, the neighborhoods, to schools; Peñalosa was about public spaces and parks; and Lopez planned to continue some of the work of Peñalosa but had to deal with the pandemic (EDILJAL#2). There is lack of continuity between the different administrations and each one is seen as the savior, not considering the good initiatives of former administrations, but rather enforcing their own vision of the city (EDILJAL#2). Citizens become discouraged due to the lack of continuity. As a change in leadership causes abrupt changes, this means abrupt changes in the percentage allocated to the local mayors. During the mayorship of Enrique Peñalosa, the claim was that he removed the budgets of the localities to pursue his infrastructure projects (COMLEA#2).

For lasting changes, “leaders rely on their successors to carry through long-term investment projects” (Gilbert, 2015, p. 677). Lack of continuity creates confusion and wastes resources, as investments do not last long term. “Some projects like the metro of Bogotá are so big, that it has been impossible to complete in just one administration. This creates distrust in civilians, as they feel that each 4 years there are abysmal changes in the way that the city is governed and there is no continuity” (EDILJAL#2). Before elections, mayors commit to building the metro, but once in office they realize how complex and expensive it is, so the solution as of now, because the metro has been recognized as long over rated need, it is no longer politicized, but the approach the mayors are undertaking, is to get elected by saying they will complete it, but once elected, they let the project advance as much as possible, and hand it over to the next administration (EDILJAL#1). This is a very interesting phenomenon, as one could say that democracy as it is now, could potentially engage in large projects, but these need to be assented by the community, and accountability must be kept over each administration to move it forward.

5.2.2.3. Unified Vision

Bogotá needs to debate on what model of city it wants to be, what type of government it wants. It is a complex city, with many contradicting views of its own development. Those interviewed had

different opinions on what they thought Bogotá should be: We want a government "that allows us to improve the public administration systems and the institutional structures we have. Also at the citizen's level, the right to the city, to the territory and to nature" (EDILJAL#2). However, "cities are conceived nowadays for businesses and speculation and not for the common people" (EDILJAL#1, 2). "Hunger is still an issue that could be solved by revising the supply chain and move away from the traditional model of importing food and instead support famers adjacent to the city" (EDILJAL#2). "I think we need to start decentralizing the conglomerate of urban housing and exit more towards the rural areas" (EDILJAL#3). There is a vision that "the future of the country is in the countryside, in the past 70 years most of the population amalgamated in the major cities as there were no opportunities for economic growth in the rural areas. Today there are opportunities, and in a short period of time, we will see a return to the rural, and this should be supported" (EDILJAL#1). "Bogotá will need to find a something that attracts people to the city, maybe tourism. There are no industries, production, there is only empty warehouses transformed into apartment buildings. Maybe private service industries will maintain but not the manufacturing" (EDILJAL#1). The vision a city has of itself is what will help it build long term projects in an efficient way.

However, it is a challenge to have every citizen agreeing to what the city should be. No matter who's governing, citizen's always find some faults with the proposed vision of the city. Peñalosa's administration was successful improving roads, parks, schools, etc. Yet, most of what is heard after his administration, is the infamous bollards. "Peñalosa spent a ton of money, and put them [bollards] all over the city, and was heavily criticized" (COMLEA#2). Petro's administration was critiqued for giving too many subsidies to the people and not teaching how to fish, making individuals dependent on the state much like what is now happening in Venezuela (COMLEA#2). Would citizens complain less if they themselves were the ones that proposed the vision of the city, while government's role was executing this vision? Would it be more effective to coordinate long term projects if priorities didn't change with every new mayorship?

5.2.3. Civic Culture

5.2.3.1. Civic Culture in Need

The lack of *cultura ciudadana* or civic culture in Bogotá has a powerful negative effect in the quality of life of Bogotáns. A few decades ago, individual's respect for each other was very high in the city. The "way we treated each other was very dignified, people would never arrive late to a family or any other type of meeting. When you verbally committed to anything big or small, your word carried weight, and it was taken very seriously" (EDILJAL#4). However, things have dramatically changed, the principles of loyalty, tranquility, civility, are almost non-existent or thought of as idealistic concepts not real in our society (EDILJAL#4). The behaviour that permeates the city is that of individualism, and each one is always trying to take advantage of everything they can. The mentality is: if you don't do it, "someone else will", "everyone else is doing it", "you are dumb if you don't take advantage of the others" (EDILJAL#4). This behaviour creates a cycle of injustices committed from the smallest to the most powerful, creating constant tension in daily life. It is manifested in various ways. In the way people drive, which is quite stressful because no-one will give you the right of way, whether you are a car or a pedestrian. Everyone is forced to cut each other if you want to get anywhere. In the way that businesses are conducted, as individuals rent spaces to set-up shops exploiting the terrain, making money, and

leaving the space in a worse state from what they initially acquired it (PRESJAC#2). In how individuals treat each other, "we tend to bully each other and often in not healthy ways, they laugh at the way you are dressed, how you talk, walk, how you do things, so it is not uncommon to feel discriminated in the city (EDILJAL#4). There is a lack of personal responsibility for public spaces as is very common to find damaged public property. This generalized attitude towards the "other" and towards the "city", creates an environment of distrust and high levels of stress.

5.2.3.2. Changing Civic Culture

Antanas Mockus was the Mayor of Bogotá in 1999, and he was the first leader to identify the lack of civil culture as one of the biggest problems in the city. He introduced several original measures (PRESJAC#3) and were well received during his tenure. "The mayors' strategy was largely successful as Bogotá experienced a move from individualism to collective spirit, and citizens reported improvements in civility, friendliness and quality of life." (Berney, 2010, p. 539). Interviews conducted by Berney in 2010 mentioned people's perception of the changes, such as feeling safer, being able to enjoy being outside and going to parks, children can play safely outside (Berney, 2010, p. 552). Change in attitudes, helped individuals act more calmly, and rationally, there was a sense of co-responsibility (Mockus, 2004, p. 2, as cited in Berney, 2010, p. 552). This helped reduced homicides, traffic fatalities, violence against the police, Bogotá went from being "ugly Bogotá, to coquette Bogotá, to beautiful Bogotá" (Martin & Ceballos, 2004, p. 390 as cited in Berney, 2010, p. 552). The changes brought about in Bogotá from 1993 to 2004 gave a lot of hope to the civilians, and the city felt vibrant and renewed. Unfortunately, these changes were not long lasting, and today, civic culture is at its lowest, again.

5.2.3.3. Civic Culture in the Works

Lack of civic culture continues to be a grave matter in Bogotá. Without civil education, projects implemented for the development of the city will become a failure. The city has already experienced innovation, excitement 20 years ago with the building of the Transmilenio, however, nowadays there is robbery, insecurity, and corruption that even leads to deadly accidents (DEPT#1). It is impossible to have a police officer going after everyone just so that they follow the norms (PRESJAC#3). Bogotáns continue to be selfish and think of their own interests. Currently, there is desire for a metro in the city, but some think that if we don't work on educating civilians to take care of their own city, soon the metro could become another focal point for violence, abuse, and insecurity (DEPT#1). "The metro will bring some development to the city by increasing employment, but we will have other problems like we did with the Transmilenio. At first it was a novelty, it was beautiful, but today you try to use it, but one suffers every time you try. It will create neglect, robbery, insecurity, I believe they need to plan it very well, not just the technical aspect, but also the cultural one, to educate people to take care of the public spaces" (DEPT#3).

Civic culture is an aspect of governance very little explored, yet, Bogotá has demonstrated the positive impact cities can experience when prioritizing projects that transform negative behaviours into positive ones. There is hope for Bogotá, and as one interviewee stated: "In Colombia, we are more the good ones, we have excellent people, smart, with big hearts, but we are all also at fault because we allow, and sometimes even contribute to all the scoundrels. Yet, history has allowed us to see that we can be more than what we are, and this means changes in our destructive cultural patterns, as we can be very emotional, very violent. If we were able to control of all of this, we

could be a great nation, be of great example and even a global leader, we could do it" (PRESJAC#4).

5.3. Beyond Traditional Viewpoints

This section proposes new thinking around and beyond megacities. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provided evident issues in the management of megacities in developing countries such as the need for a holistic and contextual approach towards urban development, the need for a suitable governance model for megacities. I have chosen to center my discussions on two less talked about issues. First, the need to re-think megacities, as they continue to be primary cities for studies, and financial funding, while perhaps missing the opportunity to advance and progress if focusing on smaller and/or intermediary cities. Second, I propose what I have called, an introduction to radical democracy. A different approach to resolving the necessity for continuity in urban planning, as well as the need to move beyond participatory or electoral democracy, to one where citizens are truly decision makers and agents of the future of their living spaces.

5.3.1. Rethinking Megacities

Governing is challenging. Large cities require complex logistics, institutions, transparency, etc., more than smaller cities. Rapid migration in already large cities create an extra burden to the governance equation. The size is not the dealbreaker, but it is important, especially for a city like Bogotá, with high levels of corruption and systemic inefficiencies. Urban growth will continue to occur worldwide, and research demonstrates, that at least in Latin America, large cities growth is stabilizing, while intermediate cities are projected to grow in the coming decades (Dobbs et al. 2012, as cited in Montero & Chapple, 2018, p.3). If this is the case, it must be seen as an opportunity for re-thinking the role of megacities in developing countries. The continued support for decentralization as an urban governance solution (UN-Habitat, 2022), must be questioned. This research has demonstrated the complexity of decentralization in large cities, and it evidences a desire for a decentralization that if pushed to the limit, it really means reducing the size of cities. Why couldn't the national government focus on the growth, and prosperity of smaller cities so that there is less incentive for migrating and overpopulating the primary city? As the UN-Habitat 2022 Report states, "sustainable urban development is not possible without effective multilevel urban governance – including local governments, civil society and national governments" (UN-Habitat, 2022, p. xxvii). Focus on smaller cities necessitates logistics at different levels of government, and focusing on smaller cities versus megacities, will give more autonomy to more people in smaller jurisdictions.

What to do then with Bogotá, already a megacity? The advantages of Bogotá as it is now, is of a city that can coordinate large scale infrastructure projects such as the construction of the metro, or road expansion, yet this advantage is diminished due to bureaucratic hurdles and corruption. Attempts to a deeper decentralization have proven unsuccessful and at the same time, there are 20 localities in Bogotá striving for their own autonomy and power. At the national and international level, Bogotá continues to attract investment, signaling a continuation and effort to make Bogotá even a bigger city. In 2019, it was known that the Colombian national government budgeted to finance 70% of the metro of Bogotá (EDILJAL#3). In 2019 the World Bank contributed USD$196 M for Phase 1 (World Bank, 2019) and planned to contribute up to USD$500 M for the rest of the project (World Bank, 2018).

Bogotá has also attracted funding for projects to make Bogotá feel more like smaller cities. The UN financed the initiative Ciudades dentro de la Ciudad ("Cities Inside Cities") which sought to reorient urban growth decentralizing jobs and services in a "set of subcenters connected by transit and located in close proximity to residential areas" (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 7). These overly designed centers did not succeed as expected, and only one of them, Ciudad Salitre - a multiuse, and economically vibrant sub-center close to the airport. The others, did not alter the polarized structure of the city (Yunda & Sletto, 2020, p. 7). While Bogotá received funds from multiple donors, such as the World Bank, the UN, and others, smaller municipalities received little or no attention from international development agencies (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 204). This research cannot conclusively provide a solution to Bogotá, but rather demonstrates that megacities are complex urban phenomena for cities in developing countries, and alternatives must be found.

5.3.2. Radical Democracy

Winston Churchill's famous quote "it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time" (Langworth, 2022) resonates with this discussion. We are accustomed as a society to entrust to our elected leaders the task to provide a vision for our countries, cities, or towns, and at the same time, we only give them at most 5 years to carry it out. We ask too much of our leaders, and only a few excellent visionaries make meaningful changes. Perhaps, the problem of democracy as we know it, is that while it does prevent us from getting stuck with a dictator, it doesn't often allow us to effectively build the countries, and/or cities we want. Citizens often have little options when selecting leaders, leading to skepticism at best. In Colombia, citizens are tired of empty promises and constant disappointments. The period prior elections, "candidates come to our neighborhoods, spend money organizing bazaars, events to gather support, but once elected we never hear back from them" (COMLEA#2). Bogotá is a city that demonstrates that even with willing, capable leaders, that have not been corrupt and have created meaningful changes during their administration, progress stalls, as there is no way of guaranteeing continuity. Often, there is strife with changing political administrations. Running a country or a city is one of the most challenging endeavours. Cities and countries need a long-term vision, and leaders should be "hired" based on their ability to carry out this vision. "Urban transformation must begin with social transformation" (Cruz, 2022, p. 14). The way we currently run democracies is inefficient and we can do better. Yet, this requires a change in mentality, a change in the way we understand and practice democracy.

The solution might be to separate the task of providing a vision and the task of carrying out the vision (managing) and run cities like organizations are ran. Successful enterprises have a board of directors (BOD) and a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In broad terms, the BOD provides the vision and elects the CEO. The CEO selects his team, manages, and executes, ensuring that the mandate of the Organization is carried out. The CEO's ability to deliver the Organization's mandates decide if he stays or not in office, and most importantly, the vision and the plans of the Organization do not abruptly change when a new CEO is appointed or removed. Perhaps the separation of envisioning and management is what has allowed many Organizations to succeed in achieving their ends by reducing volatility. It has been argued, that for development interventions to be effective programs and initiatives must be sustained over multiple electoral cycles (Muggah & Tobón, 2019, p. 255). Separating the vision of the city from the management of the city could

potentially eliminate the problem of continuity in development projects and save economic resources wasted from abrupt political changes.

How could democracy be more radical? Today, democracy is equated as freedom to elect political leaders. What if citizens could be seen as the BOD of the city, each one being able to vote twice; once for the vision of the city, and once for whom they believe can effectively carry it out. Citizens deciding the fate of their city based on their needs, and with a long-term vision is radicalizing democracy beyond what it has been practiced today such as "electoral democracy", or even "participatory democracy". On one hand electoral democracy limits citizen's decision making, as it is subject to the vision and performance of the elected leader, and on the other, participatory democracy, is often a form of consultative democracy, and if not, is often blamed for getting in the way of progress (Berney, 2010, p. 546). In a radical democracy, citizens would *defacto* be decision makers before a leader is elected, ensuring democratic decisions taken are carried out despite who is in power. A mayor would still be necessary, just like a CEO is necessary, but the elected mayor of the city would be limited to managing and executing, and not wasting time convincing the opposition that their ideas are worth pursuing.

The construction of the Metro is an example, of how a more radical vision of democracy could have saved economic resources and provide better services to citizens. The current democratic system established by the 1991 Constitution requires that the mayor complete a development plan for the city within the first six months of their administration, and an evaluation plan at the end of the term reflecting on the work accomplished (Berney, 2010, p. 544). A new development plan is drafted with every new administration. Bogotá's metro might have been constructed years ago if citizens had a chance to vote on whether they wanted a metro or not. The first plan for a rail system was proposed in 1948 (Guzman et al., 2017, p. 203), and only 72 years later the metro has begun construction. This is not a phenomenon unique to developing countries, as the city of Toronto experienced the same fate with the yet incomplete metro system that was also initially proposed in the 1940s (Young, 2012).

While the details on the citizen's led democracy would need to be planned out, it is also evident that the more individuals a city needs to please, the more challenging coordination of plans of the city will be. Perhaps this is best tried out in smaller cities, also reducing the number and complexity of projects, and even removing unnecessary levels of government, for smoother execution, not only voicing the needs of the citizens, but carrying out those wishes. This is integrated governance, one that considers all important stakeholders - citizens being the greatest and most important one.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1. Research Review

This study has examined the viability of megacities as urban phenomena in developing countries, with a case study of Bogotá. The first chapter introduced us to the concepts of megacities and what makes them an attractive urban phenomenon. The initial assessment invited an exploration of concept of governance and the notion of decentralization and its complexities. The research questions aimed at looking at megacities from the contextual and institutional perspectives, to understand the framework in which Bogotá is imbued, as well as the institutional challenges it faces when trying to govern close to 10 million inhabitants.

Chapter 2 presented the steps taken to conduct this research, from the philosophical framework to the analytical methods. This research begun with abstract concepts and ideas, followed a method that provided meaningful data, and concluded with analysis and discussions. I have learned that a critical realism gives the flexibility to utilize inductive and deductive methodology as well as statistical and qualitative collection and analysis of data. Mix-method research allowed me to gauge the sentiment of some of the inhabitants regarding living in Bogotá and obtain a more in-depth perception on Bogotá's context and institutional challenges. I believe that the methodology selected to answer my research questions has allowed me to carry out this research project so that the findings can meaningfully contribute to the body of knowledge.

Chapter 3 introduced the contextual challenges Bogotá faces complicating governance. Rapid urban growth in Bogotá was ignited by the rapid economic growth of the 1900s. Overtime, adjacent municipalities were absorbed by the Capital District to provide better public services. The urban development and transit plans of the city from the 1950s polarized the city creating spatial barriers between the poor, the wealthy, and the middle class. The polarization of the city and the inability of local governments to provide affordable housing and effective transportation deepened inequalities. Bogotá, as the most inequal city of Colombia, experiences high levels of crime and violence. Money laundering from narcotraffic monies moves through the city creating a sub network that traffics drugs, weapons, children, and stolen goods. Criminality is protected by corruption at all levels of governance. Governance in Bogotá is challenging, and future studies should deeply address the complexities in a holistic approach taking into consideration the interconnectedness between the different issues the city faces.

Chapter 4 begun by introducing the different institutionalized mechanisms of decision making in Bogotá and attempted to describe the type of decentralization found in the city's governance. There are two levels of decentralization, and each level has distinct characteristics that evidence the two parallel systems coexisting together. The first level is a form of devolution in political, fiscal and administrative decentralization. These powers are held by the District Council, the Mayor and the Secretariats, allowing them to hold elections, collect revenues and decide on the expenses while running all the public services of the city. At the second level, a form of deconcentration is found in the form of the local mayor and the seven to eleven Ediles in each of the 20 localities. The Ediles can be elected by constituents while the local mayors are appointed by the district mayor from a trio presented by the Ediles in each locality. The localities have no freedom to collect or to expend fiscal resources. Administratively, they carry out the ordinances indicated by the local mayor and the secretariats. This hybrid system has brough about much debate, as the expectation of many locals is to give more power and autonomy to the localities, while there is ambiguity in the statutes

that govern the city of Bogotá, leaving Bogotá's governance in a limbo at the mercy of the district mayor in power. A debate that can be summed up between increasing participation vs increasing efficiencies, something that seems irreconcilable in the city of Bogotá.

Chapter 5 evaluates what Bogotá does for its inhabitants. Access to employment and being close to family and friends were the two highest likes selected by individuals surveyed for this research. For individuals living in countries in development, access to income is their number one priority. Bogotá's greatest attractiveness is the possibility of attaining a job. However, when later asked if they had all the things they want or like in a city, would they have a preference in the size, more than 80% of respondents did not chose a megacity, although all interviewed lived in Bogotá. These results reveal that most individuals don't want to live in a city as large as Bogotá, and the economic factor is what determines their decision. This chapter also presented three themes that appeared in the interviews as essential aspects of good governance in the city of Bogotá. Good leadership means commitment, nonpartisan, and skilled leaders at all levels of government. Bogotá needs a vision that focus on needs, that is long term, and in which everyone agrees on. Improving civic culture in the city is just as necessary as improving any of the other aspects of the city, as lack of it, has destroyed public spaces and generated fear.

The thesis concludes introducing two unconventional proposals. The first one, is that of eliminating megacities all together. The acclaimed process of decentralization to improve governance, if taken to the extreme, it means to introduce territorial decentralization, that is in Bogotá, giving full autonomy to each of the 20 localities. This would mean that each locality runs its affairs like its own independent territorial unit, that is a much smaller city. It would be dividing Bogotá into 20 smaller cities, or if 20 seems unnecessary, then could follow proposals that divide Bogotá into 4 or 6 cities. Would this work? Future studies could examine if this has already been tried. Therefore, to answer plainly if megacities make sense as urban phenomena for developing countries I would say no, at least not in the way that they are currently designed. Bogotá's complex hybrid governance system is overpowered by the contextual challenges, and in particular corruption. I believe that developing countries should seriously invest in smaller cities, in many cities at the same time, creating a network of vibrant cities, and each with its own competitive advantage. Smaller cities foster a greater sense of ownership among residents and are less encumbered by bureaucratic hurdles, allows them to better meet the diverse needs of their inhabitants. To build vibrant cities, we need a long-term vision, that it is not inhibited by political disagreements. Rather, citizen should be able to dream the cities that they envision and build the cities they want. This will still be challenging in smaller cities, and much research would be needed to find the best way to achieve this.

The two research questions, how does Bogotá's urban context impact the effectiveness of its decentralized governance model? And how does Bogotá's decentralization model impact the effectiveness of top-down institutionalized decision-making mechanism in governance? Served as a guide to confirm the hypothesis, that megacities are not viable urban phenomena for cities in developing countries.

6.2. Research Findings

6.2.1. Bogotáns Desire Employment but Prefer Smaller Cities

Do individuals prefer to live in big cities versus smaller ones? Many people like big cities for the lifestyle that they can have versus living in smaller towns. For this research it was important to find out whether Bogotáns liked living in Bogotá as a megacity, and not only for what it offers. Understanding what individuals living in Bogotá desire, enriches our understanding of megacities providing a more holistic approach to what these cities do for their inhabitants. What most attract individuals surveyed to Bogotá is the possibility of employment, yet 80% of those surveyed would prefer to live in a smaller city than a megacity, if they had all the perks megacities offer. Therefore, it can be concluded that at least Bogotáns would prefer to live in smaller cities, and living in Bogotá, is a necessity to find what they most desire: employment.

6.2.2. Bogotá is a City of Contrasts

Han's assessment that "the urbanization process is driven by a series of interrelated changes: economic, political, demographic, cultural, technological, social and environmental" (Han, 2012, p. 4) comes to life when trying to make sense of Bogotá. There are huge advances in urban development, and at the same time, some critical systemic mobility issues. Great leaders have emerged, yet the city is plagued with corruption scandals. Bogotá is a puzzle and trying to make sense of the factors that affect this city and how it interplays with the structural governance makes it an interesting case study. There is a need for policymakers to revise the city of Bogotá from a holistic perspective, and Bogotáns are resilient people with a desire to improve themselves. In the words of one of the Edils interviewed represent this inner fighting spirit "we are more the good people, the excellent people, intelligent, brilliant, with a big heart, but we have permitted and sometimes become accomplices of the scoundrel of the people. We need to wake up and decide that we want a better country a better place for all of us, with what we have, instead of stealing, we should work hard and make this country a paradise for all" (EDILJAL#4).

6.2.3. Bogotá's Governance is Impacted by its Context

Bogotá's urban governance is directly impacted by its own context. Bogotá is a good city, is the capital but also has many problems. Is everyone's city and nobody's city "Ciudad de todos y ciudad de nadie" (PRESJAC#4). Very few of the people who live in Bogotá are *cachacos* (natives), the city continues to grow at a speed that no urban and mobility plan seem to be able to catch up. For years, the city has introduced various initiatives such as the Transmilenio, and the dismantling of the El Cartucho and The Bronx, building cities within a city "El Salitre", and all of these seem to have fallen short. There is not much hope for the future metro, as many think that the initial hype might again be overshadow by the systemic transit failure of the city. People live in stress due to traffic and insecurity; they live in fear. Poverty and inequality have pushed many to illegal industries that harm their own people. Urban growth, mobility and inequalities all feed each other. Corruption and narcotraffic exacerbate the difficult context of the city. All these issues need to be addressed as a unified problem. Governments in developing countries have a much arduous job governing due to the complex contextual and systemic challenges cities experience. These cities need to be studied as unique phenomena and western urban theories implemented with caution.

6.2.4. Governance is More Complex in Megacities

Almost 30 years ago Gilbert wrote: "what is needed in Latin America is both economic growth and better urban management… what is problematic is the ability of the urban authorities to

manage the megacities" (Gilbert, 1996, pp. xvii–xviii). This statement still relevant today. Megacities are complex urban developments unlike any other size of cities. Megacities should be studied as their own urban phenomenon, apart from any other smaller city. The magnitude of the cities necessitates complex governance systems, and greater efforts for coordination to achieve efficiencies without diluting participation. For megacities to thrive, they need sophisticated planning and financial capacity to engage in large infrastructure projects. The literature specific to megacities is scarce as the assumption is that the size of the city does not matter as much as their governance systems – the initial conclusion from the literature review in preparation for this research. However, Bogotá's governance system is very complex, and difficult to even understand, as it has been adapting to the needs of the city, as well as to the political movements the nation and the city has experienced. If megacities in developing countries are to thrive, there is a great need for research and understanding of best practices. Academia must stop ignoring megacities, as they continue to be an absorption machine of national resources.

6.2.5. First and Second Level Decentralization

This research proposes the idea of a first and second level decentralization found in megacities like Bogotá. Academic work on decentralization has been limited to describing decentralization based on the type of powers being decentralized, such as fiscal, administrative or political; or on how pure decentralization is practiced, that is devolved, delegated, or deconcentrated. When examining the type of decentralization taking place in Bogotá, confusion and lack of consensus was found. Some academics described Bogotá as a hybrid model of deconcentration and delegation. Individuals in office and the public, misunderstanding the norm, critique and demand a deeper form of decentralization. The Constitution of 1991 left gaps around the normative of decentralization in Bogotá, that were aimed at being addressed with the introduction of the EOB. Unfortunately, the EOB reduced the powers of the second level of governance and instituted deconcentration rather than devolution as initially designed.

To properly understand the type of governance that exist in Bogotá, it is necessary to introduce the phenomenon of two layers of governance and decentralization. The first layer of decentralization is the transfer of powers from the national state to the district, and the second, the delegation of powers from the district to the localities. Some argue that the second level of decentralization shouldn't exist in Bogotá, as the localities are not territorial units, but simply deconcentrated administrative units. The reality, is that the division of where a territory begins or ends, is not set in stone. In Bogotá, some would like to see more power in the localities, as this would be closer to the people. A megacity of more than 10 million inhabitants necessitates participatory mechanisms for individuals to feel they can take part of what occurs in their communities. The localities can be this mechanism, but corruption, and complex bureaucracy needs to be cleared before decentralization at the first and second level can thrive.

6.3. Methodological Limitations

No research design or methodology is perfect (Good, 2024). This research presents limitations in the research design, the sampling pool, and the analysis methods. Explanations and approaches to reduce the impact of these weaknesses in research.

6.3.1. Limitations in the Research Design

The biggest challenge was understanding what it was meant by the frequent advice from my supervisor and committee "to narrow it down". As a student researcher, only during the coding process, that took months to complete, I began to comprehend why not having a more focused research topic and questions were problematic. I was stubborn as I sincerely wanted to know if megacities are ideal urban phenomena for developing countries. I had never carried out research of this magnitude, so it was hard for me to comprehend, at the beginning, that it is impossible for me, in a master thesis and without a research team, to properly answer this question with the rigor that is required in academic research. I designed the interview and survey questions targeting all the issues that could impact megacities. I wanted to ensure I didn't leave anything behind. How else would I be able to fairly answer this question? To do this, I spent months researching everything about governance, I remember searching over and over for any article that came across governance and selecting the most relevant aspects and putting them in a document that ended up being 203 pages. I even thought, I might not have everything, but I need to move on and decide what to ask in the interviews and survey. To mitigate this shortfall, without impacting the quality of the document presented, I selected a few of the most relevant data collected. I surely hope to continue my academic endeavour and further explore and present the portions I couldn't develop in more depth in this thesis. I sincerely want to continue understanding what type of cities we want to promote in developing countries.

6.3.2. Limitations in the Sampling Strategy

Research limitations were also experienced with the sampling pool selected. As mentioned in Section 2.1.5.1 I had planned to survey individuals ages 18 to more than 96 years old. I thought that reaching out to all adults over the age 18 would provide a representative sample of individuals of all ages (except children). However, Questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 in the survey could not be answered by those who were in the age of retirement. These questions asked in detail the impact mobility had on the individual in their daily trips to and from work. As I gathered responses from older individuals, when they told me they did not work, I would then ask them to answer thinking on their experience when they used to work or the means of transport, they currently use the most. As I completed most surveys, I realized that this age population could affect my data, as they might be answering thinking of difficulties in mobility from the past or simply leaving some answers in blank. Seeing this potential skewness of the data, I decided to exclude individuals that appear older than 65 as I approached respondents in the streets. I did not want to remove entirely the entries in my data of those older than 65 because they provided valuable information on the participatory portion of the survey.

Accessing a representative sample of the different income stratum was also challenging to achieve. I thought that by physically surveying individuals in 10 localities of different income stratum, I would have a representative example of the opinions of individuals in all 6 stratums of the city. In the high stratum, I surveyed individuals in the parks or in the streets, and not in their places of work, as I did in other localities, reducing the possibility of answering the survey of individuals of higher stratum. Therefore, most people surveyed were from stratum 1 - Very Low and 2 – Low, and very few were from stratum 5 – High or 6 – Very High. While this finding reveals much about the mobility and economic dynamics of the city of Bogotá, this limited the ability of analysing data based on income levels, also known as ecological fallacy problem. This limitation was due to my sampling strategy. I should have instead, conducted a more standard, geographically stratified

household survey (Haslam, P. Thesis Evaluation Report, April 8, 2025). As the research objective of this thesis was broad, I believe that the insights obtained in this thesis, although not representative are still valuable in its exploratory nature.

To overcome these two sampling limitations on the analysis and writing steps of this research, I first acknowledge the skewness in the data, as well as took care of not falling into the temptation of wanting to make comparison between different age groups or income levels. What I did instead, was to analyze the answers of each age group as well as each income level and try to provide insight per group level. At the time I designed the research, I did not have sufficient knowledge on how to properly survey street pedestrians to obtain a representational sample. I thought that simply by diversifying the location, age, and gender was sufficient to accurately reflect the characteristics of the larger group. How to properly sample to avoid these types of skewness, is something that I look forward learning as I grow in my profession as researcher.

6.3.3. Limitations in the Analysis Methods

The analytical methods for statistical and quantitate data collected were designed to provide insight and answers to the research questions. However, lack of sufficient knowledge of statistics is a limitation, as I was only able to collect and conduct analysis on nominal and ordinal data. Collecting other types of data such as ratio data could have provided more nuance on the costs and time efficiencies on mobility in the city for example.

Time and expertise proved to be a limitation conducting the analysis of qualitative data. It was difficult for me to code 40 hours of interviews without previous knowledge on coding. As this is my first time conducting academic research, it was an arduous task, and as I conducted the coding, I devised strategies to create efficiencies without decreasing the quality of my work. For example, I would use keywork search to identify sections where coded words appeared, and code sections by themes of words versus line by line, which was more time consuming. I know that I will be able to transfer the skills acquired for this thesis to future projects.

6.4. Future studies

As this research was broad, the possibility of future studies is tremendous. I will focus on the future studies I find more interesting after completing this initial research. First, I would significantly narrow down the scope of the research, to make the topics more manageable to deeply delve into. Second, I would focus on research that promotes small city sustainable economic development, rather than continuing researching about solving the complexities of megacities. Third, I would want to conduct a comparative study between various small cities that thrive in developing countries and try to understand why those cities are successful. As this is still a broad proposal, initial research and literature review would be needed to assess specific issues, whether is the morphology of the cities, the political systems, the urban governance models, etc. Perhaps, understanding the urban governance models of thriving small cities be an interesting future study. The ultimate goal, I believe is to find proposals that could meaningfully impact cities in developing countries, so that rapid urban growth is reduced, and cities have time and resources to properly serve their inhabitants. A second passion and linked to the findings of this study, is making sense of corruption. Studies on how to effectively eradicate corruption in cities in developing countries is fascinating, as without transparency and honesty in public affairs and administration, poverty and inequality will continue to dominate every aspect of urban living.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Mayors of Bogotá

MAYOR	START	END	POLITICAL PARTY
Andrés Pastrana	1 June 1988	31 May 1990	Colombian Conservative Party
Juan Martín Caicedo	1 June 1990	30 March 1992	Colombian Liberal Party
Sonia Durán	31 March 1992	31 May 1992	Colombian Liberal Party
Jaime Castro	1 June 1992	31 December 1994	Colombian Liberal Party
Antanas Mockus	1 January 1995	10 April 1997	Independent
Paul Bromberg Zylverstein	11 April 1997	31 December 1997	Green Alliance
Enrique Peñalosa	1 January 1998	31 December 2000	Colombian Liberal Party
Antanas Mockus	1 January 2001	31 December 2003	Indigenous Social Alliance Movement
Luis Eduardo Garzón	1 January 2004	31 December 2007	Alternative Democratic Pole
Samuel Moreno Rojas	1 January 2008	3 May 2011	Alternative Democratic Pole
María Fernanda Campo	4 May 2011	8 June 2011	Social Party of National Unity
Clara López Obregón	8 June 2011	31 December 2011	Alternative Democratic Pole
Gustavo Petro	1 January 2012	19 March 2014	Progressive Movement
Rafael Pardo Rueda	19 March 2014	21 April 2014	Colombian Liberal Party Social Party of National Unity
María Mercedes Maldonado	21 April 2014	22 April 2014	Progressive Movement
Gustavo Petro	23 April 2014	31 December 2015	Progressive Movement
Enrique Peñalosa	1 January 2016	31 December 2019	Radical Change
Claudia López	1 January 2020	31 December 2023	Green Alliance Alternative Democratic Pole
Carlos Fernando Galán	1 January 2024	Incumbent	New Liberalism

Table retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mayors_of_Bogot%C3%A1 on May 16, 2024.

Appendix 2: Philosophical Path

As a student researcher, I am confronted with the task of explaining what my philosophy is. This is a daunting yet important aspect of research. Am I an idealist, who believes that reality only exists in the mind? Or a materialist, who believes that only physical things exist, and my mind and consciousness are a product of active operations of matter? What about my epistemology? Do I gain knowledge through the senses or through my reason? In essence, what is my position as a researcher? Am I a positivist who things that through observation I can increase general knowledge of reality, or am I a relativist or its derivations of interpretivism, constructivism, etc., who among other things, believes that I am inextricably bound into the human situation that I am studying?

For some time, I believed that my approach was positivism inspired in Hemple (1965), as he focused on "the need for reasoning that moves from theoretical ideas, or a set of given premises, to a logical conclusion through deductive thinking. That is, through the mental process of developing specific predictions from general principles, and through research establishing whether or not the predictions are valid" (Crossan, 2003, p. 50). I began this research with the hypothesis that megacities are not ideal urban phenomena for cities in developing countries. I predicted that most people do not like to live in megacities but due to lack of opportunities in their own towns, they feel forced to live in large cities. As large cities invite more people because of greater opportunities, then national governments feel the need to invest more funds in megacities, reducing the funding given to smaller cities. Perpetuating the cycle of megacity growth. To prove this, in my survey, I asked individuals living in Bogotá to choose the size of the city they would like to live in, provided they had all the things that attracts them to live in larger cities. The response, to certain extent, was confirmatory, as more than 80% of the respondents selected smaller cities than megacities. So, I felt that my research did have some elements of positivist methodology. However, one the major criticism of the positivist approach is that "it does not provide the means to examine human beings and their behaviours in an in-depth way… as the study of human behaviour… makes the establishment of laws and ability to generalise impossible" (Crossan, 2003, p. 51). The complexity of disproving my hypothesis pushed me to continue to search for a more suitable philosophical approach.

Post-positivism didn't seem to suit me either, even though they believe in reality influenced by contexts, therefore, providing more flexibility, yet expecting some level of certainty. I agree with Popper's (1969) argument that we can't prove anything based on our experiences, as there is always the possibility of observation or experiments that might disprove anything we had previously believed as true (Crossan, 2003, p.53). If fact, I feel that with this research, I am trying to disprove the long-stated truth that megacities are economic engines of growth and therefore progress and development, but perhaps they are not, as the quality of life in megacities is questionable. One of the aspects of post-positivism that caught my attention, is what its described as *critical multiplism*, the necessity to utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods, as research can generally be approach from several perspectives. There is however, a limitation of post-positivism that kept me on the look for a more suitable philosophical framework, and that is the criticism often given to qualitative methods, of potential research bias, and difficulty to generalize the findings due to the participatory and interactivity of the researcher (Crossan, 2003, p. 53). I did not feel that in my qualitative portion of the research, I needed to get too heavily involved with the subjects, I wanted to listen to their perspectives, to understand more, to avoid as much as I could,

that my own personal biases impacted the evaluation I was making of the city of Bogotá. I knew I was getting closer, as I wanted to find a philosophy that suited the type of research I wanted to do and present.

I could not get attracted to post-modernist thinkers that denounced meta-narratives to give superiority to the links between knowledge and power, as they strongly believe that there is no universal knowledge or truth. There are objective, real, tangible, and generalized problems in the city of Bogotá. For example, Bogotá is one of the most congested cities in the world, this is a fact Bogotáns must endure daily. This fact is a truth, that exist independent of whether I believe it or not. It is true to many citizens and tourist of Bogotá. I agree that there is not one narrative that will be the solution for traffic to every city in the world, but I do want to believe that there are at least a few options to solve the traffic problem of Bogotá. I also could not accept post-modernist's examination of language and their belief that there is no necessary correspondence between words and their meaning, the signifier and the signified (Walliman, 2011, p. 23). I do agree in part, that some knowledge is framed by institutions in power, but not always, as I do think that sometimes, there is genuine desire to know the truth. Sometimes we find cases of knowledge being manipulated by corporations, but sometimes not, there are, at least the individual level, individuals who honestly want to understand reality as it is, without any double motives.

It was in this path of learning and reflecting that I came across critical realism. From what I have come to understand from this theory, they recognize some aspects of both positivism and relativism. "Critical reasoning seems to be a reconciliatory approach, which recognizes, like positivist, the existence of a natural order in social events and discourse but claims that this order cannot be detected by merely observing a pattern of events. The underlying order must be discovered through the process of interpretation while doing theoretical and practical work" (Walliman, 2011, p.24). I think reality exists and can be known, not only through our sensory experience, but also through our critical reasoning. I believe both observation and analysis are necessary to comprehend a little better complex social phenomenon. I knew that I wanted to do both quantitative and qualitative studies, but I did not want to be constrained by their limitations, and so to the best of my ability, I been trying to use the critical realism approach to embark in this research. I have conducted observation and applied reasoning to interpret and provide a better understanding of the situation for civilians in Bogotá, with the hope that the findings are both meaningful and insightful on what type of cities we want to promote in developing countries.

Appendix 3: Mix Methods Justification

There seems to be academic debate on the validity of using mix methods or not. Some argue that using both survey and interviews on a single study strengthens both methodologies allowing for a more holistic analysis of what is being researched. Hallie Preskill writes "Mixed methods research acknowledges that all methods have inherent biases and weaknesses; that using a mixed method approach increases the likelihood that the sum of the data collected will be richer, more meaningful, and ultimately more useful in answering the research questions" (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 121). Others, like Hughes and Sharrock (1997) and Smith (1983) think that it is impossible to reconcile the philosophical approach of positivism and relativism, as they divert in essential components (Walliman, 2022, p.199). I believe that this position of seeing competing philosophical approaches between positivism versus relativism is a historical debate, that has in part been overshadow by the increasing amount of supporting data towards the benefits of mix-methods approach (Crossan, 2003, p. 49). However, mix-methods research is a fairly new research approach that is continuously being developed and re-defined (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 112), and for some a necessary tool to best "conceptualize the "soft" (or informal) governance mechanisms… we need not only conceptual innovation but also more qualitative approaches and way to systematize findings resulting from case study research" (Montero & Chapple, 2018, p. 8). Perhaps is not about which methodology is better or not but utilizing what is needed for each case study.

Why did I choose to use mix-methods approach? I wanted to explain and interpret the situation for civilians in Bogotá and address the questions at different levels. For me, it was important to know how civilians in Bogotá were affected by the mobility in the city, what choices in size of the city they prefer, how much they knew and value the institutionalized mechanisms of decision making at their reach. At the same time, I wanted to understand what the governance structure at the various local governments is, what are the structural or political challenges of those working in these institutions felt. Doing a survey and a semi-structured interview seemed to be not only possible, but necessary to fully answer the research questions, and provide credible assessments of what megacities do for its inhabitants. Interviewing strengths, it's the "ability to access personal experience and its meanings…respect for contextual factors… deep analysis of the issues, [etc.]" (Carrera-Fernández et al., 2013, p. 1590). The use of mixed methods seemed coherent with my philosophical stance, and my decision of using the hypothetico-deductive scientific method that combines both inductive and deductive reasoning.

How did I go about carrying out mix-methods approach? Walliman (2022) summarizes Yanchar and Wiliams (2006) suggestion of five steps to carrying out mix-methods. I found this method helpful, as it provided guidance, but also the flexibility needed to tailor the process to my research objectives. First, they suggest tailoring the choice of research methods to the research questions, and the context. The two research questions for this thesis are composed and overarch a total of four subthemes that aim at providing light to the hypothesis. Second, creativity to combine the methods to fit the research goals versus trying to adopt an unfitted formula. I think I achieved this, as I designed the survey and the interview to ask questions directly related to the research questions. Third, conceptual awareness, that is to acknowledge "that all aspects of your work are based on philosophical standpoints, no research subject is historically unburdened and lacking in individual theoretical bases" (Walliman, 2022, p.201). I believe I have done this in section 2.1.1.

Philosophy of this thesis. Fourth, coherence – so there is no contradiction between the two methods used. In my case, the design of the survey and interviews was made so they triangulate each other and provide supporting evidence of what individuals feel in the streets, and what those working in public office or leaders of localities think about the different issues burdening the city of Bogotá. Fifth – a critical reflection, I have tried to identify and evaluate the assumptions that might have been made while carrying out the fieldwork, these reflections are presented along with the presentation of the findings in Chapters 3 to 5. I hope I have been able to utilize the mix methods in an effective and meaningful way and to have somewhat advanced knowledge in this area of research.

There are various ways of using mixing methods as presented by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) and summarized in Walliman (2022, p. 201-205). I used the pragmatic approach that gives equal status to interviews and surveys as I see that together they are compatible and complementary. Other mix-method approaches tend to give priority to one of them and use the other method as complementary. For example, for my research proposal, I drafted the survey and interview questions in parallel, focusing the survey mainly on the subjects of urban growth, mobility effects on civilians, and preferences for the size of the city, and the interviews focused on the challenges that individuals in local power encounter when governing the city of Bogotá, with an emphasis on urban growth and mobility. The revisions to my proposal suggested I focus more on the one aspect that my literature review had highlighted as the most relevant for assessing the viability of megacities, that is of urban governance. Therefore, I spent some time researching in more depth governance and adjusted both the survey and the interview template to address the issues of local governance and participation. The themes asked in the surveys and interviews are summarized in Table 2-1 section 2.1.3.

The growing literature on mix methods has also provided various strategies that can be employed when using mix methods. Walliman (2022 p. 202-205) introduces Clarck and Crestwell (2008)'s six types of strategies. Each strategy provides different possibilities of combining and analyzing both methods. The strategy that best explains the approach I have taken to utilize these two methods, is what Clarck and Crestwell call *Sequential Transformative* which uses both survey and interviews equally, and once fieldwork is completed, the results are integrated and interpreted using the strengths of both methods. The exception in my study is that the individuals interviewed and surveyed were not the same but did come from similar geographical locations. The individuals interviewed worked or lived in some of the same localidades where the survey took place.

There were no apparent problems of compatibility or limitations experienced while using the mix-method approach, rather the benefits were apparent, as utilizing the two methods simultaneously allowed for a deeper comprehension of some of the complex situational problems experienced by individuals in the city of Bogotá. Using only the data available in the public realm was not enough to answer the research questions, therefore conducting the survey and interviews provided answers to the questions, and insight to the problems of governance, mobility, and quality of life in the city of Bogotá.

Appendix 4: Survey

1) **¿Are you already vaccinated from Covid-19?**
    a. Yes
    b. No
2) **¿Are you 18 years or older?**
    a. Yes
    b. No
3) **I have read the consent form and I accept to participate in the research study conducted by Luisa Gómez from the University of Ottawa, whose research is under the supervision of Dr. Huhua Cao.**
    a. Yes
    b. No
4) **What is your age range?**
    a. 18-25 years
    b. 26-35 years
    c. 36-45 years
    d. 46-55 years
    e. 56-65 years
    f. 66-75 years
    g. 75-85 years
    h. 86-95 years
    i. > 96 years
5) **What is your sex?**
    a. Male
    b. Female
6) **What race do you identify with?** Black
    a. Afro-Colombian
    b. Raizales of San Andres and Providencia
    c. Palequeros de San Basilio
    d. Pueblo Rroma,
    e. Indigenous: _____
    f. Mestizo
    g. White(European descent).

PART I: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CAUSES OF URBAN GROWTH

7) **How long have you lived in Bogotá?**
    a. <10 years
    b. 11–30 years
    c. > 30 years
    d. > 30 years, but mi family or I are not from Bogotá
    e. All my life, my family and I are from Bogotá
    f. I do not live in Bogotá
8) **Were you born in Bogotá?**
    a. Yes
    b. No
        i. Where were you born?

1. Department: _____
2. Outside of Colombia: _____

If you were not born in Bogotá, why you or your family moved?

a. Internal conflict
b. International conflict
c. Economic opportunities
d. Educational opportunities
e. Other: _____

PART II: LIKES AND DISLIKES OF LIVING IN BOGOTÁ

9) Select the things you like about living in Bogotá

a. Possibility of de employment
b. Diversity of employment
c. Access to public services
d. Access to education
e. Diversity of education
f. Urban safety
g. Mobility (public transit /traffic)
h. Culture and entertainment
i. Environmental security
j. Other: _____

10) Select the things you like the least about living in Bogotá

a. Employment insecurity
b. Ordinary Street Crime
c. Delinquency
d. Lack of services
e. Lack of education
f. Mobility (traffic/transport)
g. Environmental insecurity
h. Other: _____

PART III: MOBILITY EFFECTS ON QUALITY OF LIFE

11) In which *localidad* of the city do you live?

a. Antonio Nariño
b. Barrios Unidos
c. Bosa
d. Chapinero
e. Ciudad Bolívar
f. Engativá
g. Fontibón
h. Kennedy
i. La Candelaria
j. Los Mártires
k. Puente Aranda
l. Rafael Uribe
m. San Cristóbal
n. Santa Fe

o. Suba
p. Sumapaz
q. Teusaquillo
r. Tunjuelito
s. Usaquén
t. Usme

12) In which *localidad* of the city do you work?

a. Antonio Nariño
b. Barrios Unidos
c. Bosa
d. Chapinero
e. Ciudad Bolívar
f. Engativá
g. Fontibón
h. Kennedy
i. La Candelaria
j. Los Mártires
k. Puente Aranda
l. Rafael Uribe
m. San Cristóbal
n. Santa Fe
o. Suba
p. Sumapaz
q. Teusaquillo
r. Tunjuelito
s. Usaquén
t. Usme
u. Fuera de Bogotá

13) In general, what means of transportation do you use to go to work?

a. Telework
b. Car
c. Bicycle
d. Uber/Taxi/Shared car
e. Public Transport

14) How much money do you spend on transportation for work per day?

a. $0 COP
b. < $4.800 COP
c. < $10.000 COP
d. > $10.000

15) How much time do you spend travelling every day from home to work or from work to home? One way

a. < 15 min
b. 30 min
c. 1 hora
d. 2hrs
e. 3hrs

f. > 3hrs

16) ¿Do you enjoy the time you spent travelling from come to work and vise versa?

a. Si
b. No
c. Indifferent

17) What do you while you travel?

a. Nothing
b. I read
c. Social media
d. Talk over the phone
e. Listen to music or a podcast
f. Other: _____

PART IV: MEGACITY VS MINICITY PREFERENCES

18) In Bogotá we are 11 million inhabitants. If you had all the services you need (health, school, work, social life) in a much smaller city with everything you need within 15min travelling distance, would you rather live in a small city or town or would you still prefer a large city? I prefer:

a. Small town (10,000-25,000 habitants) think of Barichara
b. Medium town (25,000-100,000 habitants) think of Honda, Guaduas
c. Large town (100,000-500,000 habitants) think of Buga, Cienága
d. Small city (500,000-1 M habitants) think of Cartagena, Cúcuta, Bucaramanga
e. Medium city (1-3 M habitants) think of Medellin, Cali
f. Large city (3-7 M habitants) think of Los Ángeles, Guadalajara, Toronto
g. Giant city (7-9 M habitants) think of Londres, Seúl, Chicago
h. Megacity (10-30 M habitants) think of Tokyo, São Paulo, Mexico City.

19) Bogotá in 2021contineus to be the third most congested city in the world. What do you think with the future construction of the metro in Bogotá?

a. Create huge improvements in the mobility issues in Bogotá.
b. Create some improvements in the mobility of the city.
c. Create a few improvements in the mobility of the city.
d. It will be like the Transmilenio, and we will continue to be one of the most congested cities in the world.

20) Do you think that with the construction of the Metro, Bogotá will grow significantly in the next 5 years?

a. Yes
b. No

PART V: PERCEPTIONS ON GOVERNANCE

21) Do you feel you can participate in the decisions taken by the local government in your localidad?

a. Nothing
b. A little
c. In some things
a. A lot

22) Do you feel you can participate in the decisions taken by the government in Bogotá?

a. Nothing

b. A little
c. In some things
d. A lot

23) Have you heard of the Junta de Acción Comunal (JAC) and what is it for?

a. No
b. Yes

ii. **Have you participated in the activities (participative budget/decision making) of the JAC?**

1. No,
    a. If no, why?
        i. I didn't know I could participate.
        ii. I'm not interested in participating.
        iii. I don't' think my participation will improve the situation in my locality.
        iv. Other: _____
2. If, yes,
    a. **Do you think the JAC is effective in providing a voice for the needs of your community?**
        i. Yes ii. No

24) Have you ever used the Petition System of the city?

a. No
    i. If no, ¿Why not?
        1. I haven't had the need for it
        2. I don't know what it is or what is it useful for
        3. I don't think it will help my problem or the problems of my community.
b. Yes
    i. If yes, do you find it effective?
        1. Yes
        2. No

25) What would motivate you to participate more in the decision making process of the in your localidad?

a. That the participation processes be simpler and more effective
b. Have more information about the participation process and the issues that are discussed in the locality.
c. That the issues being discussed be more relevant for me or my neighborhood
d. That the projects that are proposed are carried out, and the money is not stolen.
e. I would not be interested in participating.
f. Other:

26) What is your level of trust in the governance system of Bogotá?

a. High
b. Medium
c. Low

Thank you!

Appendix 5: Semi-Structured Interview

Introduction to the study

Thank you very much for agreeing to have this interview with me. I am Luisa Fernanda Gómez Jiménez, a master's student at the University of Ottawa, Canada and I am doing research on governance in mega-cities, in particular Bogotá. I seek to understand how top-down and bottom-up institutionalized decision-making mechanisms enable large cities, like Bogotá, to provide public services to their inhabitants.

Governance here is understood as "a dynamic gear that takes into account the **regulatory framework** that will provide legal support, the **participation mechanisms** that will be democratic support, the **territorial planning** that will constitute the geopolitical balance of a government, the **permanent incentives** to **streamline the mechanisms** and the **generation** and **management** of **information** that will allow citizens to be well informed with a high degree of critical thinking "(Castillo, 2019, p. 1)

In order for me to understand the context of your responses, it would be important to know how long you have been working in the ___(department/institution)_____ and what your duties are or have been. You can also share information from any other institution with which you have worked and that has allowed you to understand about governance in Bogotá.

Our university policy requires that we inform you of this research. Attached to these questions is the consent form, which explains the parameters of this study and the contacts if you have any questions about it.

Before starting the interview, I will ask you if you have read the consent form, if you have any questions, and for your verbal consent. At that time, you can tell me which anonymity option you would like to choose.

The interview will last approximately an hour and a half. I will record these questions so I can transcribe them and then analyze the answers.

Part I: Positionality

1) How long have you been working as __(position of individual interviewed)___? Do you live in the locality in which you exercise your function?

Part II: Urban governance system in Bogotá

2) How would you describe the urban governance system of Bogotá? Is it centralized or decentralized? Do you think that the current governance system benefits or hinders the provision of services in the city?

3) What influence does the __(dept/org)____ have on the way the city provides urban services, such as water, sewerage, electricity, security, transportation, etc.?

4) What are dynamics of governance between the local mayor's office, the secretaries, and the mayor's office? What are the functions and responsibilities of the ___(dept/org) ___ office?

5) What functions have been delegated to the ___(dept/org) ___ office? In these delegated functions, does the ___(dept/org) ___ office has full autonomy to make decisions? What kind of activities do you need to consult with the mayor's office?

Part III: Participatory Governance

6) How much is the budget (average) for the ___(dept/org) ___ office? What percentage of the activities in the budget are carried out and completed?

7) Is the participatory budgeting used for budget decision making? If yes, what is your opinion about the participatory budgeting process? How is this process carried out? If not, why is this modality not used?

8) Do local mayors deal directly with institutionalized bottom-up decision-making mechanisms? Can you name some of these mechanisms? How effective are bottom-up mechanisms in expressing and creating change for the inhabitants? How could these mechanisms be more effective?

Part IV: Urban governance and mega-cities

9) How does the private sector, governmental organizations, and/ or multinationals influence decision-making in the local mayor's office?

10) Has the ___(dept/org) ___ used smart technologies to provide services and / or increase citizen participation in decision-making?

11) What do you think is the level of trust of citizens in the governance process of Bogotá?

12) What do you think are the biggest challenges for urban governance in big cities like Bogotá?

13) Do you think that large cities, like Bogotá, are capable of effectively providing urban services to their citizens? Would Bogotá be more manageable if there were a slower rate of urban migration? Is urban growth a challenge for the governance of Bogotá?

14) What is the best way for the city to meet the needs of those who live in informal settlements?

15) In 2002, Transmilenio received multiple national and international awards for its viability and profitability, but in 2018, Bogotá was classified as the second most congested city in the world (González et al. 2019, p.1). The comments about the Transmilenio nowadays are that the costs are high, the waiting times are unreasonable, the buses are full and in general the traffic has not really improved. In part the reasons are due to an unfinished project, but why else do you think Transmilenio was not as successful as expected?

16) Do you think the metro will fix the mobility issues of Bogotá? Do you think that the construction of the metro will contribute to Bogotá becoming a mega-city (+ 10M inhabitants)?

Thank you!

Appendix 6: Type of Statitiscal Data Collected

There were 26 questions asked in the survey. Questions 8, 23, and 24 were composed, and depending on the answer selected, by the respondent, they were prompted to answer other questions. Therefore, the total questions asked, for analytical purposes was 31. Most of the questions asked were nominal[18], some were ordinal[19], none were ratio[20] or interval[21]. The nominal questions included binary type of answers such as Yes/No (Q1, 2, 3, 8, 20, 23, 24) which included if they were vaccinated, over 18, etc., while the others were categorical, such as race (Q6), locality where they live (Q11) and where they work (Q12), type of transportation used (Q13), what would motivate them to participate more in the decision-making process (Q25), among others. The ordinal type of questions had an internal order or range, such as age range (Q4), number of years living in Bogotá (Q7), level on enjoyment while traveling from-to-work (Q16), ability to participate in decision making processes (Q22 & 23), and level of trust in governance system in Bogotá (Q.26), among others. Q15 - time spent traveling one way to/from work, and question Q14 - how much money it is spent on a single route, could have been categorized as ratio as the answers have a meaningful zero, but they were kept as ordinal, as the intervals between one answer to the other are not equal in value, and potentially rendering the analysis statistically meaningless due to bias/error in the data.

Type	Sub-category	Question #	Total # Q	Percentage
Categorical	Nominal	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q6, Q8, Q8.1, Q8.2, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q17, Q20, Q23, Q23.1, Q23.2, Q24, Q24.1, Q24.2, Q25.	23	75%
	Ordinal	Q4, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22.	6	20%
Numerical	Interval	None	0	0%
	Ratio	None	0	0%
Total			**31**	**100%**

[18] Nominal measurement divides the data into separate categories that can be compared with each other, enabling inclusion, exclusion, and comparison of the categories (Walliman, 2011, p. 75-76)

[19] Ordinal measurement organizes the data on the perception that one result is more or less than the other – a range based on one particular property such as size, income, etc., without a precise measurement of the property *(Ibid).*

[20] Ratio level of measurement has a true zero – the point where the value is equal to nought. Such as distance, time, velocity, etc. *(Ibid)*.

[21] Interval level measure data "precisely on a regular skill of some sort, without there being a meaningful zero, for example, temperature scale[s]" *(Ibid)*.

Appendix 7: Changes to Dataset Prior Statistical Data Analysis.

After carrying out an initial analysis of the data after translation, it was deemed necessary to make the following changes to the dataset:

- Q.4 the "years old" component of the answer was removed. For example, the variable in the column for age range changed from "18-25 years old" to "18-25" for every record.
- Q.8.1 the variable "Bogotá" was added to those who answered "Yes" to the question if they had been born in Bogotá. Respondents who answered No, were asked to provide where had been born. Those who answered yes, had no answer on this column. Adding Bogotá, allowed for better comparison of the data.
- Q. 9 and 10 the way that the data was displayed was changed. Instead of the variable naming the like or dislike, new columns were added per like and dislike, and "Yes/No" answer was applied. This allowed to analyse the likes and dislikes based on gender, age range or income level.
- Q.11, 12 and the column that identified the location of where the respondent was when the survey was conducted, as added a column next to it, to include the stratum level based on the localidad selected. The assigning of the stratum level to each localidad, was done using the official city website that provides stratum allocation: https://www.sdp.gov.co/gestion-estudios-estrategicos/estratificacion/estratificacion-por-localidad

These changes helped optimize the data collected and made it suitable for analysis.

Appendix 8: Detailed description of Governance Structures in Bogotá

The District Council

In the legislative branch of local governance, the city counts with a centralized District Council and decentralized board of local administrators (JAL). The District Council is a political-administrative corporation of 45 councillors elected by the citizens every 4 years, whom cannot be employed at any other public institution (COL Const. art. 312). The District Council is the supreme authority of the Capital District. It is responsible for monitoring and controlling the management carried out by the district authorities and in administrative matters, its attributions are of a normative nature (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 8).

The description of the roles and responsibilities of the District Council demonstrates, that at least in writing, decentralization from national state to the municipal bodies is intended in all the four specific functions established by Resnick (2022): electoral, administrative, fiscal, and legislative. The District Council, the Mayor and the Ediles (the JAL members) are all elected by citizens. The president of the nation can only intervene if and when the mayor of Bogotá (or any municipality in the country) was to cease his administration less than 18 months prior next election. In this case, the President must appoint a mayor for the remainder of the period, respecting the political party or coalition in which the previous mayor was registered under (COL. Const. art.314 & 323). The District Council appoints "el Personero" (explained in Section 4.1.9.2) for the period determined by law (COL Const. art. 313 n.8). In practice, electoral decentralization does occur in the country, as elections are hold on the stipulated times and with a fair level of transparency.

The 1991 Colombian Constitution and Decree 1421 of 1993 develops the legislative, administrative, and fiscal competencies of the District Council. At the legislative level, the Council regulates the functions and efficient delivery of the services for which the district is responsible (COL Const. art. 313 n.1 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.1). The Council also dictates the rules to guarantee decentralization, de-concentration, and citizen participation and oversight in the district (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.10). Legislation to organize the district, varies to giving the mayor *pro tempore* powers to exercise certain functions (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.11), organize and regulate the Personería (Ombud's), and the District Comptroller (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.15), issue norms to regulate the relations between the district and the public servants (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.21), issue police codes (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.18), and even dictate traffic and transportation regulations (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.19). In terms of planification and uses of the land, the council adopts the *Plan General de Ordenamiento Físico*[22] (to regulate the physical development of urban areas which includes, roads, infrastructure, housing (COL Const. art. 313 n.7 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.5), and create norms for the control, preservation, and defense of the ecological and cultural patrimony of the municipality (COL Const. art. 313 n.9 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.7 & 13).

The administrative functions delegated to the city by the nation, allows the District Council to determine the structure of the municipal administration, the functions of their dependencies (COL Const. art. 313 n.6 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.8), the division of the territory into localities, and to assign them powers to ensure their effective operation and management of resources (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.16). The Council can also determine the remuneration scales of the

[22] General Plan for Physical Planning

district public servants (COL Const. art. 313 n.6 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.8), give itself its own regulations, and (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.24) create the jobs necessary for its operation (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.20). To stimulate the economy and improve public services in the city, the Council can create, with the initiative of the mayor, public institutions, commercial, industrial, and mixed public-private companies, or enterprises (COL Const. art. 313 n.6 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.9 & 12). The Council also reviews and evaluates the periodic reports submitted by district public servants (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.22). The Council has delegated to the JAL the collection of fees for the use of public space for the performance of cultural, sports, and recreational events, yet the council determines the system and method to be adopted for these activities (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.5).

Financial autonomy at the district level, allows the District Council to vote and establish taxes, create an investment plan, issue annually the budget, authorize mayor to make contracts, and authorize the indebtedness quota of the district and the centralized entities (COL Const. art. 313 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12). For the income administration, the Council can establish and eliminate taxes, contributions, surcharges, make exemptions, and create systems that guarantee the effective collection of taxes and other charges (Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.3). The collection of property taxes including housing and vehicle ownership are two examples of district level taxes. The District also has to adopt the *Plan General de Desarrollo Económico, Social y de Obras Públicas*[23], which is part of the *Plan General de Desarrollo*[24] and contains the multiannual budgets for the programs and the financial resources required to execute them (COL Const. art. 313 n.2 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.2). The Council also dictates the regulation of the budget, the revenues, and expenditures of the district (COL Const. art. 313 n.5 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.4). Finally, the District Council authorizes, and sets the amounts up to which contracts can be entered and regulate the nature of the contract and the contracting entity (COL Const. art. 313 n.3 & Decree 1421, 1993, art.12 n.14).

As the District Council is the supreme authority in the city, even above the Mayor, the Council decisions have significant impact in the development of the city. For example, the plans for the development are presented to the District Council by the Mayor, and the Council can approve or not this plan (EDILJAL#2). Also, the Council has oversight responsibilities, as they ought to request and find out irregularities in the way public services are provided in the city, through the checks and balances of public institutions through the already established organisms of control (EDILJAL#3). One of the criticisms to the District Council is the little connection between the District Council and the JAL, as the Council mainly works with the centralized bodies and not the decentralized ones (EDILJAL#2). The Council is the supreme authority in the City of Bogotá and key player in communication between the citizens and the mayor, as the mayor's ability to do or not is determined by the Council (COMLEA#1). Some argue that the Council should in fact serve as a community voice, as they are elected by the people, however, the current governance structure does not encourage a direct connection between the Council and Bogotáns.

[23] General Plan for Economic, Social Development and Public works
[24] General Development Plan

The Mayor of Bogotá

The Mayor of Bogotá is the head of government and administration and represents the Capital legally, judicially, and extrajudicially (Decree 1421, 1991, art. 35). The mayor is also directly and secretly elected by the people every 4 years, without possibility of re-election for the next period (COL Const. art. 323). As the supreme authority of the city is the District Council, the mayor's responsibilities are to enforce the Constitution, the law, the decrees of the National Government and the agreements, ordinances, and resolutions of the District Council (COL Const. art. 315 n.1 &Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 1 & 5). The mayor is to preserve public order in accordance with the law and the instructions from the President (COL Const. art. 315 n.2 &Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 2). To achieve this, the Constitution invested the mayor as the highest police authority in each city, making the National Police accountable directly to the mayor (COL Const. art. 315 n.2). The mayor must also coordinate and monitor the national entities for the proper provision of services in the city (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 7). The legislative competencies allows the Mayor of Bogotá to either sanction or veto the resolutions which the Council may have approved (COL Const. art. 315 n.6), to issue decrees, orders and resolutions (approved by the Council) (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 4), to collaborate with judicial authorities (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 17), and to take the measures authorized by law and municipal agreements in cases of emergency and inform the Council on the rationale of the measures taken (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 18).

As the Mayor of Bogotá is the head of the executive branch, most of the competencies bestowed are related to the management of the city. To direct the administration of the city, which includes the execution of the functions and the delivery of services (COL Const. art. 315 n.3 & Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 3), the mayor can create, eliminate or merge positions, appoint and remove the officials under his/her jurisdiction, as well as the managers or directors of the public institutions and the industrial or commercial enterprises of local character (COL Const. art. 315 n.3, 7 & Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 8, 9). The mayor can also eliminate or merge municipal entities (COL Const. art. 315 n.4 & Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 10), while coordinating and monitoring the services provided in the district by national entities (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 7). Finally, the mayor is also allowed to distribute his work to the secretariats, administrative departments, and decentralized entities (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 6).

The Mayor of Bogotá must also comply with financial responsibilities, such as presenting to the Council its General Plan for Economic, Social Development, and Public Works, the annual report and budget of revenues and expenditures (COL Const. art. 315 n.5 & Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 12, 13), to manage municipal expenditures in accordance with what was approved by the Council (COL Const. art. 315 n.9.), ensure the collection and administration of revenues and treasury flows and decree their investment (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 14), and to judge and approve contracts of the central administration, powers that can be delegated to the secretariats and heads of administrative departments (Decree 1421, 1993, art. 38 n. 15). Therefore, although the Mayor of Bogotá is elected by the people, they ought to have all their projects and budgets approved by the District Council.

The Secretariat

In the executive branch, the mayor of the city counts with 15 Secretariats, that are centralized organisms, to execute the different areas of the management of the city such as urban planning, economic development, education, health, social integration, culture and recreation, mobility, public services, security, and justice. These Secretariats are the arms of the mayor to administer the city. There are two types of decentralized organisms, those attached to the government and those associated. These could be institutions, foundations, corporations, etc. They contribute with the mission of the government (Decree 1421, 1993, Preprint 54).

Secretariats divide their work sometimes by localities, by UPZ[25] or by sectors (children, youth, women, etc.) impacting the way services are provided. For example, the Culture, Recreation and Sport Secretariat's work is solely carried out in the 46 most vulnerable UPZ (DEPT#1). They use recreation and sports to mitigate individuals with social problems such as addictions, or migrants unemployed, who without support, could end up becoming a problem for the communities. Normally the Secretariat assigns a manager per UPZ to warrant that the mission, work, and processes are carried out. To ensure that the activities proposed are adequate in each UPZ, the Secretariat conducts a *territorial characterization* to identify the individual needs of the community. Through the territorial characterization, the Secretariat also identifies community leaders, and propose the activities and projects related to their area of responsibility (DEPT#1). One of the problems with this type of organization (46 most vulnerable UPZ), is that other areas of the city are neglected, and recreation and sports is a right for every citizen (DEPT#1). The Mobility Secretariat on the other hand works by localities. They have *local centers of mobility* in each locality, where individuals can request information, complain, etc. for anything that corresponds to the Mobility Secretariat (DEPT#3). Mobility Secretariat directs the IDU[26], the unity for road maintenance, transport terminals, the Transmilenio, and the future Metro (DEPT#3). The mission and vision of the Mobility Secretariat is not only to improve the mobility of the city, but also increase the security (reducing accidents) and inclusivity, especially to individuals with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ2+ community (DEPT#3). Projects include training mobility personnel on how to treat minorities and persons with disabilities to reduce discrimination in the city; moving away from diesel and fuel to more green mobility with the introduction of green buses; and recuperating public spaces in neighborhoods; transforming roads into pedestrian streets to improve air quality and bring back commerce lost during the pandemic (DEPT#3). As the mission of Social Integration Secretariat is to provide social services to those most vulnerable (selected based on public policy) they organize their work by sectors (children, youth, LGBTQ2+, elderly, homeless, family, and women) (DEPT#2). This Secretariat carries out multiple projects such as community dinning, old age subsidies, community centers, hostels and protection centers for the elderly or individuals at risk of becoming homeless, child daycares, care and orientation to young mothers, the family project to reduce intra-family violence, help to members of the community with disabilities, funeral services for families without resources to bury the dead, free courses to find jobs. This Secretariat also has programs for homeless who do not want to leave the streets, so they try to improve their quality of life, and mitigate conflicts that arise with

[25] Unidades de Planeamiento Zonal (UPZ) or "Zonal Planning Units" are planning instruments that establish urban regulations for a set of neighborhoods that have common characteristics in their urban development, as well as in their predominant uses and activities (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2022). There are about 117 UPZ as these are groups of neighbourhoods withing the localities. There are from 1 to 12 UPZ in each locality.

[26] Instituto de Planeación Urbana (IDU) or Institute for Urban Planning

communities when they use streets as bathrooms or destroy garbage bags for their survival (DEPT#2). All the Secretariats are evaluated by their results and future years budget allocations heavily depends on their performance (DEPT#2). While results based management can be a positive evaluation criteria, the personnel working on the Secretariats argue that often they rush to get numbers for statistics sometimes reducing the quality of their services.

The Secretariats' approach is heavily influenced by the political beliefs of the mayor in office (DEPT#1). For example, under the current administration of Claudia Lopez, the push is to increase the articulation among the different centralized, decentralized, and local entities to work together to "stabilize the community" versus the silo-style of former administrations (DEPT#1). The Secretariats are encouraged by the current administration to inform the local mayors of their projects and strategize together how to carry out the specific activities in their locality, but without delegation of competencies to local mayors (DEPT#1 & 3). The Secretariats work with the local mayor's office, as it is much easier to territorialize public policies. In fact, the Secretariats provide the technical line, yet in a decentralized manner, each locality has a local sub direction per Secretariat, an operative unit where the projects are executed by professional teams which aid in the local articulation with the local mayor's office and other institutions (DEPT#2). Instruments such as Social Boards (CLOPS[27]) are spaces for the community to make recommendations as the local mayor tables new public policies proposed by the central mayor (DEPT#2). The Secretariats also benefit from working with the local mayors as they form alliances for specific projects of mutual interest and sometimes these projects are funded with the local participatory budget (DEPT#2 & 3). A critique that some community leaders make, as Secretariats asking back for funds from participatory budgets pushes the system back to centralization, which reduced citizen's participation.

The mayor of the city allows each Secretariat to decide on the specific projects and allocate budget amounts, according to the parameters handed down to them by the Mayor's and Councillors approved budget (DEPT#1 & 2). The challenges to execute the projects planned varies. In 2020-2021 the Covid-19 pandemic forced re-allocation of budgets to meet the most immediate needs of the civilians (DEPT#1). Funds formerly allocated for sports and recreation were used to feed hundreds of hungry families during the pandemic. However, reductions to budgets have been ongoing even before the pandemic. For example, the Recreation Secretariat saw a reduction of funds for activities for the elderly in the last 15 years. Previously, they were able to provide uniforms, trips for the elderly, festivals, and snacks to raise the cultural awareness of the city (DEPT#1).

There is no participatory budget at the Secretariat level. The leaders do a reading of what the community needs, decide the projects, and how to implement them (DEPT#1). Sometimes, the Secretariat organizes forums with local mayors to understand the problems of the city in a holistic way (DEPT#1). At the same time, Secretariats organize tables of participation with all the district entities, however these meetings are not always effective. For example, after multiple participatory meetings over two months, members did not come to an accord during the 2021 protests, mainly over very complex war of powers (DEPT#1). Unlike the other two Secretariats interviewed, the Mobility Secretariat is trying to introduce the Institutional Participative Plan (PIP for its abbreviation in Spanish), which aims at including the community in all the plans and projects of

[27] Consejos Locales de Política Social (CLOP) or Local Board for Social Policies

this Secretariat (DEPT#3). Minorities do not directly influence decision making, but Secretariats do try to motivate them to participate in the projects and to keep them informed (DEPT#1). For example, minorities were consulted on how they will be affected by the new integrated transport system once the metro is constructed, which will remove the current transport routes that go to the most vulnerable areas of the city, increasing transportation fees in those communities. Integrating indigenous communities in the implementation of this new system allows the Mobility Secretariat to reduce the impact of their new policies (DEPT#3). Another interesting aspect of governance is that the Secretariats are autonomous in their work and not influenced externally either by the private sector or international assistance, they follow only the indications of the Mayor and the Council (DEPT#1, 2 & 3). However, the Secretariats contract private entities to carry out different projects, guaranteeing fair competition but these private entities do not part-take on decision-making (DEPT#1 & 3).

Decentralized District Entities

Decentralized entities in Bogotá, are entities with legal personality linked to one of the Secretariats. They are created by the Constitution, law, ordinance, agreement, or by authorization of the legislator to the executive (Funcion Pública, 2022). There are 35 decentralized district entities in Bogotá, out of which 21 are attached and 14 are associated. The 21 attached decentralized entities have administrative and financial autonomy, legal status, and their own assets, to perform administrative functions or provide a service (Función Pública, 2022a). The associated entities also have administrative, financial autonomy, legal personality, and independent capital but their purpose is to carry out productive, industrial, or commercial activities for the sale of goods and services (Función Pública, 2022b). As one of the aims of this research is to understand what big cities do, particularly Bogotá, in terms of top-down institutionalized decision-making mechanisms for the provision of essential public services; two of the attached decentralized entities were selected for interviewing, as these entities focus on administrative functions or provision of services rather than the sale of goods and services.

IDEPAC

The Instituto Distrital de la Participación y Acción Comunal (IDPAC) or Participation and Community Action District Institute is a decentralized attached entity with administrative autonomy that reports to the District Government Secretariat[28]. This institute was created under the 257 accord of 2006 to guarantee the right to citizenry participation, through the strengthening of social organizations, and contributing to policies, plans and programs that directly deal with urban citizen's participation (IDPAC, 2022). IDPAC works primarily with JACs but also with other organizations, as long as these organizations have signed an agreement with the JACs (ORG#1). Just this past year for example, they worked with organizations such as *Vibra Verde Vive Verde, Ser Sumapaz, Altos del Zuque o Guaches, Cabildo Inga,* and other youth and LGTBQ organizations. These organizations already have community projects in place like teaching the community how to recycle, create community gardens, and others (ORG#1). The IDPAC has a $500 million COP budget for 25 projects, or $20 M per project a year for the 20 localities (ORG#1). These projects are suggested by the community, for the community and executed by the community. Through these projects IDPAC increases local's participation by making the community aware of the different mechanisms for decision-making while generating knowledge in the community, such as protecting the environment, or improving civil culture. IDPAC also has

[28] See Table 4.1 Centralized and Decentralized Organisms in Bogotá

a school of participation to train community leaders (ORG#1). Yet, there are multiple critiques towards this decentralized entity such as corruption, malpractice, or simply poorly structured. Corruption and malpractice critiques were briefly mentioned in the section of the JACs. In terms of how this entity is structured, some believe that the fact that the director of IDPAC is appointed by the mayor of the city, makes this position a political reward to be paid in turn of political favours as this position is well remunerated and includes traveling (COMLEA#1).

UAESP

The Unidad Administrativa Especial de Servicios Públicos (UAESP) or Special Administrative Unit for Public Services is a decentralized attached entity that reports to Habitat Secretariat. This entity specializes in the collection of garbage, recycling, cleaning of the streets, and illumination in the city of Bogotá. The UAESP has a complex internal organigram to achieve their aims. This is partially because decree 596 of 2016 formalized the position of *recicladores* (recyclers) which was traditionally a type of informal employment. Now recyclers are regulated by the UAESP (Decree 596, 2016), and it is estimated that close to 24,000 individuals are registered as recyclers, although there are many individuals still working informally (ORG#2). Recyclers collect from public and household garbage the items that could be recycled and sell them for profit. For recyclers to legally get paid, they need to be registered with UAESP, but also be part of an association. The association keeps a tally of how much (in kilos) each recycler collects and based on that amount, the association pays the recycler (ORG#2). ARASID is an example of one of the 200 associations recognized by the UAESP. The local mayors often hold events to promote recycling, and sensibilization to encourage citizens to keep their city clean, and they often invite UAESP and associations to contribute with the campaigns (ORG#2). There is still much controversy withing the recyclers after the formalization of their positions. The city wants to structure the role of the recycler by giving them a schedule and minimum salary. Yet, recyclers object as under the current system of being paid by kilos and without a proper schedule, they can work when they want, and sometimes make more money by selling in the black market, valuable items they find in the garbage (ORG#2). The recyclers' community doesn't not feel understood or included in the decision-making of the leaders in the city.

The Board of Local Administrators (JAL)

The Junta de Administradores Locales (JAL) or Board of Local Administrators, began to be regulated by the law decree 1421 of 1993 (EDILJAL#2 & 3). There is one JAL in each locality. The JAL is composed of 7 to 11 Ediles (larger localities have more Ediles). The Ediles are local level councillors, who reside or carry out some professional, industrial, commercial, or labor activity in the locality in which they run for office. The Edil's task is to identify the problems or needs that their locality is going through, and thus serve as channels to manage solutions (El Tiempo, 2021). Ediles are elected by their communities every 3 years. At the national level, only a few JALs have honorariums for the Ediles, but as Bogotá is the Capital, Ediles are remunerated which gives them greater stability, but their salary is conditioned to their assistance to the sessions (EDILJAL#2). The JAL is organized in five commissions: Budget; Education, Culture, Recreation and Sports; Social Welfare; Health and the Environment; and Government and Development Plan. Each commission has a President and a Vice-president. These commissions guide and control in each one of their areas of responsibility (EDILJAL#1).

One of the roles of the JAL is to ensure the local mayor follows the guidelines of the mayor. The JAL reviews and approves the budget allocated to the locality every year. In their review, Ediles can shift, if needed, the amounts allocated in the budget lines, but they cannot add a single line to the budget, as they must follow the directions of what was indicated in the Development Plan (EDILJAL#1).Once the budget is approved, the Ediles oversee that the projects, and the contracts are both in line with the budget, and the contracting requirements by law. As corruption has been rampant, the JAL was institutionalized to ensure the local mayor's office does not "steal" the funds allocated for development projects in the locality. The JAL also oversees all the government entities that work in their locality, such as the Secretariats of Health, Infrastructure, Recreation, etc. (EDILJAL#1, 2 & 3). When the Ediles find irregularities, they can raise their concerns to higher district levels of control such as the Personería and Contraloría (EDILJAL#2).

Another of the roles of the JAL is to pre-select the candidates to be the local mayor in their locality. This process was designed to keep the accountability and transparency of the appointment of local mayors. Any civilian can apply to become a local mayor, and there are no pre-set qualifications, they don't even have to have completed high school. They do need to pass a written exam. The individuals with the highest exam results are called for an interview with the Ediles of the locality and each Edil votes for the candidates they deem more suitable for the job. Candidates' professional competence and political affiliation are considered in the interview, as the Ediles also represent a political party. The Ediles must select three possible candidates and present them to the mayor of the city who then selects one of them as the local mayor for that locality (EDILJAL#1 & COL Const. 1991 art.323).

The members of the JAL work with the JACs in their locality to ensure the community has a voice in the affairs of the locality (EDILJAL#2). For example, Ediles often invite JAC members to participate in commission debates for them to raise issues of interest in their communities (PRESJAC#3), and to vote on "local accords" that might become part of the political and administrative life of the locality (EDILJAL#2). Yet, when addressing civilian's concerns about public services, there is very little Ediles can do besides raising awareness of issues or ensuring just charges for these services to the community (EDILJAL#3 & EDILJAL#4). For example, Ediles are informed of changes implemented regarding transportation issues, but not consulted in decision-making (EDILJAL#4). When it comes to ensuring safety in their locality, Ediles can meet with the Police in their locality to address issues, and request reports of activities. However, most public services organizations are accountable to the District Consul as these services are centralized (EDILJAL#3), so the JAL can raise awareness of malpractice and issues but are not part of the decision-making process to public services and infrastructure in their locality.

The JAL could be more effective if it was strengthened and improved (EDILJAL#2). If Ediles had more of a say in the definition of the budget, in the formulation of the plans of development, and the social and political life of the localities. However, the current laws that regulate this mechanism create obstacles for these changes, as everything that arrives to them is already defined and structured at the central level, which weakens the social and political influence of the JAL (EDILJAL#2). Yet, it is the Ediles who know the territory, the needs of the locality, and the city development plan, so their imput could be more effective if they were able to propose or be involved in the decision-making, but all they can do, is to enforce accountability of what has been proposed at the central level (EDILJAL#1). The changes in these laws bring up the debate between

centralization or decentralization, of questioning the type of government that would be more suitable to attaining the "dreams" of Bogotáns (EDILJAL#2). Ediles feel that when working with higher levels of governance, such as the Secretariats, they often feel ignored as they do not really have a stake in what happens in their localities. Secretariats are more inclined to talk and arrange things with members of the District Council (EDILJAL#2). There is no autonomy in decision-making at the JAL, as everything they want to do in their locality, needs to be consulted. Even when drafting local accords, the Government Secretariat, and the local mayor ought to approve them (EDILJAL#4). Ediles are only able to make decisions that fall within the already established rubrics, and often the community demands them to act or deal with certain issues, Ediles are left with the uncomfortable answer of "the law doesn't permit me to go any further" (EDILJAL#4).

The Local Mayors

The local mayor's office is a purely administrative figure in the governance system of Bogotá. One of the Secretariats deals with the local mayor's offices and their performance (DEPT#2). As previously mentioned, local mayors are not elected by the community, but are appointed by the mayor from a trio pre-selected by the Ediles of the JAL (COL Const. 1991 art. 323). As the local mayor is appointed, there is very little decentralization in administrative or financial affairs. The local mayor's office has no authority over the provision of urban services in their locality as these are the competence of the Secretariats. Local mayors only provide administrative support to the plan of the Secretariats (PRESJAC#1). The local mayor's responsibilities are to move projects ahead, such as education, improving roads, parks, provide financial aid to the elderly, children, and less favored individuals, all in accordance with what was predetermined by the approved centralized Development Plan (PRESJAC#4). For example, the local mayor is informed by the curaduría urbana[29] of the construction projects that will be taking place in his locality, and he/she must ensure that the curaduría has the legal permits in place and that they carry out the project as it was approved (EDILJAL#4). Local mayors also need to find ways to accommodate the needs of their localities without moving away from this plan (EDILJAL#2). The local mayor's office ought to coordinate institutions and maintain their locality in good order, keeping records of use of land for example, and other administrative affairs (EDILJAL#4).

The local mayors played an important role in their localities in times of crisis. For example, during the pandemic, there were some localities such as Rafael Uribe-Uribe and San Cristobal in which the local mayors were able to identify the most vulnerable people and provide them with emergency subsidies effectively, while this was not the case in other localities (ORG#1). According to one of the organizations interviewed, the difference in outcomes is mainly due to the competence of the mayor. Local mayors, although they do not have much of a decision-making role, they are key to the successful competition of projects, and at the same time, they can create havoc or simply utilize their position for their personal benefit. However, communities have higher expectations of what their local mayors should be able to do for them. According to one of the community leaders interviewed, local mayors are the bridge between the district mayor and the Public Service Entities, be water, electricity, or gas, they have the obligation to advocate for the good of the community. "Local mayors are appointed to work for their locality, for their community, to attend to the inhabitants of the area, to their requests and complaints"

[29] Curaduría Urbana: It is an individual who exercises the public function of studying, processing and issuing urban planning licenses at the request of the interested party in advancing urbanization, subdivision, construction and subdivision projects.

(COMLEA#1). Yet, even when local mayor's have the best intentions to help their communities, they themselves feel frustrated due to their inability to do more, as they are handed down the plans from above, if the community doesn't agree to these plans, or they see other priorities, there is very little the local mayor can do to change these plans (PRESJAC#1). The only autonomy the local mayor has is to spend or not the budget allocated to his locality, with some minor changes. Mayors without much managerial experience can delay projects and under expend, reducing their budgets for the next administration (PRESJAC#1).

This type of centralized approach to local mayors reduces the accountability of the local mayor towards the citizens in the locality. As the only requirements to become a local mayor, are to get a high score in a test and then pass an interview, it often happens that local mayors are not residents in the localidades where they are appointed. This causes frustration in the communities as they feel their local mayor doesn't represent them as they do not really understand the needs of the community. The local mayor's job security depends on their performance as evaluated by the district mayor and not the community. Some think that it would greatly improve local mayor's accountability if they were elected by the people (EDILJAL#2).

The Board of Community Action (JAC)

The Junta de Acción Comunal (JAC), or the Board of Community Action is an institutionalized mechanism for citizen participation, at the neighbourhood level, in local governance and decision-making. Although these organisms have existed for about 60 years, they were only constitutionally constituted in 2007 by Law 743 (PRESJAC#3). The JAC is composed of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Fiscal, and other members that are part of working groups, totaling10-15 members (PRESJAC#4). There are about 6000 JACs in all of Colombia. In Bogotá they represent the neighborhoods, but they are also present in rural communities and in the municipalities (PRESJAC#3). The directives hold their positions for 4-year periods, The JAC report to both ASOJUNTAS and the IDPAC. ASOJUNTAS oversees all the presidents of the JAC and keeps them informed of all the state, mayoral, local mayor's office and police's notices that could concern the JAC. There is also a delegate from ASOJUNTAS that joins the meetings and activities of the JACs (PRESJAC#2). The IDPAC on the other hand, regulates the action of the JAC.

The JACs represent and support the community. "La Junta es el primer aliado de todo lo que usted quieren llegar a ser (the JAC is the first ally of all you [the community] wants to be" (ORG#1). One of the presidents of the JAC noted that recently, the nation is more aware of the importance of community leaders and has started to give more attention to the JAC (PRESJAC#2). The mission of the JAC is to identify and raise awareness of the different types of needs of the community; such as infrastructure (street illumination, water shortages), and social public services (health, culture, and recreation) (PRESJAC#3). JAC members fundraise to give food donations to the poor, help support migrants, send right of pleas to public services entities, accompany the elderly or help conciliate any community conflicts (PRESJAC#1). The JACs have been present when the communities have had the greatest needs, such as natural disasters, situations of general violence, socio-economic challenges, and most recently during the 2020-2021 Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the JACs seconded the indications and initiatives the mayor and the local mayor proposed to keep civilians safe, as well as to identify vulnerable families and provide subsides and food packages for their subsistence (PRESJAC#3).

Although the JAC is a good system for community participation, corruption, mismanagement, and lack of institutional support limit the effectiveness of this instrument. “La gente no cree en las Juntas de Acción Comunal (people don’t believe in the JAC)” (PRESJAC#1). JAC leaders have used their position to gain personal favours for themselves, their relatives or those closest to them (COMLEA#1, PRESJAC#1 & ORG#1). It is common in Colombia at all levels of government to hear about individuals buying votes to win elections. Ignorance and personal needs pushes citizens to sell their votes, perpetuating the corruption cycle, in which communities end up electing corrupt officials that buy their votes. Campaigns of formation on the importance to vote consciously are recurrent, but the poor with serious financial needs end up using this fast cash to feed their hungry children. One of the individuals interviewed, insisted on the need for citizens to vote consciously, to inform themselves well, to choose someone who will really work for the community and avoid selecting those who only wish to gain personal benefit (ORG#1).

Corruption is present not only in the aspiring members of the JAC, but also in other organisms that are supposed to support and strengthen the JAC. According to one of the community leaders interviewed, the IDPAC is corrupt and has abandoned the JACs. In some communities JACs don’t even have a space to work, or have any desks, chairs, computers, etc., which are necessary for them to do their job (COMLEA#1). JAC members have complained and in some cases, minimal help was received, even after writing letters to the local mayor, the mayor and the IDPAC.

In other neighborhoods, JAC members might have been fairly elected, but then those elected lack the knowledge and ability to fulfill their functions. Some JAC members don’t know how to use a computer, how to do the accounting, keep track of meetings, and some don’t even know how to read (COMLEA#1). If elected members are capable, then they lack time, as these positions are on a volunteer basis (COMLEA#1). Often, JAC members must contribute from their own pockets to be able to do their job right, such attending different meetings organized by the government entities which they are obliged to participate as members of the JAC (COMLEA#2). The poorest neighborhoods require more state support to maintain the JAC’s properly working, as in the wealthy communities JAC members can fundraise their salaries and are supported by the neighborhood (COMLEA#2).

There are some JACs that are more effective than others, and this greatly depended on the acceptance of this mechanisms at the community level. In some neighbourhoods, the JAC matters a lot, and the members receive a lot of support to voice community needs to their local mayor. Other JACs are very inactive, and do absolutely nothing for their neighborhood, and rather use the JAC for political gains and/or personal benefit (ORG#1). The solution to ensuring this mechanism is not abused by corruption, is that the state strengthens these institutions (ORG#1). However, lack of resources and corruption at other levels end up controlling those JAC’s where the communities are not very involved, often out of ignorance or dissatisfaction with the historical failure of some of these institutions.

Appendix 9: List of Centralized and Decentralized Organisms in Bogotá

Capital District	Centralized Organisms	Attached Decentralized Organisms	Associated Decentralized Organisms
1. Public Administration	**General Secretariat**		
	Administrative Dept. Civil District Service		
2. Local Government	District **Government Secretariat**	District **Institute of Community Participation** and Action (IDPAC)	
	Admin. Dept. Defensor of Public Space		
3. Treasury	District **Treasury** Secretariat	Fund for Economic benefits, severance pay and pensions	Bogotá Lottery
		District Census	
4. Planning	District **Planning** Secretariat		
5. Economic, Industry and Tourism development	District **Economic Development** Secretariat	Institute for Social Economy (IPES)	Corporation for the Development and Productivity of Bogotá
		District Tourism Institute (IDT)	
6. Education	District **Education** Secretariat	District Institute for Investigation, Education and Pedagogical Development	District **University** Francisco José de Caldas
7. Health	District **Health** Secretariat	District Financial Fund for Health (FFDS),	Capital Health (EPS)
			Administrative and Technical Advisory Entity
		Integrated Health Service Subnetworks	District Institute of Science, Biotechnology, and Innovation in Health (IDCBIS)
8. Social Integration	Social Integration Secretariat	District Institute for the Protection of Children and Youth (IDIPRON)	
9. Culture, Recreation and Sports	District **Culture**, **Recreation** and **Sport** Secretariat	District Institute for Recreation and Sport,	Capital Channel
		District Institute for Culture and Patrimony (IDPC)	
		District Institute for Arts (IDARTES),	
		Gilberto Alzate Avedaño Foundation	

		Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogotá	
10. Environment	District **Environment** Secretariat	**Botanic Garden** (JBB),	
		District Institute for **Risk Management** and **Climate Change** (FONDIGER),	
		District Institute for the **Protection** and Wellbeing of **Animals** (IDPYBA)	
11. Mobility	District **Mobility** Secretariat	Unit for Rehabilitation and Maintenance of **Roads** (UAERMV),	Transport Corporation **Transmileno**,
			Transport Terminal
		Institute of **Urban Development** (IDU)	Corporation for the **Metro of Bogotá**
12. Habitat	District **Habitat** Secretariat	Unit for **Public Services** (UAESP)	Renovation and **Urban Development** Corporation
			Water and **Sewage** Corporation
			Electricity Corporation
		Popular Housing Bank (CVP)	**Telecommunications** Corporation
13. Women	District **Women** Secretariat		
14. Security, harmony, and justice	District **Security**, harmony, and **Justice** Secretariat		
	Official Body of **Firemen** of Bogotá		
15. Juridical Management	District **Juridical** Management Secretariat		

Centralized and Decentralized Organisms in Bogotá. Translated by Author from: https://www.alcaldiaBogotá.gov.co/sisjur/organica/tabla_organigrama.html