

Urban Commons: Peace, Reintegration and Community Development in a Neighborhood of Bogota

IASC 2017 Conference
Practicing the Commons
Self-governance, cooperation and institutional change
10-14 July 2017-06-19 Utrecht, the Netherlands

Mauricio Rubio
Universidad Externado de Colombia
mauriciorubiop@gmail.com

The Colombian government has received international attention for its peace agreement with the FARC guerrilla. Local peace issues, such as reducing crime and reintegrating of former gang members have received less attention. For many urban areas, these processes are very relevant: they determine safety of the neighborhood, reappropriation of public spaces and natural environment, decisions about their improvement and use, as well as relations between the neighbors and those of the community with the authorities.

This paper describes one of those current developments in a neighborhood adjacent to Universidad Externado de Colombia, in the eastern part of Bogota, bordering the mountain. The first section summarizes how the pacification of one of the gangs occurred and how the University involvement began. The second section provides a brief summary of the history of the neighborhood with emphasis on the close relationship between the community and the criminal activity that began several decades ago. A third section presents some ideas that have been proposed by the leaders of the gang. The main project, already begun, is to serve as guides for hiking and sightseeing in the same road and trail where they formerly attacked. They want to make a living from the forest and the mountain, but legally. The paper concludes by linking the project with the theory of commons and summarizing the support that the university could provide in terms of design, partner search and evaluation of projects best suited to strengthening and managing the Commons, natural, cultural and urban of that neighborhood.

Two peace agreements

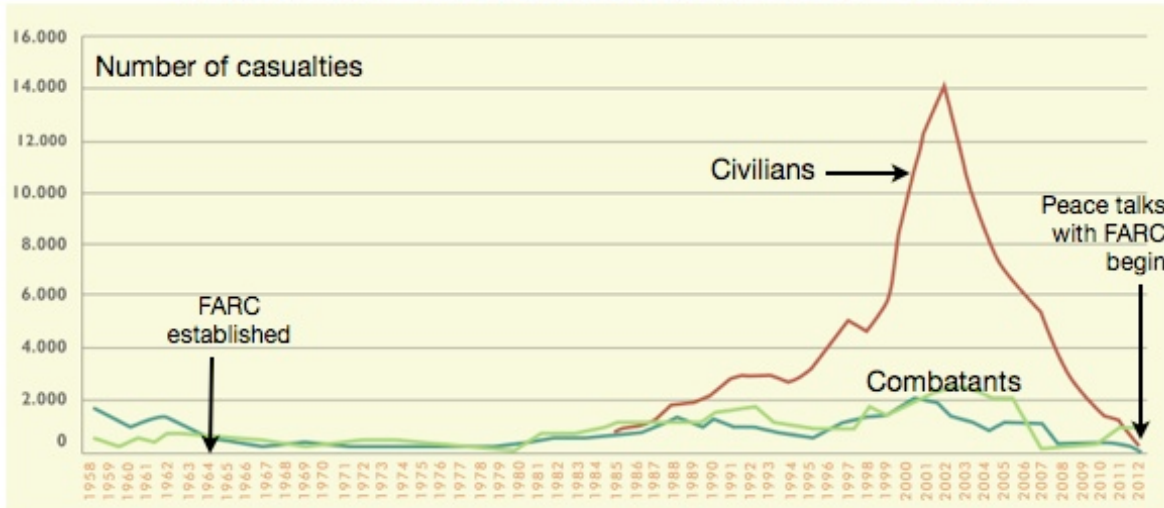
In December 2016 Juan Manuel Santos, president of Colombia, received the Nobel Peace Prize. This ceremony was part of a process initiated four years earlier at a table of dialogue with the FARC guerrillas in Hurdal, north of Oslo. The meetings then moved to Havana where both parties negotiated for more than four years. Kaci Kullman Five, coordinator of the Nobel Committee, explained that the distinction to Santos was "for his determined efforts to end more than 50 years of civil war in the country, a war that has claimed the lives of at least 220,000 Colombians"¹. There were several inaccuracies in that statement. The first was to describe as a civil war the very complex confrontation of the Colombian State with a wide variety of guerrillas, criminal organizations and gangs. The second was to suggest that the Colombian conflict began in the 1960s, when the FARC was founded; Colombian violence really grew considerably in the 1980s, with the rise of drug trafficking. Third, that statement did not explicitly say that at the beginning of the dialogues with the FARC, all available indicators of the conflict -massacres, homicides, kidnapping, internal displacement- showed that it had practically ended². To be more

¹ BBC (2016a)

² GMH (2013), GMH (2013a)

precise, the Peace Agreement signed with the FARC represented an important, but late and partial, advance in the reduction of Colombian violence, a process that began a decade before the dialogues with this guerrilla group, the most powerful in the country.

Colombia - Armed conflict 1958 - 2012



Source : GMH (2013)

After the delivery of the Nobel Prize and the final signing of the Agreement, it has become clear that clashes with other guerrilla groups continue to take place and that the cultivated area of coca, the main fuel of the war, increased instead of decreasing during negotiations with The FARC. Moreover, urban violence persists and the actions of criminal organizations have prevented the consolidation of peace³.

In this context, a small peace agreement between the Bogota Police and a gang in the neighborhood of Egipito, east of Bogota, on the initiative of its leaders, is important. As in many districts in any of the cities under the influence of drug trafficking, falling murder rates, youth violence and gang reinsertion did not result from ambitious legal reforms, nor were they led by governments that, on the contrary, brought to many localities the war on drugs. Although they would never have motivated a Nobel Prize, in urban areas without guerrilla influence, these dynamics have been crucial: they determine the number of violent deaths, delinquency, the management of public space, as well as relations between neighbors and political arrangements of Communities with local and national authorities.

In the neighborhood of Egipito, adjacent to the Universidad Externado de Colombia, gangs lived from the robbery of tourists and travelers to the municipality of Choachí and the east region of the department of Cundinamarca, where the Capital District is located; their territory was the hill: the Cerro Guadalupe, the forest, and the narrow road that crosses them. At the beginning of 2016, saturated with violence, worried about their children, the leaders of one of the gangs made a pact of coexistence with the police: they committed themselves to leave crime behind and to improve the infrastructure and social conditions of the neighborhood. Conscious of the importance of education to "live clean", that is to say, within the law, they asked for support from the university through a professor who had practiced almost two decades of social work in that parish. The university offered three

³ FIP (2013)

courses and, following a meeting of the band leaders with the president, decided to support a spontaneous, exploratory but realistic and pertinent effort, although totally disconnected from the peace process with the FARC.

The Egipto neighborhood and its bandits

The history of Egipto is peculiar: a traditional community, with strong ties between neighbors and, for different circumstances, various links with the complex Colombian conflict. Although the Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, whose murder in 1948 was a determinant of La Violencia –the violent political confrontation between liberals and conservatives- was born in the neighborhood of Las Cruces, "due to the precarious economic situation, the Gaitán family was forced to move to Egipto"⁴. The great leader lived then as a child in one of the "poorest neighborhoods of the capital". This experience served him to suffer the inequalities of a society like Colombia"⁵. Undoubtedly this was one of the reasons he was so close to "Papa Fidel", the first big Colombian mobster who defined how the gangs would behave: robbing rich people from outside the neighborhood to help their own community"⁶.

The alleged assassin of Gaitan, Juan Roa Sierra "came to the world in the Egipto neighborhood, half a block from the humble residence where that the caudillo was born"⁷. One may speculate that the resentment of Roa Sierra against Gaitan began when both were children.

Also in the foothills of Cerro Guadalupe, Luis Otero, one of the commanders of the M-19 guerrilla group, spent his childhood. He took part in the assault to the Palace of Justice in November 1985, a definite attack of the armed conflict that was planned near the same neighborhood. Otero was an active member of this guerrilla from the moment that it became publicly known with the robbery of the sword of Simon Bolivar, an action that also took place very close to Egipto"⁸. There, without daring to confirm it, some people indicate that there were neighbors who collaborated with that action"⁹.

Apart from these coincidences, several criminal activities have been well entrenched in the neighborhood for decades. Fidel Baquero, precursor of the bandits, organized a big illegal business: a large smuggling organization of homemade liquor, the "aguardiente" known as "tape tusa". Baquero was a friend of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, and without doubt the first great Colombian mafioso.

As happened decades later with many drug traffickers, who began their criminal careers as members of security agencies, in 1926 the authorities learned that a former customs guard was dedicated to defrauding the treasury. Two years were enough for Fidel Baquero to become the headache of the police and a mythical character exalted by journalists. Although less drastic than the prohibition of alcohol that in the US led to the emergence of powerful criminal organizations that smuggled liquors forbidden by law, Fidel Baquero was favored by the fight of the Colombian authorities against intoxicating drinks, and in

⁴ Marín Taborda (sf)

⁵ Alape (1980)

⁶ Herrera (2011)

⁷ RS (2006)

⁸ RS (1990a)

⁹ Interviews with neighbors, September 2016

particular, against "chicha" and artisanal "aguardiente". For the government and the mainstream media, alcohol was the source of many problems, especially those related to social protest, political demonstrations and uprisings. "The history of the aguardiente is one of shame, corruption, cruelty and ruin" wrote the newspaper La Humanidad ¹⁰. Like chicha, it was thought that homemade aguardiente "deformed the face and produced criminals, crazy and maladjusted, led to misery and despair" ¹¹. A big problem with these measures was that they were incoherent and hypocritical, since in the same newspapers announcing the ravages of certain liquors, advertising was made for others consumed by the upper classes. The health campaign was not directed against alcohol in general but against cheap intoxicating drinks. In 1923 a high tax was imposed on the sale of liquor: each bottle of aguardiente should be sold at more than double the previous price. That was the opportunity that Fidel Baquero used to distribute alcoholic beverages clandestinely: he could sell his aguardiente for a fraction -between a quarter and a sixth- of the value of the one that paid all the taxes ¹².

The accounts of the criminal adventures of the civil servant turned into smuggler looked like a serial novel in the media. The so-called red chronicle –based on judicial or police reports- was a prominent section in any newspaper. This, despite the fact that crime activities in Bogotá were still very incipient, there were practically no criminals, and it had been so since the nineteenth century. "If a comparison of the criminality between what today forms Colombia and other nations of America and even of Europe, it would be demonstrated that, thank God, we are a very notable exception in what makes several crimes too frequent in others societies. Banditry can be said to be barely known on this earth, despite the complete absence of preventive or security means in the deserted roads, as well as in towns. It is astonishing the tranquility with which it is possible to travel through "despoblados" and "páramos", without finding other obstacles that the bad roads" ¹³.

By the time of Fidel Baquero, "police news were still very scarce. So much that it was necessary to invent them. Nothing sensational happened in Bogota" ¹⁴. One of the most celebrated chroniclers, José Joaquín Ximénez, visited daily the only permanent court and communicated by phone with General De Leon, police commander, looking for something new, "but only the trivial facts happened one after another with exasperating monotony" ¹⁵. For these reasons, Ximénez had to invent a personage of the underworld, Rascamuelas, that could appear like the author of a large robbery and other serious crimes. Some monstrous homicides, such as the murder and later dismemberment of a woman whose corpse was put in pieces in a suitcase, were committed by persons with no previous judicial record ¹⁶. The Colombian lag in crime at that time was such that the assault on a famous jewelry, which could not be attributed to any of the offenders known to the authorities, inept, almost naive, was committed by French fugitives from Guyana.

In this context, the adventures of a smuggler like Baquero were really appreciated by the chroniclers who, ready to invent, could simply exaggerate his adventures. Papa Fidel, as he was known in the neighborhood of Egipto, was not only engaged in clandestine liquor trade and evading the authorities but also defending the small delinquents who

¹⁰ Cited by Herrera (2010) p. 11

¹¹ Herrera (2010) p. 11

¹² Herrera (2011)

¹³ Cordovez Moure (1893)

¹⁴ González Toledo (1994) p. 189

¹⁵ Ibid p. 188

¹⁶ See for example "Body of woman for pounds" in González Toledo (1994) pp. 43-50

collaborated with him. When a “cafuche”, man or woman, was imprisoned, “the same robust man, dressed in cloth, pocket watch, snuff on the bottom of his trousers, hat, and mustache, came to intercede.... His presence was so common to support those people persecuted by justice for smuggling, that the gendarmes began to call him Papá (father) Fidel and so he remained”, wrote a chronicler ¹⁷.

For the first time in Bogotá, the criminal activity was technified “with arms, with distribution network, with cheap lawyers who took the lawsuits, with information services and espionage” ¹⁸ and Papa Fidel was an important employer in the neighborhood of Egipto. Ximenez, the red chronicler, did not hesitate to affirm that the “cafuches”, those gunmen with iron discipline, “represent organizations that have now reached an almost incredible degree of perfection” ¹⁹. The name of cafuche came from the animals that lived in the caves of the hills and reflected their ability to hide. The initial team of the leader in Egipto was small, “among men, women and boys”, but gradually expanded. He usually bought the businesses of those who supplied the liquor and became partners. By the end of the 1930s “the group of smugglers commanded by Fidel Baquero amounted to more than five hundred and fifty, who live scattered throughout the city” ²⁰.

In 1936, following an operation by the police commander backed by a tougher anti-smuggling law, Fidel was arrested but very soon was released. Two years later, as if predicting the bloodthirsty confrontations between mafiosi for the export routes of cocaine, the band of Fidel faced La Culebrera, a group led by another gangster. The reason for the dispute was the distribution channels of contraband. Carlos Alba, one of the opponent's lieutenants, was injured when he was having a drink with some friends. “Papa Fidel and his nephew Juan de Dios entered the shop, approached Alba's table and shot him” ²¹. The police captured them, and when they were in front of the judge, on the outskirts of the court, the cafuches of the two gangs decided to ally themselves and work together to avoid mutual reprisals. After committing another crime, Baquero was referred to a penitentiary colony outside Bogota for greater security, but he fled in a few days. Félix Cruz, one of his nephews notes that “once my uncle Fidel was put in jail and more than 150 people, some armed, went to get him ... Release him or no one will remain alive. The policemen, who were no more than five, let him free” ²².

The success of contraband aguardiente was such that it was consumed even in official ceremonies. When the funicular of Monserrate was inaugurated in 1929, among other personalities, the Apostolic Nuncio, the archbishop, the Minister of Communications and the mayor of Bogota attended. “Upon arriving at the station above, the party was received with champagne, pastries and sweets, while the workers gathered at the summit and toasted with “tape tusa”, that contraband aguardiente distilled by the so-called cafuches, the delinquents that set up competition to official liquor of Cundinamarca” ²³. In its golden period, Papa Fidel's organization managed to distribute more than four thousand liters of contraband aguardiente per day ²⁴.

¹⁷ Herrera (2011)

¹⁸ Herrera (2011)

¹⁹ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²⁰ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²¹ Herrera (2011)

²² Herrera (2010) p. 20

²³ ET (1992a)

²⁴ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

The business operated first in the sectors adjacent to the Central Market Square. Each cafuche would remove five or ten bottles from the containers and go out and sell them. If the police caught him, he broke the bottles so as not to leave evidence of the crime. Very meticulous, Papa Fidel was able to recruit collaborators among the elite: "he generally manages all matters related to his subordinates, gives the orders, traces the road map, plans the means of placing the *aguardiente*, identifies the markets, closes the wholesale deals, and almost everything is done through senior officials, who are their immediate subordinates and who act directly on the order of *cafuches*"²⁵. His power was such that when one of his accomplices fell into the hands of the authorities, "he confesses plainly in the police station that he is a *cafuche* and he works under the orders of Papa Fidel"²⁶.

Later, the business was transferred to a place called El Verjón, in the foothills of the Cerro Monserrate. The position of the new site allowed to maintain observation and surveillance posts to give a warning signal in case the authorities approached. Thus, instead of the poor delinquents controlled and despised by the police, or those invented by the chroniclers, such as *Rascamuelas*, there was now a powerful criminal organization that managed to put the authorities in check, infiltrating and confronting them. "This strong and formal union, together with the iron discipline, makes the order of the *cafuches* a fearsome band that lives outside the law and against which all the efforts of the authority have crashed"²⁷.

Although it was a criminal enterprise, a crucial role of Papa Fidel and his *cafuches* was to give employment and protect the neighbors of Egipto who collaborated with them. A "special group of gunmen were set up to deal with the authorities, defend the community and provide special surveillance services; this group includes robust men, of great courage, all similar to the American gangsters or the Yankee strikebreakers. They will jump immediately in the moment of danger, ready to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, to defend the five hundred and more *cafuches* who maintain the smuggling business"²⁸.

The illegal activity gave Papa Fidel the ability to establish other businesses. It is estimated that he was able to accumulate a fortune equivalent to half a million dollars today. When he died, the highlight of the media was his generous, almost altruistic personality. "He had a heart of a philanthropist, he helped many people and not less than two thousand people lived out of his many businesses. He was in the habit of supporting poor families and ensuring the education of many children" wrote *El Liberal*²⁹. "Badly obtained but piously distributed money. This was the secret of his fame" pointed out *El Espectador*³⁰. References to Robin Hood were made since he was alive. He was also compared to Raimundo Russi, a well-known criminal defense lawyer during the independence period. He was detested by aristocrats, landlords and ecclesiastics, even though "everyone knew that Dr. Russi was poor and lived in a modest room in the neighborhood of Egipto"³¹.

Papa Fidel was no stranger to political activity, and more specifically to proselytism in favor of his great friend Jorge Eliecer Gaitan. After him, in the neighborhood there were several cohorts of thieves and robbers with different types of victims always outside the

²⁵ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²⁶ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²⁷ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²⁸ Ximénez (1938, 2013)

²⁹ September 10, 1946, quoted by Herrera (2011)

³⁰ September 10, 1946, quoted by Herrera (2011)

³¹ ED (2009)

neighborhood. Also typical bandits, without leftist rhetoric, current gang members are the fourth generation of criminals who, simultaneously, help women and neighboring families, offering them not only protection but part of the spoils in exchange for cooperation with their illegal activities. In 2002, for example, alluding to the clans, a newspaper titled that "families of robbers seize the road to Choachi"³². The same article reported that the nearest police station "confirms that at least two robberies occur weekly on that route"³³. According to several testimonies, "the route is used by eight bands composed of families that are dedicated to rob those who travel by that route"³⁴.

A former gang member, who has withdrawn as a result of the arrest of her teenager son, tells of the role of women in the organization of robberies. The first function was to hide the booty "in hot", just after obtaining it. They also played the role of mourners in case the police detained any of the band's young members. Finally, perhaps most importantly, they were in charge of selling the stolen merchandise to the retailers located in the center of Bogota. Their advantages for doing that were two. On the one hand, they were rarely signed by the police, arousing less suspicions when carrying cameras or other goods. Over time, they were able to accumulate better knowledge of the market: both the prices of stolen products and the most reliable buyers³⁵.

Anticipating the large burial of Pablo Escobar, considered by many a great benefactor of popular sectors, there were crowds in the funeral of Papa Fidel in 1946. About fifteen thousand people attended the ceremony and "there was a caravan of more than a hundred trucks and cars"³⁶. All media considered the death a true event. "Imposing the funeral procession of Papa Fidel ... A great crowd at the funeral ... Demonstration of mourning for the death... Apotheosis ... Thousands of humble people accompanied his coffin to the cemetery"³⁷. Beside his young wife, Emma Rodriguez, his several women also wept. One of his trusted men would remember many years later "that burial, not even that of a president. A burial that nobody believes"³⁸. Another assistant compared the burial with that of the great leader of liberalism. "I have been to two good burials in Bogotá, that of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and that of Papa Fidel. At Fidel's funeral, people cried heartily because the person who gave them work was dead. Men who cried, old men who cried like orphans"³⁹.

Like Papa Fidel, who kept many women with his children in the neighborhood, it was usual for gang leaders of different generations to be womanizers and have several homes simultaneously. These complex family ramifications reinforced the bonds of gangs with the community as providers and trainers of the next generation of robbers with the same principle of stealing from outside the neighborhood, and even better from foreign tourists, to distribute the booty within the community. Thus, they lived in peace because they were not affected by insecurity and crime. In fact, the pressure of the neighbors of Egipto on the last generation of gang members to make the agreement with the police intensified when young members of the band began to attack people of the neighborhood⁴⁰.

³² ET (2002a)

³³ ET (2002a)

³⁴ ET (2002a)

³⁵ Interview in the neighborhood, September 2016

³⁶ Herrera (2010) p. 7

³⁷ Headlines of La Razón, Clarín, El Espectador, El Siglo, El Liberal and El Tiempo cited by Herrera (2010)

³⁸ Herrera (2010) p. 16

³⁹ Herrera (2010) p. 17

⁴⁰ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, January 2017

East of Egipto, by the route that leads to Choachí, you reach a mountainous area that for many years was a refuge for the FARC and where they took and held hostages while negotiating their rescue. Journalist Guillermo La Chiva Cortes, for example, was forcibly removed from his El Zancudo country house, in the eastern municipality of Cundinamarca, to remain captive for more than 200 days⁴¹. Years before the businessman Carlos Nader Simmonds was kidnapped in the center of Bogota and despite being blindfolded he knew that he was taken out of the city by the road to Choachí. "They took me to a mooreland, we were in "cambuches" (very simple camps), there were four tents and one for the kitchen. They told me they were common criminals, but I knew they were guerrillas because they rigorously brushed their teeth at 5 am, they had the same way of folding the blankets and cleaning the guns" ⁴². A few days later, after an overflight of army helicopters, the guerrillas decided to take the hostage to another camp, he pretended that his foot had been broken, they mounted him on a horse and he managed to escape, arriving very soon at the road above Egipto.

At the end of 2001, the army found two FARC camps near Choachí, one of which could house up to 10 fighters. "The military found another hiding place, arrested two people and seized 200 kilos of explosives during an operation carried out in a village near Bogota" ⁴³. An official document issued at the same time indicated that the presence of both the guerrillas and the paramilitaries of the Auto Defensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC, the main paramilitary group) had increased considerably in the towns bordering the capital. The same study indicated that "the rebels have been approaching Bogota in the southeast and southwest of the city with the help of urban militias, in a fact that has been accompanied by a high rate of selective killings" ⁴⁴.

Harassment in the vicinity of Bogota by the FARC had begun several years earlier. In 1992, for example, several agents of the police command of Choachí were attacked when they returned from a judicial proceeding. In the same attack the assistant of a truck delivery of beer and an employee of the municipality of Choachí were assassinated. The action, which occurred in broad daylight a few kilometers from the capital, was attributed to the FARC Front XXII, with operations center in that area ⁴⁵. In a few years, the guerrillas practically took over the road and were able to establish checkpoints. As in 2002, when "members of the FARC installed yesterday a checkpoint on the Bogotá-Choachí road, at the height of the site known as Alto de la Virgen. There, the guerrillas burned a bus and a taxi, while they deprived the passengers of their belongings " ⁴⁶.

It is a little surprising that the FARC were making arrests and attacking the police in the same territory where gangs from Egipto were stealing travelers. By the time of the guerrilla kidnappings, the descendants of Papa Fidel's cafuches also controlled in their own way the lower part of the Cerro bordering the capital. In 2002 it was reported that eight robbers, one of them armed with a fisto shotgun, had surrounded the vehicle of a university professor and had taken away her documents. The doctor who treated her –she was shot in the shoulder- reported that he suffered a similar attack two years earlier. The

⁴¹ ET (2000)

⁴² Rubio (1993)

⁴³ AFP (2002)

⁴⁴ AFP (2002)

⁴⁵ ET (1992)

⁴⁶ ET (2002)

harassment was so recurrent that the bogotanos with farms in the Eastern region had opted for an alternative route to reach them ⁴⁷.

According to the ex-gang members of the Egipto neighborhood, since the siege of the capital began in the mid-1990s, the FARC tried to convince them to "do some jobs" ⁴⁸. It would certainly have been a helpful decision, but the gang leaders refused to get involved in the conflict because they were sure that this would put the safety of all the families in the neighborhood at risk. As in many Colombian municipalities, working for the guerrillas could mean a death sentence at the hands of paramilitary groups.

The kidnapping of the journalist Cortes shows that by that time the truly wealthy victims had already been exhausted and the kidnapping had spread to affect all layers of the population. "There are not enough wealthy people left," noted a newspaper editor ⁴⁹. It was during those years that the kidnapping figures soared and the "pesca milagrosa" (miraculous fishing) modality was introduced: this was the name given to massive kidnapping incidents, without any previous investigation of the hostages' ability to pay. The "retenciones", as the guerrilla called them, were done a little at random in the roads, even to vehicles of intermunicipal public transport, without knowing who could fall. Kidnappings spread not only to low-income people but also to minors and seniors. These practices generated a strong reaction of the population that did not understand how, on behalf of the people, victims with such vulnerability and without any significant assets were attacked. These actions definitely contributed to the strengthening of paramilitary groups fighting the guerrillas ⁵⁰.

Thus, by that time, the romantic image of the rebels collapsed. There, too, ended the idea of an informed illegal bureaucracy that, in order to kidnap, acted almost with knowledge of the income statements of the victims. Organizations with serious information and training problems became evident. A Spanish waiter kidnapped at a checkpoint, when released, described his captors as "illiterate kids, who do not know what they are doing" ⁵¹. Thomas Hargrove, an american agricultural scientist and journalist also kidnapped at a FARC checkpoint, was impressed by the carelessness of his captors to handle guns both during the operation and throughout his captivity ⁵².

The current leaders of the gangs of Egipto were born in the eighties, the time of intensification of the Colombian conflict. They wasted their childhood in a tenacious and bloodthirsty gang war which, according to every testimony, was very deadly. "At the time of the old Gasolinos there was a daily dead in this neighborhood" says a neighbor ⁵³. The figure of several homicides each week is corroborated by older people in Egipto ⁵⁴. The main confrontation was between Los Pilos, predecessors of the reinserted gang and the Gasolinos, a band that moved away from the Robin Hood model that helped and protected the neighborhood and that, like the guerrillas, tried to become a para-state that extorted business, gave orders to the community and sought to impose its own rules ⁵⁵.

⁴⁷ ET (2002a)

⁴⁸ Interviews with Jaime and Jairo Roncancio, September 2017 and January 2017

⁴⁹ Director of the newspaper El Tiempo quoted in Rubio (2005)

⁵⁰ Rubio (2005)

⁵¹ El Tiempo, Marzo 1 de 1999

⁵² Hargrove (2011)

⁵³ ET (1994)

⁵⁴ Interviews with neighbors September 2016

⁵⁵ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, Calvaso, September 2016 and January 2017

The origin of the confrontation is somewhat confusing because it quickly became a chain of relentless retaliations, whose dynamics absorbed all the youth and children of the neighborhood. According to one version, the fight started by a woman. Chocolate, a brother of Carlos Julio, aka El Gasolino, the leader of the gang, was shot in Fontibon, a Bogota neighborhood. Popeye, another of the Gasolinos, appeared quartered on the road to Choachí, six months after he disappeared. The fight between the two bands was truly ruthless and bloody. "The body of a 15-year-old tortured and decapitated teenager lay on the lawn of a vacant lot in the foothills of Cerro Guadalupe in eastern Bogota. The crime could have constituted only an isolated case, but from then until today the number of young victims whose inert bodies have appeared in the same manner has risen to 10. Most were witnesses of exception of the Public Prosecutor against a band known as Los Gasolinos"⁵⁶. The chain of murders did not stop even with the death of Gasolino who was killed by a member of his own band in an alley in the neighborhood of La Aguas, next to Egipto⁵⁷.

When I asked Calvaso, a former gang member and now community leader, why he joined the band, he did not hesitate to clarify that he did not decide anything, he simply got caught up in the spiral of revenge when, at the age of eleven, he witnessed the execution of his cousin by a squadron of Gasolinos, the rival band. His older brother gave him a gun and told him that from that moment he had to defend himself, otherwise he would be the next to die⁵⁸.

Cathedral projects and bazaar projects

Former system engineers - the IBM 370 generation - always proclaimed that computing must pass through a computer center. Years later they were overwhelmed by the technology they despised: microcomputers, mouse, friendly interface and open programming. The final blow was Linux. No one anticipated that an operating system could result from the partial work of thousands of users connected by Internet. This is how Linus Torvalds revolutionized the way of making software. A text that circulates on the web⁵⁹ illustrates the two strategies for software development - structured programming and open architecture - with a powerful metaphor, The Cathedral and the Bazaar, which serves to highlight the importance of this initiative that is being developed in Egipto. This programming metaphor illustrates two ways of seeing the world and solving problems: from above, as a synod of cardinals, experts, enlightened, deductive and perfectionists. Or from below, as in a bazaar, informal, decentralized, handmade, intuitive, observant and adapted to the environment.

One of the most important differences between the cathedral and the bazaar approaches to undertake projects or reforms has to do with the attitude towards errors. While for experts who promote a bottom-down methodology errors are a drawback that undermines the supposed perfection of design, in the bazaar approximation failures are always welcome because they allow to gradually, and at the margin, improve the dysfunctional components of the reforms and adapt them to the ever recurring changes in conditions or the environment, giving them greater flexibility and realism.

⁵⁶ Rubio (1994)

⁵⁷ ET (1994)

⁵⁸ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, January 2017

⁵⁹ Raymond (1999)

The current project to reintegrate gangs and promote urban renewal in Egipto is not the first effort to combat violence, but perhaps it is the first that emerges from the initiative of the gang members with the support of the community. Unlike previous proposals characterized by a top-down approach, this is a bazaar project, inductive, a bottom-up initiative whose promoters are prepared to accept errors and try to correct them.

There are several examples of cathedral initiatives that were proposed earlier in Egipto and did not last. In 1986, for example, under the leadership of Fernando Rueda Williamson, the parish priest, an initiative sought to carry out a trash recycling project similar to the one that at that time operated on the island of San Andres under the leadership of Governor Simón González, a personal friend of President Belisario Betancur. Rueda Williamson sought to break the monopoly maintained at that time by the union of the Public Utility Company (EDIS). Its members selected what could be sold to large recycling companies. "What I propose is that EDIS pick up biodegradable waste three days a week, and the three days be assigned to us to collect recyclable waste". The figures for the business were so positive that "neighbors of Egipto are receiving professional help from universities such as the Externado de Colombia and La Salle, which provide advice to properly set up a cooperative"⁶⁰.

A year earlier, the opening of the Circunvalar Avenue bordering the city of Bogota by the eastern foothills, produced a great deterioration in the urban conditions of Egipto. "The new high-speed road broke the neighborhood, destroyed its old market plaza, pulverized a school, and separated another by four lanes of traffic to its 2,500 students, leaving residual lots which are already converted into landfills"⁶¹. To counteract the impact of this urban infrastructure work on the life of this neighborhood, located in an area of "environmental conservation", an ambitious project was conceived led by renowned architects which had all kinds of official support. It had been commissioned by the Administrative Department of District Planning (DAPD), and its studies funded by the Banco Central Hipotecario. "To advance this project were solemnly committed the Mayor and the Institute of Urban Development (IDU), responsible for the Circunvalar Avenue"⁶². The purpose was to restore the "natural environment", to rebuild its newly cut public space, building "two bridges on the highway, one at the entrance and another at the exit of the neighborhood". It was also sought to "open a new market plaza, using an abandoned lot belonging to the Aqueduct ... to create a park and public toilets; an arcade gallery for food stalls. A new school would replace the one that was demolished. A health facility, a nursery, and a community center, using lots expropriated by the IDU and today transformed into garbage dumps ... And all this will be accompanied by a regulation of facades and volumes for public and private buildings, new or Recovered, destined to preserve the characteristic original physiognomy of the neighborhood, its heights, corners, overhangs, roofs "⁶³. The project cost was only 3% of the total investment in the Circunvalar Avenue but finally nothing was done because, according to a newspaper article of the time, "Egipto is a modest neighborhood, inhabited by the poor, planted with tenement houses with absentee property owners and no political godfather"⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ RS (1986)

⁶¹ RS (1985)

⁶² RS (1985)

⁶³ RS (1985)

⁶⁴ RS (1985)

In 1990, the La Candelaria Corporation presented a project to rehabilitate the "Maria Nazareth" House in the main square of the neighborhood. The work sought to "recover the original structure of the house which will become a training center for domestic service employees, part of the parish works of the Egipto neighborhood" ⁶⁵. In 1999, the Junat Administradora Local had "projects to improve recreation areas and encourage culture and sports with meetings and workshops. Also some cultural groups are promoted by the civic corporation Ecos " ⁶⁶.

A few years ago, a group of businessmen and an artist wanted to transform Egipto into a gigantic craft center. They bought 24 houses and almost 200 thousand square meters of land to "build a European-style village of the Middle Ages. They would build adobe houses of three floors, with integrated workshops and warehouses of craftsmen of different trades, with the forge in bronze as the main axis" ⁶⁷. With the massive purchase of properties circulated the rumor that foreign businessmen sought to appropriate the neighborhood to expel its inhabitants and make a high standing project. In a typical example of combating gentryfication that is currently occurring in several European cities, the discomfort caused the residents to react. They began to distrust and try to sabotage the initiative that aborted by a mixture of problems with the licenses of the city and disagreement between the partners ⁶⁸.

It is not a simple coincidence that the community library in Egipto, one of the collective projects that has survived and is at the origin of the current process of reintegration of former gang members, emerged from the bottom, not from expert summits. Manuel Rojas, professor of the Faculty of Administration of the Externado de Colombia and the main link between the neighborhood and the university, was one day having lunch when a garbage collector approached him. The first reaction of the teacher was to try to share his lunch, but he received in response that "instead of a snack, I would like to have access to knowledge. Although I read and write, I have not been allowed to enter a library because if you do not have an ID, you are not authorized to use it" ⁶⁹. Thus, in 2000 the Universidad Externado and the archdiocese of Bogota, represented in the Parish, founded the Community Library of the neighborhood through the rehabilitation and endowment of the left nave of the Church. When in 2016 the gang members decided to make a pact of non-aggression with the police, they were aware of the need to receive training for their new activities, so they went to the same professor Manuel Rojas and asked for support from the University.

Unlike the guerrilla groups that seek, in the typical cathedral scheme, to seize power and govern with a solid hierarchical structure, the former gang members and current community leaders are more assimilable to small entrepreneurs. Independent and pragmatic, they are determined to leave at their own risk the underworld to begin legal activities. More than paternalistic help, they seek partners for their projects. They considered themselves "builders of their own destiny". It is an irony that a society with corrupt politicians and rapacious, ambitious and untouchable "public servants" only considers it valid to dialogue with guerrillas like those of the FARC, barely repentant, arrogant, more statist and authoritarian than bureaucrats and not with those who are

⁶⁵ RS (1990)

⁶⁶ Navia (1999)

⁶⁷ Gómez Torres (2012)

⁶⁸ Gómez Torres (2012)

⁶⁹ Molina (2015)

willing to respect the law, develop initiatives without demanding legal or constitutional reforms or public resources, without pretending to change society with a peace agreement.

Fundamental in this process of leaving behind the violence is the exercise of "historical memory" in which the reinserted gang members are committed. They want to remember, recognize and narrate their crimes, to establish a clear and sharp difference with what is happening now and, still more, with what they will do for their future, their people and their neighborhood. "I'm not interested in money, I want to be remembered for doing good and helping my community" says the leader. He thinks that the money that comes easily and quickly can also be spent in the same way.

The urban and security recovery in Egipto

The main project of these gang members turned into micro entrepreneurs is to guide hikers through the same paths where they committed crimes. They know that foreign tourists who stay in traditional neighborhoods in the center of Bogota, such as La Candelaria, like nature, landscape, typical food and crafts that will give economic impetus to the neighborhood, but also the detailed accounts of how the gang robbed people who, like them, visited the Colombian capital. The initiative to add a criminological component to the tourist and ecological excursions arose by chance, as is often the case with the bazaar approach.

Practically from the conference "City as a Commons: Reconceiving Urban Space, Common Goods and City Governance" held in Bologna in November 2015, the urban commons were consolidated as a topic of study. Issues as diverse as the design of the public space of cities, the inventory of empty government properties, the impact of Airbnb on the level of real state prices or the gentryfication of cities, require theoretical and analytical tools similar to those developed for studying the management of traditional commons such as natural resources and the environment⁷⁰.

Since in most of the developed countries safety is not a very pressing problem, the use of analytical tools from the theory of commons to address such problems is still in its infancy. Added to this is the almost universal recognition that ensuring peace and law enforcement is a state responsibility difficult to delegate to communities.

Among the objectives of the settlement agreement of the gangs of Egipto with the Police three of them that can be approached with the theory of the commons: one, the use of Cerro Guadalupe as an environmental reserve and tourist spot, not only of the community, but of the city of Bogotá; two, the urban recovery of the neighborhood, deteriorated by its condition of marginality and by the works that, for the benefit the Bogota car owners, caused considerable damage and, three, the reduction of crime, to guarantee the safety of the inhabitants of Egipto, the passers-by and the tourists attracted by the Cerro Guadalupe.

The first two common resources present fewer dilemmas and conceptual problems than the one related to security. For them it is worth just making a few specific comments. A thought of the gang leader when he was in prison illustrates well his non-academic intuition about the commons. Jaime Roncancio was aware that his life, and that of many people in the neighborhood, had always depended on the Cerro Guadalupe. For various reasons he had already decided to leave behind crime and try to reintegrate into society. It

⁷⁰ Bollier (2015)

made him anxious to think about what he was going to do for a living, since his main economic activity had always been robberies on that hill. He decided then that his business would continue to be around this natural resource but "doing good", legally, without robberies. This way he came the idea that members of his gang would become tourist guides to make hiking through a territory that from childhood was so familiar to them.

The motivation of the reinserted gang members to improve the urban infrastructure of Egipto could be interpreted as an intuitive version of the "broken windows" theory: the urban deterioration can facilitate illicit activities and, in addition, contributes to the stigmatization of the neighborhood. "It is common here that milk delivery trucks and other product transporters come up escorted by police or private guards"⁷¹. For that reason, gang leaders proudly show the new face of the neighborhood and remember with shame how was, for example, the alley where drugs were sold. However, there is an even more powerful reason: to leave all possible testimonies to account for the change, to compare how the situation of the neighborhood was before, how it is now and, above all, how it will be in the future. Thinking about the delinquency they left behind is almost obsessive their desire to show the marked contrast between that risky and harmful past and the new life that begins under the rule of law.

The issue of security in the neighborhood of Egipto is full with dilemmas, both conceptual and practical, for a simple reason: the visceral distrust of the former gang members with the authorities, and in particular with state security agencies. It would be foolish to endorse the claim of a private security supply in a country that has only just begun to recover from the harmful effect of paramilitary groups that, trying to assume primarily state responsibilities, lost control and left many violent deaths behind them. But it would not be wise to ignore the lack of legitimacy of the repressive state apparatus among those who have been confronted with it, often arbitrarily.

After the peace process with the FARC, the situation has become even more difficult due to the favorable treatment that the guerrilla members are receiving, both in legal terms and as economic support for their reintegration into society upon disarmament. This favorable treatment has generated considerable opposition to the Peace Accord for a not negligible proportion of the population. In fact, a referendum that was made to ratify the Accord was won by those who did not support it⁷².

Compared with the generous benefits received by a guerrilla group that caused great damage to the entire colombian population -both from widespread kidnappings and from terrorist attacks with many deaths and enormous damage to the infrastructure and the environment- it is difficult to understand that a group of former gang members seeking to reinsert themselves without asking for state resources continue to face serious problems with the criminal justice system.

In Egipto I heard a woman with a son arrested, for minor offenses that will not be pardoned, the most energetic protest against the peace agreement with the FARC. She is not the only one outraged; there is a young man from the neighborhood who is detained, everyone thinks that he is innocent but they fear a hard sentence. "Even the process with the paramilitaries was more just: they paid a few years and most of us benefited from it" says

⁷¹ Navia (1999)

⁷² BBC (2016)

the gang leader referring to another peace agreement, that of paramilitary groups with the administration of Álvaro Uribe ⁷³.

A group of former gang members from the Aguablanca District in Cali, equally or more violent than those from Egipto, are currently receiving support for their reinsertion, with generous funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in a project executed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) under the orientation of Corpovisionarios, a think-tank led by the ex-Mayor of Bogotá" ⁷⁴. Why do they have access to the funds and legal benefits contemplated in the Peace Agreement with the guerrilla? Simply because they were part of the urban network of the FARC, although in that role they probably caused more damage in their own communities than the young gangsters from Egipto on theirs.

The precarious job situation of the former gang members makes their intentions to abandon their criminal career face serious economic difficulties. "The bills keep coming, especially with boys in the school" says one of them with three children ⁷⁵. In 1999 there was a similar peace effort in the same Egipto neighborhood. "The first result of the talks was a pact of non-aggression that allowed breaking the boundaries that the bands had created. If a boy from a gang went into the territory of another gang they would kill him ... Elias, a survivor of five bullets, is willing to enforce the pact. He does that for his three children and for the balance he makes of his childhood friends: seven in jail and sixteen in the cemetery ... " ⁷⁶. What probably failed then was that there was no consensus among the gang members for the initiative, not everyone thought like Elias: "About three months ago, the police and the parish priest of Egipto managed to gather in the chapel of this sector the leaders of the two bands They were brought down from their quarters almost by force so they would talk, guarded by the police. Their first reaction was to blame each other: you who must have died, you who betrayed me, you who are a son of a ... Then the spirits calmed down and eventually they came to a simple agreement in the middle of the war. That they were not going to kill each other and that they could walk through the territory of the others. Some, like Elias, still do not do it as a precaution and because the enemies are many " ⁷⁷. This precarious agreement did not last.

Despite the fact that in the current process there seems to be greater consensus among all former gang members, economic difficulties persist and constitute an obvious risk: to return to crime out of economic necessity. At the beginning of 2017, with the process already initiated, two members of the gang robbed some foreigners. The reason given for breaking the agreement was that their temporary employment in a maintenance contract ended right at the time of payment of tuition, supplies and uniforms for schools ⁷⁸.

The distrust of the young gang members with the authorities is such that they still oppose the Bogotá Metropolitan Police to reproduce in other neighborhoods the same non-aggression pact that, so far, has worked well in Egipto. One way to alleviate this mistrust has been for the two groups –ex gang members and police officers- to jointly participate in English language courses taught by the university in the Communal Library facilities.

⁷³ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, January 2017

⁷⁴ VA (2017)

⁷⁵ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, January 2017

⁷⁶ Navia (1999)

⁷⁷ Navia (1999)

⁷⁸ Interview with Jaime Roncancio, January 2017

There are several areas in which collaboration with the authorities is required, but there is not much conceptual clarity on how to define the boundaries between what is a police function and a community responsibility. The use of Cerro Guadalupe for hiking provides some examples of these dilemmas.

The era of high criminal activity in the Cerro Guadalupe, when gangs robbed tourists and the FARC made checkpoints and carried kidnapped hostages illustrates several of the recurring concerns with the commons. First, it was clear the "overuse" of this resource, which excluded the rest of the Bogota population. In the 1990s, when crime in Caracas was only beginning to become a problem, Ana María Sanjuan, one of the scholars interested in the issue, emphasized that crime imposed on other citizens costs that went beyond the property appropriated by criminals: "they also deprive us of public space, parks and terraces, compel us to stay at home" complained her although she did not have any familiarity with the literature about the commons.

In the case of Cerro Guadalupe, something similar occurred, even more expensive than overuse, and it was the perverse use of that natural resource, causing damage to third parties. Therein lies the importance of the gang members being fully aware that this is no longer a resource they can use at will for their private benefit. But difficult situations and security-related dilemmas persist. In one of the meetings held at the university to receive feedback on the first trial excursions around the Cerro, a comment was made to the former gang members: the number of guides per hiker was perhaps exaggerated. With some condescension the leaders responded that this was the only option because there were still presence of gangs from other neighborhoods, whose attacks they were able to dissuade only with a sufficient number of companions pretending to be tourist guides. They thought the project would be unnecessarily affected if they make explicit their role as bodyguards or, even worse, asking for protection from the police.

On the other hand, in spite of the lack of legitimacy of state authorities, the gang members have shown themselves willing to respect regulations, especially those related to environmental issues. One of the extensions they considered desirable and feasible for the activity of the hiking was bike-crossing, for which it was necessary to delimit and to enable a bike-route. When they were informed by professors of the University that this type of intervention in the Cerro Guadalupe was not allowed, they had no problem in abandoning the idea.

One of Elinor Omstrom's recommendations for analyzing how a common is governed is to analyze the structure of the resource well, to understand thoroughly both the flows and attributes of individuals and the norms that have been designed to coordinate actions. It is therefore worth looking at the major differences in the common good "security of the inhabitants" in a community under the influence of a guerrilla group like the FARC or a band like those that have lived in Egipto since the time of Papa Fidel.

The first point worth mentioning is that the theory traditionally used in Colombia to explain violence -poverty and inequality as the main elements that promote it- has more logic and meaning among bandits like those in Egipto than among guerrillas as the FARC. The basic rule of action adopted for several decades by Papa Fidel and the bands that succeeded him was to rob outsiders, better if they were foreigners, always considered richer than the inhabitants of the neighborhood to transfer to them some the proceeds of the crime. The FARC, which allegedly acted on behalf of the dispossessed peasant people, did not

always have this logic of economically favoring the population over which they exercised their influence.

For this reason, there is little evidence of popular support for the guerrillas as there was for the Robin Hood type of bandits. A simple but indisputable indicator is the number of people attending burials, or the reference to the philanthropy of some bandits whose disappearance has been lamented by many people. Unlike the burials of bandits like Papa Fidel, Pablo Escobar, Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha or Víctor Carranza, who were true popular events, the death of historical and emblematic leaders of the guerrilla, like Manuel Marulanda Vélez, Tirofijo, has normally been surrounded by a great mystery and their funerals have been incidents internal to the organization, kept under the greatest reserve.

While the tacit agreement of the neighbors of Egipto with the leaders of the band was one of reciprocity -a reward for the collaboration rendered- the one of the guerrilla with the peasant communities was more based on fear and the collection of taxes to their productive activities.

The decision not to work for the guerrilla, an option that could have been profitable, was taken for one reason: avoid risking the security of the neighborhood. Several FARC decisions show a totally opposite attitude: they sacrificed the security of some communities for military benefits for the group. The most palpable example of these priorities is the massacre of Bojayá, where in 2002, seventy people "lost their lives in the village church, after the cylinder bomb dropped by FARC guerrillas during the confrontation with paramilitaries of the Bloque Elmer Cárdenas of the AUC"⁷⁹. It is incomprehensible that the current Peace Accord signed with the guerrillas provides more favorable legal treatment, and generous financial support, to members of that guerrilla group than the one received by gangs who prioritized the well-being of their community and remained marginalized from the conflict.

One of the observations made by Elinor Ostrom on how commons are governed is the emphasis on trial and error. "Given the levels of uncertain about the basic structure of the problems appropriators face, the only reasonable assumption to make about the discovery and calculation processes employed is that appropriators engage in a considerable amount of trial-and-error learning. Many actions are selected without full knowledge of their consequences... Some rules cannot be enforced because no one is able to monitor conformance to them. By definition, trial-and-error methods involve error, perhaps even disasters. Over time, appropriators gain a more accurate understanding of the physical world and what to expect from the behavior of others"⁸⁰. Without making it explicit -at that time the programming metaphor was not known- Ostrom suggests that the feasible approach to administering commons is the bazaar, not the Cathedral; the bottom-up, not the top-down, is the feasible way to incorporate information and adapt institutional designs.

Interactions with gang leaders about possible ways to execute their ideas show their enormous ability to solve obstacles and problems that arise on the go. Their training as robbers has undoubtedly been definitive for this ability since they learned to face very high uncertainty and had to be always ready to redesign a plan or strategy as a result of some unforeseen event, or some mistake.

⁷⁹ VA (2016)

⁸⁰ Ostrom (1990) p. 34

Below are some ideas about the support that the University can give the project whose overall objective is to consolidate the peace agreement achieved by the gangs from Egipto with the Police and prevent the youth and children in the neighborhood to join gangs of robbers.

In youth violence prevention programs, with dropouts not yet employed, it is crucial to avoid the creation of false expectations and the resulting frustration when they are not fulfilled. The classic example is job training that does not lead to employment. Resources are always scarce and the list of possible contributions to improve the economic and social situation or the quality of the neighborhood are practically infinite. It is easier to get many small contributions for modest projects than to fund a large project.

Given a limited amount of resources, which can be called a Prize, one way of assigning it, more effective than dividing it, is to establish a Contest for a single winner, individual or group. For example, all students of the English course can not be promised a learning trip to the US and a three-month stay. But getting that Prize for one or two of them is a feasible goal. If it is announced that whoever gets the best grade in the course (or any other criteria) will win the prize, the double purpose of not disappointing and offering a stimulus to the study is achieved. Any donation or contribution, however small, can be converted into a merit Contest. Through different Contests or Competitions each donation or contribution, however small, can contribute to the achievement of global objectives. In a conversation with the leaders, the proposal of the Contests was well received, precisely because it avoids false promises. They are willing to administer these Contests through an independent foundation that they want to set up.

As already mentioned, the most advanced project is that of becoming guides for hiking from the neighborhood to the Cerro Guadalupe, a field trip that includes the provision of a picnic. The main clientele are the foreign tourists staying in the hotels of La Candelaria. The attraction of these walks is manyfold: sightseeing, doing sport, ecological... but also criminological. The tourists have expressed their interest in the stories of the different "techniques" that were used in those places for the robberies. This may seem sinister but it corresponds well to the leaders' desire to undertake a process of "historical memory", to point out the importance of changing their lives.

An informal association of restaurateurs in Bogotá has contemplated the possibility of providing advice to typical traditional food businesses, to renew the presentation of their dishes, try new recipes and have a "discourse" about the advantages of what they offer (use of local and fresh produce, preserving traditions etc ...). This initiative fits well with the need to provide foreign tourists of the excursions with a picnic with "local flavor". Specifically, a project would consist of developing typical recipes presented for picnics, which could also be sold in food stands at the beginning and end of the tours.

Being the most consolidated, hiking is also the project on which leaders have thought more of possible extensions. Some may be listed:

- build a "lookout terrace" at the point where the excursions to the Cerro are currently starting. On that terrace picnics for the excursion could be supplied to the tourists but also meals and drinks could be sold for other consumers
- prolong the possible routes of the excursions, eventually to Choachí
- strengthen the support given to tourists (guides, illustrated maps)

- routes with different degrees of difficulty for different groups of tourists, as well as maps that indicate them properly.

Another project proposed by the leaders and several members of the gang is the remodeling of single-family homes in which a mix of commercial activity (restaurant, shop ...) or guest accommodation (Bed & Breakfast or self catering) and improved housing of the inhabitants of the neighborhood. To avoid repeating the experience of fear of gentrification, a suitable scheme for these renovations is a partnership between the owners of the house and investors who finance the remodeling

Following the good image of the peace process, the Bogotá Police wanted to extend under its tutelage similar programs in other neighborhoods. The Egipto leaders have been reluctant to this initiative. As a substitute I proposed a project that allowed sharing the experience of the neighborhood band without losing control. This idea has been applied in the US: former "gang members" doing coaching in other neighborhoods or schools to prevent, based on talking about their experiences, other young people joining gangs. The idea has been discussed with the leaders and they found it interesting and feasible.

Following an interview with Jaime Roncancio in which he talked extensively about his life, I commented that it would be interesting to write a book with the stories of everyone in the gang. He replied that it would be better to make a "saga" in which each member writes a few pages with his story.

Finally, a list of possible University activities to support projects promoted by former gang members from their own Foundation:

- Diagnosis and preliminary evaluation of the "educational environment" of the youth of the neighborhood
- Collection of testimonies, stories and data, as well as the priorities of action of the Foundation and the community
- A description as detailed as possible of the current situation of the neighborhood, which can serve as a "baseline" for future evaluation of all projects.

REFERENCES

AFP (2002). "Campamentos de las FARC cerca de Bogotá": *El Nuevo Herald*, [Ene 1](#)

Alape, Arturo (1980). "Un hombre, un pueblo". *Semana*, [Nov 12](#)

Ballesteros, Roberto (2016). "La Guardia Civil encarcela a una banda de perfeccionistas ladrones de chalés". *El Confidencial*, [Junio 13](#)

BBC (2016). "Colombia dijo no: 4 puntos para entender qué pasa ahora con el proceso de paz y las FARC". BBC Mundo, [Oct 3](#)

BBC (2016a) "Las razones del Comité Noruego para otorgarle el Nobel de la Paz 2016 al presidente de Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos". BBC Mundo, [Oct 7](#)

Bollier, David (2015). "The City as Commons: The Conference", *News and Perspectives on the Commons*, [Nov 13](#)

Carranco, Rebeca (2017). "‘Lanzas Internacionales’: los nuevos ladrones de casas". *El País*, [Abr 8](#)

Cordovez Moure, José María (1893). "Crímenes célebres". En *Reminiscencias de Santa Fé de Bogotá*. Tomos I y II. [Versión Digital](#)

_____ (1893a) "Juicio y Ejecución de don José Raimundo Russi y sus compañeros". En *Reminiscencias de Santa Fé de Bogotá*. Tomos I y II. [Versión Digital](#)

ED (2009). "El doctor Russi un juicio infame": *El Diario*, [Ene 17](#)

ET (1992). "Choachí: 5 muertos en ataque de cg". *El Tiempo*, [Mayo 15](#)

ET (1992a). "Clave 1929 se Inaugura el Funicular a Monserrate". *El Tiempo*, [Mayo 28](#)

ET (1994) "2000 víctimas del miedo". *El Tiempo*, [Sep 15](#)

ET (2000). "La chiva cortés, en manos de romaña". *El Tiempo*, [Feb 2](#)

ET (2002a) "Familias de atracadores se toman vía a Choachí". *El Tiempo*, [Oct 3](#)

ET (2002). "Montan Retén en Vía Bogotá-Choachí". *El Tiempo*, [Abr 12](#)

GMH (2013). *¡Basta Ya! Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad*. Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica.

GMH (2013a). *Una Verdad Secuestrada. Cuarenta Años de Estadísticas de Secuestro 1970-2010*. Informe de Cifras & Conceptos para el Grupo de Memoria Histórica.

González Toledo, Felipe (1994). *20 crónicas policíacas*. Bogotá: Planeta. [Versión Digital](#)

De Pío, Alegría (2014). "Lucho Otero, otra víctima". *Proclama del Cauca*, [Oct 31](#)

FIP (2017) "Se desactiva la guerra, pero la violencia sigue en Colombia". Fundación Ideas para la Paz". *El Espectador*, [Abr 8](#)

Gómez Torres, Yolanda (2012). "En intento de ser pueblo medieval, barrio Egipto se quedó en abandono". *El Tiempo*, [Sep 2](#)

Hargrove, Thomas (2001). *Long march to freedom*. UK: 1stBooks Library

Herrera Durán, Natalia (2010) "Papá Fidel, El Semi Dios De Ruana: Vida y Leyenda del Mayor Contrabandista de Licor Artesanal de Bogotá (1926-1946)". Pontificia Universidad Javeriana: Trabajo de Grado para Optar por el Título de Comunicadora Social. [Versión digital](#)

Herrera Durán, Natalia (2011). "Papá Fidel, vida y leyenda del primer capo colombiano". *El Espectador*, [Abr 20](#)

Marín Taborda, Iván (sf). Jorge Eliécer Gaitán – Ficha Biográfica. Banco de la República, [Biblioteca Virtual LAA](#)

Molina, Luisa Fernanda (2015). "Diagnóstico- Biblioteca Comunitaria- Proyecto de Extensión Universidad Externado de Colombia" Mimeo

Navia, José (1999). "El por qué de las bandas". *El Tiempo*, [Feb 21](#)

Ostrom, Elinor (1990). *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press

Raymon, Eric (1999). "The Cathedral & the Bazaar".
<http://www.unterstein.net/su/docs/CathBaz.pdf>

RS (1985) "Egipto busca un padrino". *Revista Semana*, [Oct 7](#)

RS (1986) "El oro de la escoria". *Revista Semana*, [Dic 15](#)

RS (1990) "Con futuro". *Revista Semana*, [Ene 1](#)

RS (1990a) "Que nos la devuelvan". *Revista Semana*, [Marzo 9](#)

RS (2006) "El perfil del asesino". *Revista Semana*, [Ago 4](#)

Rubio, Miller (1993). "Carlos Nader se Escapó de Secuestradores de las Farc": *El Tiempo*, [Dic 17](#)

_____ (1994) "Asesinan a 10 testigos adolescentes". *El Tiempo*, [Sep 13](#)

Rubio, Mauricio (2005). *Del rapto a la pesca milagrosa. Breve historia del secuestro en Colombia*. Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia

_____ (2011). *La Catedral y el Bazar. Reflexiones profanas sobre la justicia*. Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia

_____ (2016). "Paces locales y la gran Paz". *El Espectador*, [Nov 2](#)

VA (2016). "Bojayá: 14 años de una reparación inconclusa". *Verdad Abierta*, [Mayo 3](#)

VA (2017). "Cali 'siembra' mil semillas de paz y reconciliación". *Verdad Abierta*, [Mayo 21](#)

Ximénez, José Joaquín (1938, 2013). "Pistoleros de los bandos 'Cafuches' se aprestan a una lucha sangrienta". *El Tiempo*, publicado inicialmente en 1938 y reproducido el [9 de Junio de 2013](#)

