

# **Bogotá Utopic: Urban Planning and Public Order in the Building of Colombia, 1948–1953**

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## **ABSTRACTS**

Der Artikel untersucht ein urbanes Planungsprojekt für Bogotá, Kolumbien, das ausländische Planer nach den großen Unruhen vom April 1948 entwickelten. Die Bogotazo führte bei den Eliten zu großer Sorge vor öffentlichen Aufständen und zu einer Kongruenz anti-kommunistischer Zielsetzungen der USA und dem Interesse an der Aufrechterhaltung der öffentlichen Ordnung seitens der kolumbianischen Regierung. Stadtplanung erschien als ein Mittel, Ordnung zu fördern. Der Aufsatz untersucht Pläne für Bogotá von Le Corbusier, Josep Lluís Sert und Paul Lester Wiener im Kontext der *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM). Im Anschluss wendet er sich der Planungsphase zu, die im Kontext gewalthafter Konflikte, Repression und urbaner Migration in den späten 1940er und frühen 1950er Jahren verkompliziert wurde. Letztlich scheiterten die Pläne an praktischen Gründen und an der Opposition kolumbianischer Politiker und Unternehmer. Damit untersucht der Aufsatz Utopismus im politischen Kontext und plädiert für die Bedeutung von Plänen, die nicht realisiert wurden.

This article examines an urban planning project for Bogotá, Colombia, that foreign planners formulated after large-scale riots of April 1948. The Bogotazo propelled elite fears of popular revolt, aligning United States anticommunist interests with the public order concerns of the Colom-

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bian government. These state actors looked to urban planning as one way to foment order. The article explores plans for Bogotá developed by Le Corbusier, Josep Lluís Sert, and Paul Lester Wiener first by analyzing ideas related to their professional organization, the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). It then turns to the planning process, which became increasingly complicated in the late 1940s and early 1950s, amidst ongoing violent conflict, repression, and urban migration. The plans ultimately foundered on practical issues and opposition by Colombian actors, including officials and business interests. The article considers utopianism in political context and posits the historical importance of plans that are never enacted.

This is an essay about a future that never happened. On the afternoon of Friday, 9 April 1948, Colombian lawyer and politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was fatally shot in front of his office in Bogotá's city centre.<sup>1</sup> Gaitán fell only blocks from where United States and Latin American officials had been meeting at the IX Pan-American Conference.<sup>2</sup> He died soon after. Supporters of the leader, who had galvanized a broad popular base that assumed the Colombian government was responsible for his death, responded in the same place that he was assassinated: the streets of Bogotá. During the *Bogotazo* (riots in Bogotá), people tore apart much of the city's downtown buildings and transportation infrastructure, looted, and brutally murdered Gaitán's alleged assassin. Anything that "symbolized social order or political power", historian Jorge Osterling writes, "was destroyed."<sup>3</sup> Afterwards, officials grappled with what kind of future they wanted for the city and the nation. A certain vision for including the *pueblo* (people) in formal politics was contested and died with Gaitán; and so too did urban plans to reconstruct Bogotá articulate a prospect of utopian city life that was soon foreclosed and would never come to pass.

The vision inherent in these urban plans was a transnational product of its particular moment. The Colombian government contracted United States and European actors to rebuild and modernize Bogotá from the late 1940s through the early 1950s. The plans thus responded to the profound destruction wrought by politically enraged people who had demolished numerous buildings in Bogotá's downtown area. Given that the charter meeting of the Organization of American States was taking place in some of the very buildings affected by the riots, international attention for reconstruction was easy to capture. The Colombian government solicited loans from the United States, and it also hired planners to come to Colombia to rebuild and modernize the city. Architects Josep Lluís Sert and Paul Lester Wiener, both European expatriates who together owned a

1 H. Braun, *The Assassination of Gaitán: Public Life and Urban Violence in Colombia*, Madison, WI 1985, pp. 134–135.

2 Bogotá berserk, in: *Newsweek* 31, 19 April 1948, pp. 48–49; Upheaval, in: *Time* 51, 19 April 1948, pp. 38–39; La Noche Quedó Atrás, in: *Semana IV* (24 April 1948) 78, p. 5, Folder 1, Box 47, Alfonso Araújo Gaviria collection (hereafter AAG), Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), Bogotá, Colombia. Unless otherwise noted, sources from the AGN are originally in Spanish.

3 J. Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: Clientelist Politics and Guerrilla Warfare*, New Brunswick 1989, p. 88.

New York firm called Town Planning Associates, partnered with the famed Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier on the project, working across three continents. Yet despite years of effort, the detailed and completed plans never led to construction.

Two categories guide this story: planning and order. Planning had wide meaning and diverse valences in this particular moment. National economic planning was fundamental to World War II and post-war policymaking, and urban planning shifted in the wake of wartime destruction, displacement, and reconstruction efforts.<sup>4</sup> In the post-war period, urban planning and architecture were closely intertwined. It was common for Europeans and Americans trained in these skills to travel the world proposing new private homes, government and corporate buildings, and neighbourhood and city plans.<sup>5</sup> Though such projects in newly decolonizing areas of the world, such as Nigeria and Pakistan, would become an arena in which to negotiate the formal transfer of power and constitute independent states, in Latin America, which had decolonized over a century earlier, they shored up the state's elite interests. These included industrial development and the modernization of capital cities and universities.<sup>6</sup> The region saw an opening moment in the wake of World War II, in which economic growth and political openness fuelled a leftist democratization process and labour militancy in many countries.<sup>7</sup> Yet the tide soon turned back to conservatism in a counterrevolutionary wave propelled by local elites' fear of popular politics, which fed into the Truman Administration's growing anxiety about communism across the globe.<sup>8</sup>

Bogotá in 1948 was a place and time in which the counterrevolution began in both loud and quiet ways; state repression as well as planning aligned with the political interests of the Colombian and US governments, in response to a disruption of public order. Order, for planners, meant both a well-functioning city – good transportation, functional infrastructure – and calm, compliant citizens, who would enjoy the benefits of housing, parks, and other amenities and thus remain aligned with the state. Planners, as Timothy

4 D. Engerman, *The Rise and Fall of Central Planning*, in: J. Ferris et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, vol. 3: *The Moral Economy of War and Peace*, Cambridge, UK 2015; E. Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960*, Cambridge, MA 2000; E. Mumford, *Designing the Modern City: Urbanism Since 1850*, New Haven 2018, especially pp. 202–252.

5 Mumford, *Designing the Modern City*, pp. 207–219. See also N. Kwak, *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid*, Chicago 2015, p. 111; A. Offner, *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy: The Rise and Fall of Welfare and Developmental States in the Americas*, Princeton 2019, p. 84. Not all building policies came from international circulation. For an account of domestic influences on Colombian housing policies, see S. Romero Sánchez, *Ruralizing Urbanization: Credit, Housing and Modernization in Colombia, 1920–1948*, PhD thesis, Cornell University 2015, ProQuest (3730458).

6 Mumford, *Designing the Modern City*, pp. 237–244. See also L. Carranza and F. Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology, and Utopia*, Austin 2014.

7 L. Bethell/I. Roxborough, Introduction: *The postwar conjuncture in Latin America: democracy, labor, and the left*, in: L. Bethell/I. Roxborough (eds.), *Latin America Between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944–1948*, Cambridge, UK 1992, pp. 1–32, at p. 2.

8 *Ibid.*; G. Grandin, *Living in revolutionary time: coming to terms with the violence of Latin America's long cold war*, in: G. Grandin/G. Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America's Long Cold War*, Durham 2010, pp. 1–42, at pp. 11–18, 29.

Hyde writes, sought “civic order” through “formal order.”<sup>9</sup> This goal reflected the fact that the very categories of planning and order were in flux, and in Bogotá they co-produced each other in specific ways – planners saw themselves as apolitical technocrats working from the top down, but their work gained heightened political stakes through the actions of rioters in the street. A protest-planning dynamic thus undergirded a broad definition of order in urban space at a foundational moment in the emergent Cold War in Latin America.

My essay locates urban planners in this context alongside Colombian and US government actors in order to demonstrate the way that states explored the projection of power through built environment. It first details the April 1948 riots as destruction of physical infrastructure by examining US and Colombian press and governmental documents. Violent political upheaval changed US-Colombian relations during the late 1940s, when the notion of communist threat became both a danger and an opportunity to state actors from both countries. The plans for reconstruction responded to this context. Urban planners operated with a vision of the future that functioned to prop up state control through the built environment of the city, even as they claimed to be apolitical. Analysis of the plans themselves and the way that the architects wrote about them in architectural trade press and private letters shows how their pre-war ideas both carried forward and shifted in the Cold War context. It reveals the political stakes of their work due to its context in the post-riot capital of a country sliding into violent rural conflict. The second section discusses the project’s failure and legacies, as planners and local officials and others came into conflict, and the possibility of the plans was foreclosed. The essay utilizes primary sources from Colombia, the United States, and France to interpret both utopian intent and the projection of state power by the United States and Colombia through transnational work. It shows how urban plans – influential and immaterial; tangible and ephemeral – hold deep historical importance in both the legacy of what remained unrealized and the material significance of that which did come to pass.

## 1. Reconstruction Plans

Just before Gaitán’s assassination, the IX Pan American Conference was underway in April 1948, with Bogotá as its backdrop. The city was located, one promotional article noted, at a high altitude (about 8600 feet or 2600 meters), on a plateau called the *sabana* (savannah) of Bogotá, with a “salubrious climate” and numerous Spanish “colonial masterpieces.”<sup>10</sup> Its population in 1947 was only about 600,000 people, but it was growing and urbanizing rapidly (in 1951 the population topped 700,00 and by 1964 it exceeded 1.6 million and 51% of Colombians lived in cities).<sup>11</sup> Bogotá had been

9 T. Hyde, *Planos, Planes y Planificación: Josep Lluís Sert and the Idea of Planning*, in: E. Mumford/H. Sarkis/N. Turan (eds.), *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953–1969*, New Haven 2008, p. 56.

10 L. Judson, *Behold Bogotá*, in: *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 82 (1 April 1948), pp. 185–197.

11 Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población* (Julio 15 de 1964),

an administrative centre of the Spanish empire. But it was mountainous and relatively isolated, at least until the advent of commercial air travel there in 1919, which would soon connect the capital to other parts of Colombia and beyond.<sup>12</sup> By 1948, it was only a two-hour flight from the coast, and travellers could ride from the Techo airport through “[m]iles of flat savanna ringed with bare mountains” on the new four-lane Avenida de las Américas.<sup>13</sup> Bogotá had recently seen “phenomenal growth and modernization,” with the “ancient, narrow streets”, one article stated, “giving way to wide modern avenues and boulevards.”<sup>14</sup> An extensive building programme was already underway in the late 1940s. It included construction of public and private buildings, factories, schools, and dwellings, as well as roads.

State officials convened the conference in a context of fraught international and domestic politics. While the United States sought to solidify a post-war hemispheric bloc under its leadership, the Colombian government’s goals were more economic. Officials wanted a Marshall Plan for Latin America.<sup>15</sup> The international conference also occurred amidst domestic political tensions. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán had articulated a popular form of politics that challenged the elite nature of Colombia’s two-party political system. The Liberal and Conservative parties, who had openly fought in the past, were attempting to get along in a practice called *convivencia* (coexistence). Gaitán criticized this political establishment. Neither party engaged with the masses, he argued, as he sought to draw the *pueblo* into a politics of the common man against the oligarchy. Some saw him as a socialist or even a fascist in the making, while others charged him with class resentment or career ambition; to his followers, Herbert Braun writes, Gaitán was “the savior who would redeem them from all earthly ills.”<sup>16</sup> With a complicated relationship to the Liberal party, whom he alternately worked with and against (and to institutional politics, having served as a congressman and briefly been mayor of Bogotá and held government minister postings), Gaitán was widely believed to have been on track to win the Liberal nomination and presidential election planned for 1950. The day that he died, Gaitán’s followers assumed his assassination to have been a Conservative government plot – perhaps aided by the Liberal establishment – to stop both the man and his political movement (although his

Bogotá 1969, p. 24; M. O’Byrne, *Le Corbusier en Bogotá, 1947–1951*, in: M. O’Byrne Orozco (ed.), *Tomo 1: LC BOG: Le Corbusier en Bogotá, 1947–1951*, Bogotá 2010, p. viii; Romero Sánchez, *Ruralizing Urbanization*, p. 1.

12 L. Judson, *Behold Bogotá*, pp. 185–197.

13 V. Hazen/V. Wheeler, *Sky-Bound Bogota is Getting Dressed Up*, in: *New York Times*, 1 February 1948, p. X17.

14 Judson, *Behold Bogotá*, pp. 185–197.

15 US Department of State Policy Information Committee, *Proposals By Other American Republics Emphasize Needs, Current Economic Developments 127* (1 December 1947), p. 9, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), *Current Economic Developments 1945–1954* (Issues 68–156), Microfiche Supplement, Washington, DC 1986; EE. UU. *Necesitan de la Ayuda Económica de Latino-América*, in: *El Tiempo*, 2 April 1948, p. 1, Luis Ángel Arango Library (hereafter LAA), Bogotá, Colombia. Unless otherwise noted, sources from LAA are originally in Spanish; *Dollar diplomacy at Bogota*, in: *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 13 March 1948, p. 113; *Communication from Washington to Bogotá*, 9 April 1948, Box 358, Folder 316, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Archivos Oficiales (hereafter MRE), AGN.

16 Braun, *Assassination*, p. 37.

alleged assassin, Juan Roa Sierra, more likely had a personal vendetta).<sup>17</sup> *Gaitanistas* saw in his assassination the death knell for the radical popular politics that he championed, and they took their anger and despair into the streets.<sup>18</sup>

The *Bogotazo* was a chaotic, explosive, and unplanned event of widespread destruction whose place in the historical record is refracted through positionality and the politics of memory.<sup>19</sup> After murdering Gaitán's alleged assassin and dragging his corpse to the steps of the presidential palace, the crowd was dispersed by government troops. Gaitán died at a nearby clinic, and, as word of his death spread, people began to stream into downtown Bogotá. They smashed, burned, and looted buildings. The protests quickly switched from a partisan focus on the presidential palace and Conservative newspapers to a more general attack on the "hierarchical social order", in which people turned their anger on "symbols of public power", including public buildings, police stations, businesses, churches, and the homes of politicians.<sup>20</sup> All told, 157 private buildings in downtown Bogotá were damaged, in addition to numerous public buildings and churches. Yet the crowd was not indiscriminate. Select potential targets survived, such as Gaitán's well known car – a dark-green Buick – which was left untouched.<sup>21</sup> Some accounts assert that Bogotá was saved due to the late afternoon drunkenness of the crowds as well as rain that helped extinguish fires.<sup>22</sup> The dead were un-counted and the full extent of mortality will never be known, though casualties were likely in the thousands.<sup>23</sup> Braun sees the riots as an attack on the very social order, which focused on the physical locations in which people could "easily see decisions being made about their lives."<sup>24</sup> The crowd, he shows, remains anonymous, though he deduces that it was "urban but lacked a strong working-class base" and included lower- and middle-class men and women.<sup>25</sup> Journalists and officials from both Colombia and the United States saw in the rioters an unruly mass instigated by sinister forces.<sup>26</sup>

17 Ibid., p. 186.

18 Ibid., pp. 36–38, 51, 56–62, 71, 74.

19 For oral history accounts, including with Fidel Castro, who was in Bogotá as a young student delegate, see Arturo Alape, *Memorias del olvido*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., La Habana, Cuba 1983.

20 Braun, *Assassination*, pp. 155–163.

21 Ibid., p. 164. The exact figures are for private buildings whose owners filed claims, and so do not include the numerous public buildings and many churches that were also destroyed.

22 Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia*, pp. 88–89.

23 Braun, *Assassination*, p. 169. Estimates range from about 500 to 2500 dead.

24 Ibid., p. 168. For an interpretation more based in the urban history of Bogotá, see Romero Sánchez, *Ruralizing Urbanization*, p. xvii.

25 Braun, *Assassination*, pp. 157, 171–172.

26 For US accounts, see press already cited; Telegram from Ambassador Beaulac to Acting Secretary of State, Bogotá, 9 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, *The Western Hemisphere*, Washington, DC 1972, Doc. 22. For Colombian accounts, see: *Así se Desarrollaron los Acontecimientos*, in: *El Tiempo*, 16 April 1948, p. 7, Folder 1, Box 47, AAG, AGN; *Mensaje de Ospina, Anoche*, in: *El Liberal*, 12 April 1948, p. 8, Gilberto Alzate Avendaño Foundation Library (hereafter GAA), Bogotá, Colombia. Unless otherwise noted, sources from the GAA are originally in Spanish. See also Catalina Muñoz Rojas, *Más allá del problema racial: el determinismo geográfico y las 'dolencias sociales'*, in *Los Problemas de la raza en Colombia*, Bogotá, 2011, pp. 11–60.

Elite and press accounts from both countries fixated on the physical destruction of the city as well as the vulnerability of the statesmen within it. US press said that the city looked “burned”, “wrecked and looted”, “desolate”, “guttled”, “battered”, “bullet-chipped”, and “ruined.”<sup>27</sup> One newspaper even reported that the “uprising” had turned the city into “an inferno of loot-lust and blood-lust.”<sup>28</sup> US Secretary of State Marshall wrote the following night that the capital building in which the conference had been held was “completely gutted” and that the “Center of city shambles and fires still burning.”<sup>29</sup> *Time* and *Newsweek* emphasized how the city became divided between safe space (the US embassy; the foreign press hotel with a “grandstand view of the fighting”; the suburban residence where Marshall was “safe but marooned”) and targeted loci – especially the presidential palace.<sup>30</sup> US Ambassador Willard Beaulac telegraphed the State Department hours after the riots began to report that “Mob invaded Capitolio, seat of Pan American Conference, ransacking building and attempting set fire at least one wing” and that “Bomb was thrown into ground floor Edificio Americano where offices US delegation housed on seventh floor.”<sup>31</sup> Colombian press likewise deemed Bogotá “Semi-Destroyed” and in a state of “Anarchy.”<sup>32</sup> Alfonso Araújo Gaviria, a Liberal statesmen, wrote in a private letter that the Government Ministry “burned like a torch” and that Carrera 7 [7<sup>th</sup> avenue] was a “volcano”, with all the buildings like “pyres, with flames up to the sky.”<sup>33</sup> In a radio address the following day, President Ospina called on the Colombian pueblo, “all the citizens of order and work”, to “form a compact squadron beside the government to bring to bear a definitive crusade against subversion, killing, and pillage.”<sup>34</sup> His was a call to citizenship and order meant to re-establish the rule of the state. After being temporarily suspended, a “skeleton conference” of only 21 leaders reconvened in a high school library in what was then the suburban neighbourhood of Chapinero.<sup>35</sup> They signed the Organization of American States (OAS) into existence by the end of April 1948.<sup>36</sup> The valedictory act such an accomplishment was meant to be, however, had been greatly diminished. Only a month had passed since President Truman declared

27 Aftermath, in: *Time* 51, 26 April 1948, p. 35; Upheaval, in: *Time* 51, 19 April 1948, pp. 38–39; Warning pigeonholed, in: *Newsweek* 31, 26 April 1948, pp. 22–23.

28 Bogota Riots Laid to Reds by Marshall, in: *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1948, p. 1.

29 Telegram from Secretary of State George Marshall to Acting Secretary of State, Bogotá, 10 April 1948, 10 pm, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, The Western Hemisphere, Washington, DC 1972, Doc. 23.

30 Bogotá berserk, in: *Newsweek* 31, 19 April 1948, pp. 48–49; Upheaval, in: *Time* 51, 19 April 1948, pp. 38–39.

31 Telegram from Ambassador Beaulac to Acting Secretary of State, Bogotá, 9 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 22.

32 Bogotá Está Semidestruida, in: *El Tiempo*, 12 April 1948, p. 1, LAA; La Noche Quedó Atrás, in: *Semana* IV, no. 78 (24 April 1948), p. 5, Folder 1, Box 47, AAG, AGN.

33 Letter from Alfonso Araújo Gaviria to his wife and children, 15 April 1948, Folder 1, Box 47, AAG, AGN. See also Braun, *Assassination*, pp. 178–179.

34 Mensaje de Ospina, Anoche, in: *El Liberal*, 12 April 1948, p. 8, GAA.

35 Telegram from Ambassador Beaulac to Acting Secretary of State, Bogotá, 14 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 28.

36 Aftermath, in: *Time* 51, 26 April 1948, p. 35; Warning pigeonholed, in: *Newsweek* 31, 26 April 1948, pp. 22–23.

Pan American Day and Pan American Week.<sup>37</sup> Now the Cold War in Latin America began with Colombia at centre stage.

The Colombian government suddenly had to contend with the global stakes of its domestic political tension. An Associated Press dispatch reportedly stated that “Communists appear to be spurring the revolution.”<sup>38</sup> Secretary Marshall denounced communist involvement from Bogotá.<sup>39</sup> One U.S. congressman deemed the riots a “South American Pearl Harbor.”<sup>40</sup> His remarks charged US intelligence failure as much as they framed the moment as drawing the US into a significant global conflict. In private, the Colombian ambassador to the United States, Gonzalo Restrepo Jaramillo, objected to the press classification of Colombia as an “unstable government” and to the charge of communism.<sup>41</sup> Yet publicly, the Colombian ambassador played into US rhetoric by deferring to Marshall’s assessment and stating that the “uprising in Bogotá was not a local or domestic event; it has to be included in the general pattern of strike, unrest and violence at present spreading throughout the world.”<sup>42</sup> Colombia soon severed diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. As the post-war democratic spring across the region turned back the other way, Colombian officials quelled the many uprisings in its cities, where rioting had spread from Bogotá in a broader set of events known as the *9 de abril* (9<sup>th</sup> of April). The events escalated previous rural unrest, spurring *La Violencia* (the Violence) – a protracted period of partisan battles and governmental repression, fought mostly in the countryside, in which an estimated 200,000 Colombians died and two million migrated or were displaced between 1946 and 1966.<sup>43</sup> The assessment of communism by US and Colombian state actors traded in anxieties about popular uprising in this moment, helping to fuel the search for different mechanisms for central state control and public order.

One week after the riots, Bogotá had somewhat returned to normal, and the Colombian government worked to restore order through both domestic and foreign policies. It issued public order decrees<sup>44</sup>; levied new taxes to fund reconstruction (while giving those

37 Harry S. Truman, Proclamation 2771: Army Day and Proclamation 2772: Pan American Week, Proclamations Harry S. Truman, 1945–1953, Harry S. Truman Library (hereafter HTL), <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/proclamations/index.php?pid=346>; <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/proclamations/index.php?pid=347>.

38 M. Johnson, Revolt Grips Bogota: Marshall Safe, Bloody Riots End Parlay, in: Daily Boston Globe, 10 April 1948, p. 1.

39 W. Sanders, Reminiscence of William Sanders, August 1975, HTL, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/orallhist/sandersw.htm>. Bogota Riots Laid to Reds by Marshall: Secretary of State Blames International Group for Uprising, in: Los Angeles Times, 13 April 1948, p. 1.

40 W. White, A “Pearl Harbor” in Bogota Charged: End of Any State Department Curb on Intelligence Agency Urged in House Action, in: New York Times, 17 April 1948, p. 7. The article attributes the quote to Representative Clarence J. Brown of Ohio.

41 Letter from G. Restrepo Jaramillo to the Minister of Foreign Relations, 14 April 1948, Folder 316, Box 358, MRE, AGN; Letter from US Embassy in Colombia to the Minister of Foreign Relations, 26 April 1948, Folder 316, Box 358, MRE, AGN.

42 Statement by G. Restrepo Jaramillo, 13 April 1948, Washington, DC, Folder 27, Box 188, MRE, AGN.

43 For more on *La Violencia*, including debates on causality and periodization, see C. Bergquist, ed., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Wilmington, DE 1992; M. Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946–1953*, Durham, NC 2002, especially at p. 5; and R. Karl, *Forgotten Peace: Reform, Violence, and the Making of Contemporary Colombia*, Oakland, CA 2017.

44 These decrees include 1148, 1239, and 1259 of May 1948. Folder 1, Box 47, AAG, AGN.



who had suffered losses a tax break)<sup>45</sup>; and employed hundreds of workers to demolish and clean up burned and ruined buildings.<sup>46</sup> By mid-April, officials had created a National Office of Reconstruction and Urbanism, which was a joint effort between the Municipality of Bogotá, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Pan-American Conference Planning Office. The new office was charged with studying and planning to reconstruct the capital city as well as other cities that had suffered destruction during the events of the *9 de abril*.<sup>47</sup>

Reconstruction was also front and centre in Colombian foreign relations with the United States as policymakers negotiated early foreign aid. Whereas Colombian policymakers had trouble advocating a Marshall Plan for Latin America before, in the wake of the violence the US government authorized a USD 10,000,000 “emergency reconstruction loan” from the Export-Import Bank.<sup>48</sup> Characterization, in Colombian and US press, of Bogotá as “bombed” or “blitzed” helped create an equivalence with Western Europe’s wartime experience, which merited high levels of reconstruction aid.<sup>49</sup> By August, the Colombian government signed an agreement for a line of credit to acquire in the United States “supplies, materials, equipment, and services required for replacement, reconstruction or repair and development of properties destroyed or damaged during the recent disturbances in Colombia.”<sup>50</sup> In the year before President Truman announced Point IV – the fourth point of his inaugural speech in 1949, which is widely considered to be the first articulation of foreign aid as part of US presidential foreign policy doctrine to fight communism abroad – funding for Colombia was being worked out in an ad hoc way, at the behest of a local government with particular needs. Though approval issues hampered the disbursement of the Bogotá Reconstruction credit, the Export Import Bank did allocate USD 3,000,000 in 1950 for the purchase of houses for the city of Bogotá and maintenance equipment for the National Highway Department.<sup>51</sup> Economic advisers also began to travel from the United States to perform studies in Colombia. These included Lauchlin Currie, a New Deal economist who led the first World Bank mission to the country beginning in 1949.<sup>52</sup> Simultaneously, Colombian officials solicited US policymakers for military aid, expressing a need to triple their standing army (Colombia

45 G. Marshall, Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, 12 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 93; Riots Cut Taxes in Bogota, in: New York Times, 9 June 1948, p. 7.

46 Un Gran Plan de Reconstrucción de Bogotá, *Estudia Ahora la Alcaldía*, in: *El Liberal*, 17 April 1948, p. 6, GAA.

47 G. Córdoba, Bogotá Recobró la Normalidad con la Ayuda de Todos sus Habitantes, in: *El Liberal*, 17 April 1948, p. 3, GAA; P. Forero, Inician la Reconstrucción, in: *El Liberal*, 15 April 1948, p. 6, GAA.

48 Treasury Secretary J. Snyder to the Acting Secretary of State, 14 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 29.

49 W. Alig, Bogotá’s Plight: US Funds Urged to Rebuild City Wrecked by Mob, in: *New York Herald Tribune*, 14 April 1948, p. 22; Americans Taken to Safety: 300 Reported Dead in Bogota, in: *Washington Post*, 11 April 1948, p. M1; Coalition Cabinet Formed to Seek Peace; La Noche Quedó Atrás, in: *Semana IV*, no. 78 (24 April 1948), p. 5, Folder 1, Box 47, AAG, AGN.

50 The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Colombia, 24 August 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 93.

51 Memorandum of informal conversation, Colombian Embassy in Washington DC, 5 May 1948, Folder 316, Box 358, MRE, AGN; US Department of State Policy Information Committee, Current Economic Developments 264 (24 July 1950), p. 11, in: FRUS, Current Economic Developments 1945–1954, Microfiche Supplement.

52 See Offner, *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy*, pp. 6, 100–111.

would soon gain more leverage for military aid by becoming the only Latin American country to contribute troops to the Korean War effort).<sup>53</sup> Thus did public order become cemented into the foundation of US and Colombian policymaker notions about Latin America's dawning Cold War.

As the Colombian government pursued reconstruction with some urgency, including by seeking US government funds, it also solicited ambitious urban planning help from international experts. Their work would build on a series of earlier studies. These included those by Austrian urban planner Karl Brunner, which were, as historian Susana Romero Sánchez puts it, "fundamental to Bogotá's expansion in the late 1930s and early 1940s."<sup>54</sup> Attempts at largescale urban plans for Bogotá were also made by local authorities, such as in the Plan Soto-Bateman of 1944, and by local architects, chief among them the Colombian Society of Architects (Sociedad Colombiana de Arquitectos, SCA).<sup>55</sup> The SCA advocated for core principles of urban design in Bogotá: respecting the orthogonal design of the city, including by avoiding diagonals and transversals; accepting the preponderance of north-south transit and promoting wide and continuous streets; and establishing new arteries within a grid of rectangular superblocks. The mid-1940s SCA *plan vial* (road plan) was completed in part. This included construction of Avenida de las Américas, which connected the airport to the city centre, as well as widening a number of main avenues. As the first functional master street plan, the SCA project remained influential.

When they were hired in the late 1940s to create new urban plans for Bogotá, Le Corbusier, Josep Lluís Sert, and Paul Lester Wiener were famed architects who had each worked all over the world. They had formed part of a common pre-war intellectual milieu through their European working group, created in the late 1920s, called the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne, CIAM). All saw fascism affect countries in which they had lived, in France, Spain, and Germany, respectively. And all immigrated to a new country – Le Corbusier (whose given name was Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) to France from his native Switzerland, and Sert and Wiener to the United States. Each was also politically ambiguous to an extent. Accusations of communism have been levied against Le Corbusier, as well as, less commonly, fascism.<sup>56</sup> The architect's ideas were statist in ways that lent them to

53 B. Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939–1960*, Kent, OH 2008; G. Marshall, Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, 12 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, Vol. IX, Doc. 93; US Department of State Policy Information Committee, *Colombian Economic Mission Visits US, Current Economic Developments 157* (28 June 1948), p. 10, in: FRUS, *Current Economic Developments 1945–1954*, Microfiche Supplement.

54 Romero Sánchez, *Ruralizing Urbanization*, p. 287; see also J. Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna: De Brunner a Le Corbusier*, in: I. Duque Franco (ed.), *Historiografía y planificación urbana en América Latina*, Bogotá 2013, pp. 73–168.

55 *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, pp. 3–11, *Estudios de la Vialidad Bogotana*, Departamento Administrativo de Planificación Distrital, Bogotá, D.E., 1960, Cámara de Representantes, Información Jurídico, Archivo Legislativo, Informes Misceláneos, Nro. 4, Material Descatalogado, AGN.

56 M. Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: The Mobilization of Myth, Art, and Culture in France, 1909–1939*, Durham, NC 2007, especially pp. 144–145, 152–153. Le Corbusier worked on plans for both the USSR and Vichy France,

authoritarian usage, from across the political spectrum, and he worked for governments of various political orientations around the world. He believed in the power of the state to shape modern life for citizens in the public sphere.<sup>57</sup> Sert emigrated to New York City after the fall of the Spanish Republic in 1939, and though he thus demonstrated greater aversion to fascism, he shared a belief in the power of the state to help create favourable planning outcomes.<sup>58</sup> In New York, Sert started working with Wiener, who had settled in the United States by the early 1930s and forged both personal and professional ties to government.<sup>59</sup> Sert and Wiener established the firm of Town Planning Associates (TPA) in New York City in 1942. TPA provided architecture and urban planning services across the world for two decades, especially in Latin America.

Each of the three architects had worked to align the modern city to the human body in physical space. Sert published *Can Our Cities Survive?* and Le Corbusier published *The Athens Charter*, both during World War II, to crystallize CIAM thinking as it had developed since the group's founding in 1928. They closely connected the urban planning reforms that they advocated to the human subject in the physical space of the city. Both advanced the concept of “human scale” as a planning referent. Sert, for example, called man the “axis of new cities.”<sup>60</sup> Each evoked the city as a “living organism.” In their “urban biology”, public health for the individual and the collective relied on CIAM's four functions: “inhabiting, working, recreation (in leisure time), and circulation.”<sup>61</sup> Yet health was also metaphorical. The “ignorance of vital necessities, as much physical as moral”, Le Corbusier wrote, “bears its poisoned fruits: illness, decay, revolt.”<sup>62</sup> The planners understood health as encompassing political stability – as against revolt – and they

though he later tried to distance himself from both, and his French CIAM group, ASCORAL, had ties to the French-Algerian resistance against the Vichy regime. See also P. Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, UK 1996, pp. 210–212; E. Mumford, *Designing the Modern City: Urbanism Since 1850*, New Haven 2018, p. 203; N. Weber, *Le Corbusier: A Life*, New York 2008, pp. 342–345 413, 465.

57 For one important theorization of this feature of Le Corbusier's work, see J. Scott, *The High-Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique*, in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven 1999, pp. 103–146.

58 Biography, The Josep Lluís Sert Collection, Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University, <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/77/resources/726>; Josep Luis Sert, Spanish architect and artist, in: *Chicago Tribune*, 17 March 1983, p. A16; J. Rovira, José Luis Sert, 1901–1983, Milan 2003, pp. 82, 50, 94. Sert had designed the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris, where Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* was displayed at the request of the Republican government. Sert became a US citizen in 1951 and dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1953.

59 Wiener left Germany in 1913 and became a US citizen in 1919, but he studied and worked in Germany during the Weimer period before returning to the United States, where he worked for the Office of Production Research and Development. In 1934, he married Alma Morgenthau Wertheim, daughter of diplomat Henry Morgenthau and sister of Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. See Paul Lester Wiener, *Architect and City Planner, Is Dead at 72*, in: *New York Times*, 18 November 1967, p. 37; Historical Note, Paul Lester Wiener papers, 1913–1968, University of Oregon Libraries, <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv66707>; Mrs. A.M. Wertheim Architect's Bride, in: *New York Times*, 25 January 1934, p. 16.

60 J. Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, Their Analysis, Their Solutions*, Cambridge, MA 1942, p. 228.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 232. Le Corbusier, *The Athens Charter*, transl. Anthony Eardley, New York 1973 (c 1943), p. 101.

62 Le Corbusier, *Athens*, p. 101.

integrated public order into their notion of the modern. Though they denigrated the pernicious effects of industry – the “civilization of black smoke, of noise, of noxious gases, of crowded slums” – Le Corbusier and Sert promoted the underlying structure of industrial capitalism.<sup>63</sup> They focused on transportation efficiency, for example, for ease of work. Both had a “profound respect for individuality” that could, on its face, seem democratizing.<sup>64</sup> Yet the paradox of individual liberty predicated on state planning points to the limitations of individualism as a truly democratic ideal. In the space of the city, from the civic to the domestic, urban planning should, they argued, act on people in a way that sought to be totalizing: their bodies made healthy and efficient by its structures. Individuals were an “enlightened population” that “will understand, desire, and demand what the specialists have envisaged for them.”<sup>65</sup> Democracy meant individual allotment in their rendering, but it did not mean self-determination. Individual choice was not part of the frame.

The architects’ ideology dovetailed with burgeoning ideas within the Truman Administration of just how subtle the geostrategic threat that it faced could be. At this early moment in the Cold War, its real fear was of changing forms of “indirect aggression”, which could include nuanced shifts in public attitudes and ways of life. The preoccupation sometimes went under the name of Psychological Strategy. Its ambit included information control and psychological operations, including radio stations and propaganda. The Marshall Plan was an important piece in the US psychological campaign because it promoted a non-communist, public-relations friendly form of economic advancement.<sup>66</sup> Such conceptions of subtle influence expanded the purview of the ideological conflict. Beyond territorial control, the human mind was a site to win influence. What urban planners like Sert, Wiener, and Le Corbusier offered was a model for how such a contest might be fought in actual, everyday terrain: in spaces of leisure, transportation, and even the human body itself. Preoccupation with these new spaces, especially in cities, gained political traction in much the same way, and for similar reasons, as Psychological Strategy and thus were connected to the Cold War conflict at its outset.

In Colombia, the planners already enjoyed both a cultural reputation and specific histories.<sup>67</sup> Wiener had travelled to Colombia, among other Latin American countries, in 1945 on a US State Department-sponsored lecture trip designed to garner political support through cultural and educational initiatives. Sert also became involved in lecturing

63 Ibid., pp. 49, 76–78, 97; and Sert, *Can Our Cities*, pp. 58, 229, 128.

64 *The Founding of the CIAM, 1928 and The Declaration of La Sarraz*, in: Le Corbusier, Athens, pp. 5, 7.

65 Sert, *Can Our Cities*, p. 239. Le Corbusier, Athens, pp. 94, 95, 103, 105.

66 S. Lucas, *Campaigns of Truth: The Psychological Strategy Board and American Ideology, 1951–1953*, in: *The International History Review* 18, no. 2 (May 1996), pp. 279–302, at p. 28.

67 Le Corbusier had lectured in Latin America in 1929, worked in Chile in 1930, and designed a project in Argentina beginning in 1948. See N. Weber, *Le Corbusier: A Life*, New York 2008. Montoya argues that South America held particular interest for Le Corbusier. See Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, p. 108. TPA drew up plans for *Cidade dos Motores*, Brazil (1943–1947) and *Chimbote*, Peru (1947–1948), and would also later take on work in Venezuela and Cuba. See Carranza and Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America, 1943–B*.

in Latin America.<sup>68</sup> Le Corbusier, meanwhile, had lectured in South America in 1929, and he later met Colombian official Eduardo Zuleta Ángel during work on the United Nations building in New York City. Zuleta Ángel invited Le Corbusier to a pair of conferences in Bogotá in June 1947, on modern architecture and town planning. Upon arriving in the city for the first time, Le Corbusier was greeted at the airport by hundreds of students, along with almost all other architects living in the city, who yelled, in French, “Down with the Academy! Long live Le Corbusier!”<sup>69</sup> Local interest in CIAM ideas coalesced in a Colombian chapter of the organization established shortly thereafter. A subsequent city mayor later wrote that, in their “youthful fervor”, the group of young Colombian architects were “disquieted [...] by the apparent inability of the city to conform” to a new order. Negotiations for Le Corbusier’s work in Bogotá began at this time; the authorities hired him to “insure success”, as he had “led the world in architectural expression of modern sociological concepts.”<sup>70</sup> Sert and Wiener had already contracted TPA to create plans for Tumaco, followed by Medellín and Cali.<sup>71</sup> Yet it was in Bogotá, Colombia’s capital city, that the clearest links between civil unrest and state planning played out.

Though the Bogotá project had been discussed before the *Bogotazo*, commentators in Colombia began to relate the urban planning efforts to the destructive events in their wake. A 1952 study through the Inter-American Housing and Planning Centre (Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento, CINVA, an agency of the OAS headquartered in Bogotá) articulated the project as responsive to the *9 de abril*. Like newspapers, it compared the events to war. England, it stated, “influenced by war, is considered today as the cradle of modern urbanism. France, Sweden and the United States have also done a lot in this sense.”<sup>72</sup> Thus was Bogotá’s situation still hopeful, despite the “disaster of the 9 of April of 1948,” which helped motivate officials to “put things in order.”<sup>73</sup> Later accounts agreed. A 1960 Pilot Plan that reviewed previous such efforts noted that officials acted amidst the “urban ravages occasioned by the events of the 9 of April of 1948.”<sup>74</sup> The planners were charged, it stated, to study “without delay the necessary measures for a prompt reconstruction of the central area, affected by the fires of the month of April and

68 See F. Hernández, *Architectural Latin American Modernism: Twentieth-Century Politics, Historiography, and the Academic Debate*, in: A. Lindgren/S. Ross (eds.), *The Modernist World*, London 2017, pp. 383–391, at pp. 385–386; Carranza/Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America, 1943-A and 1943-B*.

69 Notas Editoriales, PROA, August 1947, LAA; F. Pérez Oyarzún, *Le Corbusier: Latin American traces*, in: J. Lejeune (ed.), *Cruelty & Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America*, New York 2005, pp. 99–100.

70 S. Trujillo Gómez, *Birth of a city*, in: *United Nations World 5* (1 May 1951), pp. 57–58.

71 Part of Medellín’s downtown centre was developed from these plans. See *Aids City Plans in South America: Wiener-Sert Group Here at Work on 6 Projects in Peru and Colombia*, in: *New York Times*, 18 February 1951, p. 198; Carranza and Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America, 1943-B*; Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, p. 327.

72 R. Vargas Mera, *El Plan Regulador de Bogotá y Sus Relaciones con la Vivienda, Bogotá 1952*, p. 4, Box 144, Fondo CINVA, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (hereafter UNAl). This study was performed by Vargas in order to earn a postgraduate degree at CINVA.

73 Vargas Mera, *El Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, p. 24. CINVA, UNAl.

74 *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, p. 11, AGN.

the adoption of plans to permit the harmonious development of the city.”<sup>75</sup> The project was motivated by a reconstruction ethic. It necessarily responded to concerns about order and intertwined them, in lasting official narratives, with goals of future growth and development.

The riots thus raised the political stakes of the work, as did ongoing violence. After spending the first six months of 1948 traveling in Latin America, including meetings in Colombia with Zuleta Ángel, Sert wrote to Le Corbusier: “I have the impression, that this ‘reconstruction’ of the city is becoming a political affair, and that the fight between ‘liberals’ and ‘conservatives’ dominates everything.”<sup>76</sup> Yet project participants denied politics, perhaps too vehemently. Bogotá mayor Fernando Mazuera, who wanted to be known as the “public works mayor”, told the popular magazine *Cromos* that he had “rejected politics from the beginning. He has wanted to be a simple administrator of the city.”<sup>77</sup> The denial of politics continued throughout 1948 and 1949, as the Oficina del Plano Regulador de Bogotá (OPRB) was created to oversee the urban planning project and the city council passed Acuerdo (Agreement) 88 to commission the plan in two phases (the Plan Director [Master Plan], otherwise known as the Plan Piloto [Pilot Plan], headed by Le Corbusier, and the Plan Regulador [Regulatory Plan], by Sert and Wiener). “When politics gets involved, the simplest things become complicated”, Sert wrote to Le Corbusier in February of 1949, as the contracts were negotiated (both architects would sign them by the end of March 1949).<sup>78</sup> Wiener reminded him that “we must bear in mind that bureaucrats will hold us – if not always themselves – to the letter of the contract.”<sup>79</sup> Like Mazuera, they wanted to be technocrats: they attempted to act as “international experts to formulate ‘apolitical’ urbanistic doctrines for common good” and “avoided local political involvements.”<sup>80</sup> Wiener wrote to Le Corbusier in November 1949, after work on the pilot plan had started. He said that he had advised Herbert Ritter, a Colombian architect partnering on the project who decried the “extreme political unrest” in which Colombia found itself as “the most serious of the century”,<sup>81</sup> to remain quiet on politics – to “stand on the completely neutral grounds of a technician, so as not to draw the City Plan into the political battle where it would only be used unscrupulously as [a] political ‘football’” – even though Wiener acknowledged that “civil war

75 Ibid.

76 Sert letter to Le Corbusier, 30 June 1947, in: M. Tieleman (ed.), *Correspondance, 1928–1965*, Paris 2009, p. 117. All correspondence between Le Corbusier and Sert or Wiener originally in French, unless otherwise noted.

77 J. Ordoñez, *Cómo se está engrandeciendo Bogotá*, in: *Cromos* LXVI, no. 1643, 26 August 1948, p. 40, GAA. See also Romero Sánchez, *Ruralizing Urbanization*, pp. 339–340.

78 Sert to Le Corbusier, 26 February 1949, in: Tieleman (ed.), *Correspondance*, p. 120; *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, pp. 11, 15, AGN.

79 Wiener letter to Le Corbusier, 14 June 1949, E029, Josep Lluís Sert Collection (hereafter JLS), Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University.

80 Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, p. 327.

81 Letter from H. Ritter to Le Corbusier, 26 October 1949, H3-4-175, Le Corbusier Archive (hereafter LCA), Paris, France. Unless otherwise noted, sources from the LCA are originally in French.

is expected momentarily.”<sup>82</sup> Their discourse around avoiding politics, as well as worries about its possible outcomes, pointed to the fraught situation that they wished so greatly to remain above.

But, unsurprisingly, politics intervened, in two major ways that challenged the architect’s claim to apoliticism. First, national politics structured and increasingly constrained possibilities. As the Liberal Party boycotted Colombia’s presidential election in late 1949, violence in the countryside escalated, and the subsequent victory of Conservative Laureano Gómez coincided with a shift in the urban planning project. Carlos Arbeláez Camacho replaced Herbert Ritter as director of the local planning office in early 1950, and he requested that Le Corbusier submit his pilot plan by August, to coincide with the new president’s inauguration. Sert and Wiener cautioned Le Corbusier to comply. They wrote that “we will have to come to good terms with the new regime since they are to carry on the work”, and that “we may have to face a less friendly and perhaps more bureaucratic regime which may want to take advantage of any omission on grounds of pure technicality, and delay or frustrate approval of the plans and the payments for same.”<sup>83</sup> But the new timeline caused the project, whose contract had initially made Le Corbusier feel “impatient” because it was delayed, to now become rushed.<sup>84</sup> Though Le Corbusier worked closely with Colombian collaborators Germán Samper, Rogelio Salmons, and Reinaldo Valencia, he lost the partnership with Ritter, who had come to southern France to work for a time and kept up a lively correspondence with Le Corbusier.<sup>85</sup>

In this context, the container of national politics gave way to a second kind of mitigating dynamic: the obstacle of interpersonal politics. Le Corbusier tried to tighten his grip on the work, writing Arbeláez – who he at first was hopeful about because, like Ritter, the new director was a member of CIAM<sup>86</sup> – that “we consider it indispensable to remain, we planners (Le Corbusier, Wiener and Sert) attached as Council to the execution of such buildings that it would be dangerous to leave to the initiative completely free to Bogotá.”<sup>87</sup> Sert and Wiener continued to negotiate the increasingly tense relationship between Le Corbusier and Colombian officials. Bogotá’s new mayor Santiago Trujillo saw the TPA planners possessing “experience and realism” to balance Le Corbusier’s “powerful, creative imagination” which arguably “soared beyond the limits of practicality.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, they pushed the French architect to be aware of financial issues and potential

82 Wiener to Le Corbusier, 8 November 1949, in: Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, p. 327. Last part of quote directly from letter from P. Wiener to Le Corbusier, 8 November 1949, H3-4-173, LCA. Original in English.

83 Letter from Sert and Wiener to Le Corbusier, 21 June 1950, H3-4-97, LCA. Original in English.

84 Letter from Martínez to Le Corbusier, 2 June 1949, H3-4-214, LCA; Letter from Martínez to Le Corbusier, 31 December 1949, H3-4-516, LCA.

85 R. Cortés/F. Arias, *La intervención de Le Corbusier en la Planeación Física de Bogotá 1945–1958*, in: H. Vargas (ed.), *Le Corbusier en Colombia*, Bogotá 1987, p. 106; and D. Tarchópulos, *Las Huellas del Plan para Bogotá de Le Corbusier*, Sert y Wiener, in: *Scripta Nova X*, no. 218 (86) (1 August 2006), <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn/sn-218-86.htm>.

86 Letter from Herbert Ritter to Le Corbusier, 28 November 1949, H3-4-165, LCA; and letter from Le Corbusier to Ritter, 7 December 1949, H3-4-159, LCA.

87 Letter from Le Corbusier to Arbeláez, 21 April 1950, H3-4-117, LCA.

88 Trujillo, *Birth of a city*, pp. 57–58.

opposition, and to work – in a literal way – with an awareness of the Colombian context. “The important existing buildings which must remain in the heart of the city”, Sert and Wiener wrote to him in June 1950, “should appear on your plans [...] so that they can see how they can evolve from the present to the realization of your plans, without having to demolish important buildings in the city.”<sup>89</sup> Le Corbusier returned to Bogotá and stayed for most of September and October 1950 to deliver the pilot plan.<sup>90</sup> His work was thus the product of a charged political context that stretched from the governmental to the interpersonal.

The political context in which the planners worked resulted in a Plan Piloto whose technical attempts at ordering bodies in the physical space of the city must be understood, also, in political terms. The final versions of Le Corbusier’s plan created order first through an intricate road system that separated people by speed and type of mobility. While many roads were different types of local streets or highways for cars, the prized V7s were green paths and park strips for exclusive pedestrian use. They connected school and play areas, including parks, which encouraged exercise as transportation and directed the flow of pedestrian traffic.<sup>91</sup> About one third of the 49 plates of plans printed in an *informe técnico* (technical report), at every scale – from the regional to the metropolitan, urban, and civic centre – explicitly evoked the human body by rephrasing the third CIAM function of recreation as “cultivating the body and spirit.”<sup>92</sup> Le Corbusier coded the reference with “C.C.” to indicate zones devoted to “corporeal culture”, which he also coloured green.<sup>93</sup> The urban scale situated areas of trees and grass together with sites of culture, such as universities, museums, and libraries. Le Corbusier proposed “cultural parks”, which combined “physical and intellectual diversions.”<sup>94</sup> He deployed the human scale by asserting that people should only have to travel “maximum 15 minutes on foot” to services such as markets, business, or cinemas.<sup>95</sup> Overall, the pedestrian plans at different levels tied an organized city to the pleasure of the natural world. They normalized the environmental ordering that they dictated and rendered bodily experience of nature in line with political order, human health, economic exchange, and industrial transportation.

89 Letter from Sert and Wiener to Le Corbusier, 29 June 1950, H3-4-93, LCA. Original in English.

90 R. Cortés / F. Arias, *La intervención de Le Corbusier en la Planeación Física de Bogotá*, p. 106; and Tarchópulos, *Las Huellas*.

91 P. Wiener / J. Sert, *The Work of Town Planning Associates in Latin America 1945–1956*, in: *Architectural Design* 27 (Mar–June 1957) 6, pp. 190–213, at pp. 192–193; and J. Rovira (ed.), *Half a Century of Architecture, 1928–1979 Complete Work*, Barcelona 2005, pp. 148–149.

92 Le Corbusier, *Elaboración del Plan Regulador de Bogotá: Establecimiento del Plan Director por Le Corbusier en París, 1949–1950* (edición facsimilar), in: M. O’Byrne Orozco (ed.), *Tomo 1: LC BOG: Le Corbusier en Bogotá, 1947–1951*, Bogotá 2010, p. 4. Original in French. The introduction discusses different copies of the *informe técnico del Plan Director para Bogotá* (technical report of the Master Plan for Bogotá) and plans in existence, pp. x–xi (one can be found in B08100, JLS). See also K. Manco Roza, *El Plan Director de Le Corbusier y su influencia en el proceso de planeación en Bogotá (1949–1969)*, Bogotá 2010, especially p. 31.

93 Le Corbusier, *Elaboración del Plan*, p. 8. Original in French.

94 *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

95 *Ibid.*, Grid 112-1. Original in Spanish.



Le Corbusier's civic centre was to be re-formed in the old Plaza Bolívar, to great physical effect. The main square was so decrepit that an initial study (maybe apocryphally) discovered "one underground drainage pipe that actually dated from colonial times."<sup>96</sup> Le Corbusier's plans extended the plaza along Carrera 7 (7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) – a major site of destruction during the riots – to become a shopping promenade, the business and commercial heart of the city, and an amusement centre. The square itself was also to have several levels connected by ramps, for pedestrian use only. Visiting and sketching the space and studying aerial photographs, Le Corbusier framed the civic centre as "following the old Latin-American tradition of colonial days", including in making Carrera 7 "exclusively reserved for pedestrians following the old colonial tradition of the 'walking street.'"<sup>97</sup> Emphasizing the core as historical past signalled an openness to local history and a preoccupation with monumentality, but only of a certain kind. It deployed the *damero* (checkerboard) style of grid design, which the Spanish crown had used toward the martial aim of public order, to replicate the effect while also evoking a storied past of high culture.<sup>98</sup> The tall rectangular buildings that Le Corbusier envisioned dwarfed the colonial cathedral, reorganizing the state's power as modern through aesthetic and spatial elements. The pilot plan for the civic centre thus worked to legitimize the architectural and statist project of bodily control in the physical space of the city by giving it timeless value.

Le Corbusier's plans also evoked a visual human form in relation to planning elements, which reflected both CIAM principles and a preoccupation with human bodies in the Bogotá context. One plate showed the Avenida Jiménez, a major thoroughfare, in tandem with drawn human figures, while another, entitled "a house, a tree", represented the passage to dwellings through the three-dimensional space of pedestrian paths, parks, and collective garages. Plates on "Rochelle" houses depicted human figures for scale in perspectival height drawings, along with calculations of square footage per person.<sup>99</sup> The plans posited, in sanitized statistical form, that which each individual physically deserves. The evocation of the human form was made possible by CIAM's new graphic methodology – first implemented in the Bogotá plans – which was supposed to facilitate the groups' work by creating a common format for architects across the world to manifest an ideal city.<sup>100</sup> The grid format was not just about buildings. It was also about graphic representation of a standardized way of acting on people in urban space. In the post-riot Colombian context, it was inseparable from reconstruction, which found cause in the way that the "bodies and spirits" that Le Corbusier wanted to act upon had been used toward urban destruction and revolutionary intent.

96 Trujillo, *Birth of a city*, pp. 57–58.

97 Ascoral, *Centre, Grille Ascoral*, Bogotá Plan Pilote draft, R2-15-5, LCA.

98 C. Hernández Rodríguez, *Las ideas modernas del Plan para Bogotá en 1950: El trabajo de Le Corbusier*, Wiener y Sert, Bogotá 2004, p. 87.

99 Le Corbusier, *Elaboración del Plan*, Grid 131-1; 131-1-3; 134-1-1.

100 Manco Roza, *El Plan Director*, 51.

## 2. On-the-Ground Realities

Despite the public order function of Le Corbusier's plans, politics continued to cause tension in the working relationship with the architects even as the pilot plan was approved. The mayor of Bogotá had alluded to limiting the action to circulation roads in 1950. He wanted to focus on building public works.<sup>101</sup> Real estate developers voiced strong objections to the pilot plan,<sup>102</sup> as they planned large-scale developments to the north and south, even as "monstrous" and "clandestine land developments" sprung up spontaneously outside of the city's perimeter.<sup>103</sup> The president delayed in making decisions about the pilot plan.<sup>104</sup> It was approved in mid-1951, many months after submission, but Le Corbusier had already become disillusioned and disinterested. He accepted his now-famous job in Chandigarh, India, despite Sert's protests and the tension it caused with Colombian authorities, whom he openly blamed for their "complete silence."<sup>105</sup> The country's government institutions were often uncommunicative and guarded during this time, to Le Corbusier's frustration.<sup>106</sup> Privately, he pointed to the political situation and civic centre construction stalling. He travelled to Colombia with Sert and Wiener in May 1951 to meet with Colombian authorities. According to a biographer, he was "expecting triumph", but was "disappointed." President Laureano Gómez, increasingly conservative and authoritarian in the face of continued unrest and economic crisis, oscillated on the pilot plan.<sup>107</sup> The architect was faced with a public opinion nightmare. "The newspapers accuse me of being an aristocrat and a conservative!" he wrote to his mother.<sup>108</sup> He was "attacked by the people in power for failing to accommodate the rich," a biographer writes, while, "at the same time, the press, like the general population, laced into him for being an aristocrat too focused on the rich."<sup>109</sup>

The problem reflected the logic of statist progressivism, wherein the provision of services was in tension with the need for central control. That which biographer Nicolas Weber deems the "double-barreled fusillade" was what CIAM's paradox looked like in practice. Earlier in the year, Arbeláez Camacho of the OPRB had reassured Le Corbusier that the national government decree authorizing the mayor to adopt the pilot plan would ensconce it in its current form for future city officials, making it "outside of political discussions of the lowest order."<sup>110</sup> "As you can see", he wrote shortly after, "we have sought to make the Pilot Plan have a very firm base and not just be a series of well drawn

101 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 17 November 1950, in Hernández, *Las ideas modernas*, p. 101.

102 *Ibid.* At the LCA, this letter is H3-4-378.

103 Letter from Wiener to Le Corbusier, 28 October 1950, H3-4-85, LCA. Original in English.

104 *Ibid.*

105 Letter from Le Corbusier to S. Trujillo, 20 December 1950, G2-11-116, LCA; Hernández, *Las ideas modernas*, p. 105. Le Corbusier informed Colombian officials of the India job in December 1950.

106 Tieleman (ed.), *Correspondance*, p. 147; and Hernández, *Las ideas modernas*, p. 104.

107 Hernández, *Las ideas modernas*, p. 102.

108 Le Corbusier letter, 20 May 1951, R2-2-44, LCA.

109 Weber, *Le Corbusier*, p. 551.

110 Letter from Arbeláez to Le Corbusier, 12 March 1951, H3-4-403, LCA. Original in Spanish.

papers.”<sup>111</sup> Yet by late 1951, Arbeláez Camacho admitted that the civic centre plan was in “bad shape”, as the “government does not want to accept a different idea of the location of the Palace than the current site”, and, furthermore, the president “has been sick and at the moment does not exercise power.”<sup>112</sup>

Despite continuing tension, TPA nevertheless began the next phase of the project: the Plan Director was developed into a complete Plan Regulador from mid-1951 to 1953. Wiener and Sert worked closely with the local planning office. They created designs in New York but prepared and checked them in Bogotá, making constant trips to the city for several months. Though Le Corbusier still served in a consulting capacity, his role was limited. Sert and Wiener had a more practical engagement with the reality in which they worked – still counselling Le Corbusier on how to act diplomatically, for example, by cautioning him to “take an attitude of complete compliance at all times” and “not to pressure the Mayor of Bogota.”<sup>113</sup> The New York firm also bowed to Colombian governmental pressure to reduce the green areas due to cost, and they proposed a four-lane rapid highway that borrowed from the “proven efficiency in American highways and conforms to US standards.”<sup>114</sup> Sert and Wiener thus built US modelling into the plans. Like their diplomatic cautioning with Le Corbusier, they framed US-style public works as a practical solution to the obstacles presented by the Colombian political, economic, and natural environment.

Yet they nonetheless encountered continued difficulties. “El Plan Regulador, a Failure?” one newspaper headline in Colombia read around this time, as tensions with the new director mounted, and he told the press that Colombian architects could finish the project.<sup>115</sup> Another made a play on words, calling it “El ‘Plan Congelador,’” or “freezer plan” due to one businessman’s charge that its urban regulations, especially the fixed perimeter, discouraged buying and selling of properties.<sup>116</sup> It became increasingly clear that part or all of the plan would never be built, especially the civic centre, which would be delayed or impossible due to “political and financial reasons over which [the Oficina del Plan Regulador] have no control.”<sup>117</sup> Nonetheless, Sert and Wiener kept working, even amidst another personnel change that saw Carlos Arbeláez Camacho resign and be replaced by the chief engineer from the Public Health department, Ernesto González Concha.<sup>118</sup> Wiener reported continued problems during a trip in 1952, but he remained

111 Letter from Arbeláez to Le Corbusier, 19 April 1951, H3-4-398, LCA. Original in Spanish.

112 Letter from Arbeláez Camacho to Le Corbusier, 21 November 1951, H3-4-26, LCA. Original in Spanish.

113 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 3 January 1951, H3-4-60, LCA; Letter from Sert and Wiener to Le Corbusier, 30 January 1951, H3-4-53, LCA. Originals in English.

114 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 29 March 1951, H3-4-405, LCA. Original in English.

115 *El Plan Regulador, Un Fracaso? El Contrato con Wiener y Sert no lo Prorrogará el Municipio*, in: *El Tiempo*, 27 September 1952, p. 1.

116 *El “Plan Congelador,”* in: *El Espectador*, 9 October 1952, Folder Bogota Clippings, 1952–53, Box 3, Paul Lester Wiener Papers (hereafter PLW), University of Oregon Libraries.

117 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 2 May 1952, H3-4-38, LCA. Original in English.

118 *Renunció el Director y Dos Altos Funcionarios del Plan Regulador, and González Concha Sería Director de la Oficina del Plan Regulador*, *El Tiempo*, 17 September 1952, p. 1, Folder Bogota Clippings, 1952–1953, Box 3, PLW.

resolute. TPA made modifications to the plan, including leaving the presidential palace at its present site.<sup>119</sup> Believing that they had “finally solved” the “difficulties with the Municipality”, they agreed to prolonging the contract by six months, until it was completed in 1953.<sup>120</sup>

The Plan Regulador extended Le Corbusier’s focus on roads, and especially pedestrian walkways, as the foundation of an ordered city. Sert and Wiener worked to divide the area covered by the amended city and planned extension into 35 sectors of 25,000 to 75,000 inhabitants. Each contained integrated green areas and local cores, with road networks determining the contours of the sectors. TPA employed an American road engineering firm to develop the concept, which continued the extension of their plan into the realm of public works. Seelye, Stevenson, Value and Knecht of New York City used the V7 system. Sert and Wiener engaged with the CIAM principal of circulation by planning for cars. One observer even noted that their metropolitan plans transformed the railroad system inside the urban space of the city to complement roads, including through displacing and eliminating certain stations and lines whose function was to be absorbed by highways.<sup>121</sup> Yet they also continued to emphasize the principal of “cultivating the body and the spirit.” Sert and Wiener described the physical experience of the pedestrian paths in an article in *Architectural Design*: they would be “independent of cars and protected from noises, lined with trees, and opening into parks, play-fields and quiet squares.” The separate “complete pedestrian network” would make controlling passage easy on the V7s.<sup>122</sup> Though cars could cause the physical elements that the planners sought to avoid – pollution, noise, etc. – and built class inequality into the plans, as not everyone could afford a car, the public pathways sought to open public space for all. The tension between class difference and the notion of equal allotment permeated the road plans.

Their efforts to more pragmatically plan the civic centre and dwellings show Sert and Wiener continuing to grapple with order. One way that the planners articulated their own vision for the city was through the vistas that they allowed and precluded for its inhabitants. In the middle of the Plaza Bolívar, the historical and monumental site that served as the city’s main square, “you would get frequent views of the beautiful hills” behind. There was a height restriction on new buildings to ensure visibility of the mountain silhouette that formed the “backdrop of the city.”<sup>123</sup> Yet in the new shopping centre, a series of squares linked by bridge overpasses, commercialistic efficiency ruled the day. “The squares are laid out in different shapes and staggered”, they wrote, “so that you can-

119 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 2 May 1952, H3-4-38, LCA. Original in English.

120 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 26 November 1952, H3-4-31, LCA; and in: Tieleman (ed.), *Correspondance*, p. 213. Original in English.

121 Vargas Mera, *El Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, p. 35. CINVA, UNAl.

122 Wiener and Sert, *The Work of Town Planning*, pp. 192, 197; Rovira (ed.), *Half Century*, p. 148; K. Bastlund, José Luis Sert: *Architecture, City Planning, Urban Design*, New York 1967, p. 67.

123 Hernández, *Las ideas modernas*, p. 87. Attributes the height restriction to Le Corbusier’s original design. Quotes Wiener/Sert, *The Work of Town Planning*, p. 197.

not get a straight-line view which would discourage walking.” In half an hour’s time, the pedestrian could pass from the political centre, through the commercial squares to the cultural and tourist heart of the city – a large, open park.<sup>124</sup> They focused on functionality and efficiency in urban space, partially for capitalistic concerns, which they echoed in planning local markets elsewhere. The planners proffered an ordered city in which the experience of space would be uniform.

The plans also reflected a paradoxical sensibility of the role of the state. The planners differentiated between low-cost housing and middle-class apartments – an unequal allotment predicated on continued socioeconomic stratification.<sup>125</sup> The open availability of public space in the commercial centre was also in tension with the reality of unequal buying power. Was the state, in these cases, providing equitable services, or did its projects literally build inequality into the urban landscape? In the civic centre, Sert pushed the concept of the urban core, believing that it promoted democracy by facilitating contact and discussion.<sup>126</sup> Without it, he argued, people were “more easily governable by the rule of the few.”<sup>127</sup> Yet Sert advocated governmental financing and oversight of the project. Thus, like other aspects of the architects’ plans, the democratizing function of the civic centre was not a protection so much as a happy – and contingent – result. It depended on and reflected a strong government. It was not inherently democratic outside of a circular, self-affirming logic, which belied the power differentials inherent in enforcing political equality.

Though politics had created the impetus for the Colombian government to hire the planners, its vicissitudes resulted in their eventual dismissal. In August 1953, the architects delivered the complete Plan Regulador for Bogotá. The government accepted it, and they declared the contract completed in November. Construction, however, never began. A military coup on June 13 had installed General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla as president. He would rule the country until 1957. Though Trujillo, the mayor who had worked with the architects, became the Minister of Public Works, and Le Corbusier offered to continue the project – “Let’s all do this Civic Centre together”, he wrote in the fall of 1953, continuing: “I would do it and I am at your disposal” – the military regime did not adopt TPA’s plans for the Colombian capital city.<sup>128</sup> The government ignored a suggestion by the SCA to create an independent commission to carry out the plan.<sup>129</sup> It stumbled on internal coordination issues, with one study noting that housing, for example, entailed

124 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

125 *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196.

126 Some scholars have seen Sert’s advocacy of the urban core as showing both US and Latin American influence. See M. Bacon, Josep Lluís Sert’s Evolving Concept of the Urban Core: Between Corbusian Form and Mumfordian Social Practice, in: Mumford, Sarkis, and Turan (eds.), Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, pp. 77–114; Mumford, CIAM and Latin America, in: Sert: Arquitecto en Nueva York, Barcelona 1997, p. 48.

127 Mumford, CIAM and Latin America, p. 60. Sert quote is from J. Sert, Centres of Community Life, in: J. Tyrwhitt, J. Sert, and R. Ernesto, CIAM 8: The Heart of the City, New York 1952, p. 11.

128 Letter from Le Corbusier to S. Trujillo, 23 September 1953, H3-4-28, LCA.

129 La S.C.A. Rinde Informe sobre el Actual Plan Regulador de Bogotá, in: El Tiempo, 18 December 1953, p. 11, Folder Bogota Clippings, 1952–1953, Box 3, PLW.

at least three entities that functioned amongst themselves with a “marked individualist criteria creating obstacles and interferences and distorting the principles of a work of such transcendence.”<sup>130</sup> Lack of official capacity and support combined with ongoing practical issues of cost, especially related to land acquisition for green areas.<sup>131</sup> The planners’ failure to specify costs and construction details and the tension over governmental versus design control had finally come to a breaking point.<sup>132</sup> Sert and Wiener had begun to incorporate the practical suggestions for which the government pushed and some observers castigated the “myopia” of those who did not understand the opportunity of a proposal originating from Le Corbusier.<sup>133</sup> Yet though Rojas Pinilla would pursue an aggressive programme of public works and infrastructure development, these particular plans were too utopian for the fraught and shifting political context.

Many Colombian architects soon remembered the project in terms of more specific failings and often cast blame on Sert and Wiener. Editorials in the architectural magazine PROA – largely read by architects as well as industry and business elites<sup>134</sup> – charged that the Plan Regulador was a failure because it did not properly utilize geographic, topographic, or demographic information, nor did it incorporate studies related to circulation and economics. A particularly scathing passage said that Sert and Wiener received over USD 200,000 for “some vacuous drawings”, along with a report and verbal exposition. The architects presented their sketches privately, they said, and did not accept questions.<sup>135</sup> Even the more generous interpretations found fault in the foreign planners. The history section of the Plan Vial of 1960, for example, which saw the planners as operating with scant statistical information and fiscal resources in a time of chaotic urban growth, charged that their plans suffered from “insufficiencies and lack of foresight.”<sup>136</sup> A major sticking point was the regional plan. “The project of Sert and Wiener was a paltry plan without regional ambitions,” PROA stated in 1955, and the planners had a “disdain for the topics of regional planning”, the publication said in 1956.<sup>137</sup> It charged that the planners “imagined that the city was an isolated nucleus in a plain”, rather than part of a “network of intermunicipal communications.”<sup>138</sup> Another observer noted that the distribution of industry that they planned was only proportionate to the necessities of local consumption, rather than broader industrial exploitation.<sup>139</sup> Colombian commentators especially objected to the restriction of the urban perimeter, which was actu-

130 Vargas Mera, *El Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, p. 52. CINVA, UNAl.

131 Letter from Wiener and Sert to Le Corbusier, 2 May 1952, H3-4-38, LCA. Original in English.

132 See Mumford, *CIAM and Latin America*, p. 72.

133 Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, pp. 73–168, at p. 131.

134 *Ibid.*, 119.

135 *El Fracaso del Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, PROA (Sep. 1955); *Otro Fracaso del Arquitecto P. L. Wiener* [sic], PROA (Feb. 1956), LAA.

136 *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, p. 22, AGN.

137 *El Fracaso del Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, PROA (Sep. 1955); *Otro Fracaso del Arquitecto P. L. Wiener* [sic], PROA (Feb. 1956), LAA.

138 *Otro Fracaso del Arquitecto P. L. Wiener* [sic], PROA (Feb. 1956), LAA.

139 Vargas Mera, *El Plan Regulador de Bogotá*, p. 31. CINVA, UNAl.

ally temporarily enacted by Decreto (Decree) 185 in 1951.<sup>140</sup> They saw it as a hindrance to future city growth that inevitably underwrote clandestine or informal housing being built outside the city.<sup>141</sup> Along with the road plan, the fixed perimeter generated intense controversy, including tensions between the OPRB and the new municipal authorities under the Rojas Pinilla administration. In December 1954, Decreto 3640 created the Distrito Especial (Special District) of Bogotá, which dissolved the urban perimeter and incorporated nearby municipalities.<sup>142</sup> But informal settlements had already caused “grave social conflicts, serious economic interferences, and delicate administrative problems,” according to one report, and incorporating them caused “serious disruptions to the road system.”<sup>143</sup>

Through many of these more specific critiques, a geopolitical implication is clear. The architects who came from other countries did not care enough about what Bogotá actually *was*. They did not study its potential or its problems closely enough in their full context. They did not see what Bogotá could become, in terms of industrial or population potential, even as the city grew rapidly in a “migratory wave” that was partially due to ongoing rural violence.<sup>144</sup> They also did not fully grasp the city’s history or the impact of plans that would have eliminated much of its urban patrimony.<sup>145</sup> When Wiener visited the city in February of 1956, a number of architects snubbed him as what they called the “natural sanction” for the “nonsense of the failed regulatory plan of Bogotá.” The implication that the country had been misunderstood – looked down upon, or even tricked or “duped” – can account for the scathing tone of some of the critiques.<sup>146</sup>

The foreign planners likewise did not understand the limited resources with which local architects and officials worked. A government report from 1960 blamed Sert and Wiener for this reason. Even though Le Corbusier’s plans were grandiose, it concluded that he stayed attuned to the “economic possibilities of Bogotá”; his plans, it said, were “less utopian than those of the Plan Regulador of Wiener & Sert, whose proposals require such onerous urban restructuring, that it is not possible to attend them with the tight fiscal resources of the District.”<sup>147</sup> The charge was especially striking given that, during the working process, it was the New York planners who had tried to keep Le Corbusier’s plans grounded, in sometimes literal ways. One form of utopianism that the Colombian government could not accept was, paradoxically, a plan in which the practical steps necessary to achieve a new kind of city were laid out in full. The many costs prohibited making the visions articulated in the plans into a reality.

The Corbusier-Sert-Wiener plans for Bogotá did not materialize, but their legacy is significant. Though Colombian architects criticized the limiting urban perimeter, they ac-

140 Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, pp. 133–134.

141 *Otro Fracaso del Arquitecto P. L. Wiener [sic]*, PROA (Feb. 1956), LAA. See also *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, p. 23, AGN.

142 Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, p. 137.

143 *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, p. 23, AGN.

144 Tarchópulos, *Las Huellas*.

145 Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, pp. 93, 112, 121, 131.

146 *Otro Fracaso del Arquitecto P. L. Wiener [sic]*, PROA (Feb. 1956), LAA.

147 *Plan Vial Piloto – 1960*, p. 21, AGN.

knowledgeed that the plans were some of the first to work on a regional scale. As such, they became the “fundamental base for later studies.”<sup>148</sup> A 1957 plan even used Le Corbusier’s V-7 system to propose new roads. The project also helped to strengthen the “institutionalization of planning,” especially by creating the OPRB, which would later become the Departamento Administrativo de Planeación Distrital (Administrative Department of District Planning). Scholars have seen Le Corbusier’s influence in Bogotá’s housing and modern buildings in the city centre, as well as in ideas such as hygiene, urban density, and renovation.<sup>149</sup> In a broader sense, an important legacy of the work was the entrenchment of the post-*Bogotazo* moment in Colombia’s urban planning history. Its core tenets continued to manifest in both US and Colombian government policies, in which national development and public order were inextricably linked in spatial and aesthetic terms.

Likewise, the project matters *for* the very fact that it was cast off. The choice overran a set of ideas and alternatives that are nonetheless recoverable through written and visual source text. The alternatives took the form of both what historian Jay Winter has termed “minor utopias” – those belonging to “a very disparate group of people [who] tried in their separate ways to imagine a radically better world” – and “major utopias” – those attempted by state actors through coercion and violence.<sup>150</sup> The Bogotá story is driven not only by the minor utopias envisioned by Gaitán and his followers, or the leftist tide in Latin America turned back in this period by counterrevolution, but it also shows how major utopias, too, can be foreclosed by the shifting tactics of state management and repression. That alternatives – of both the minor and major variety – never came to pass does not reduce their historical importance. It should, rather, shake our sense of linear narrative. It should displace the notion that material history need be solely rooted in the concrete. We can trace differing visions and thus better understand national and international development as a process of implementation with multiple origin points, whose aesthetic and spatial properties were contingent and, in some cases, deeply imbricated with urban processes and fears. Development was negotiated and contested; it overran other options; it was also obviated by different ways of living in the minds of many. That which came to pass was not unscathed by alternative visions, by frustrated hopes, or by people who were killed. Just as it was not unchanged by cities never built.

148 Plan Vial Piloto – 1960, p. 23, AGN.

149 Montoya, *Planificación, urbanismo y la construcción de la Bogotá moderna*, pp. 154–159.

150 J. Winter, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven 2006, pp. 1–2.