

Master Thesis

**Considerations on Perception and Reality: Understanding the Discrepancy between
Subjective Feelings of (In) Security and Objective Crime Rates in Bogotá, Colombia.**

A Social Capital Perspective.

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Executive Summary

This thesis analyzes the possible influence of *social capital* on the levels of *fear of crime* perceived by residents of Bogotá. The thesis focuses on the potential role of *social networks* and the individual perception of *collective efficacy* of neighborhoods in the metropolitan area of the Colombian capital. According to current theoretical developments, people who belong to *social networks* and actively participate in them expect reciprocity from their peers in case of a criminal event. Thus, they will benefit from an inhibiting effect on their individual levels of *fear of crime*.

Following the statistics, the security situation in the city of Bogotá has improved during the last years. For example, the homicide rates have ostensibly dropped in the last 20 years and other crimes, such as robberies and burglaries, have stabilized within normal occurrence rates compared to the historical average. Nevertheless, citizens of Bogotá feel more insecure and perceive higher risks of being a victim of crime than 10 years ago. This seemingly paradoxical situation suggests a gap between the subjective feelings of citizens and objective criminal rates registered by different authorities.

As most of the theoretical and empirical research has focused on the study of facilitators of *fear of crime*, using quantitative methodologies, this thesis will focus on the study of inhibitors of fear. To understand levels of *fear of crime* in neighborhoods of Bogotá it adopts a qualitative methodology. In addition, it inquires for the most relevant factors that produce *fear of crime* and suggests policy recommendations to make people feel safer in the city. The results show that the role of *social networks* in inhibiting individual levels of *fear of crime* depends on the quantity and quality of pooled resources that a community has. Neighborhoods with more social, economic and institutional resources provide environments and milieus where people feel safer. This perception of *collective efficacy* to advance communal goals plays a pivotal role in the inhibition of *fear of crime* and is stronger in more cohesive and organized neighborhoods. Finally, high levels of *fear of crime* lead to less participation in neighborhoods where illegal armed groups exert *de facto* control of the territory, hampering the already low levels of *social capital* in these communities.

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List of Abbreviations

CAB	Communal Action Board
CAI	Center of Immediate Attention (Police)
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics
PICSC	Integrated Plan of Citizen Security and Coexistence

1. Introduction

Feeling relatively secure is one of the essential conditions for human beings to lead a good life. Our levels of psychological, physical and social wellbeing are negatively affected by a constant anticipation of danger, loss and uncertainty. Moreover, our actions and behaviors modify dramatically when our thoughts and perceptions are informed by fear, hindering the expression of our natural potentialities in the realms of social life.

Uncertainty is a constitutive condition of life. Over the centuries, humanity has advanced to a certain level at which the provision of food, water, housing, health-conditions, sanitation, recreation and security are available and relatively assured for vast numbers of individuals. Despite these advances, millions of people all over the globe face hardships and live their lives without knowing if they will have their minimum basic needs covered on the next day. This situation is aggravated in the highly populated metropolises of the Global South, where many citizens lack access to basic public services. The chaotic rhythm and hectic cadence of living in the region's present-day cities, in addition to the unfettered sprawl of their geographical boundaries and the enormous diversity of the backgrounds of their dwellers has worsen the levels of certainty and security among many citizens.

Urban crime is a reality that influences the *feelings of (in) security* of individuals. Some awareness and concern about crime is sound, because people take precautions against victimization for themselves and others. Nevertheless, when *fear of crime* is taken to extremes, its effects are detrimental to citizens and their emotions, producing a feeling of isolation and vulnerability and sometimes a significant loss in personal well-being (Hale, 1996). Individual resources that could be used to improve quality of life are directed to the enhancement of security conditions. These uncoordinated individual responses have the potential to harm the quality of community relations. As Hale (1996, p.80) points out "*fear may increase social divisions between rich and poor, between those who can afford private security measures and those who cannot*". Therefore, "*this deterioration in community life may lead in turn to a decline in society's ability to deal with crime*".

Based on Fattah and Sacco (1989), the concept of *fear of crime* has three related dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral: "*the cognitive dimension involves a*

rational thought process whereby perceptions of risk are developed; the affective dimension recognizes emotions associated with fear; and the behavioral dimension captures physical responses to the situation at hand" (Franklin, Travis & Fearn, 2008, p. 205). *Feelings of insecurity* are embedded in the broader concept of *fear of crime* corresponding to its cognitive dimension, as explained before.

Violence and crime are daily scourges in Latin America. In 2004, the region had a homicide rate of 24.4 per 100,000 inhabitants – over three times higher than the global average of only 7.6 (Casas-Zamora, 2013). In some countries such as Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela, rates were even higher, amounting to more than 30 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants on average. Despite these high figures, some of the Latin American countries have progressed in terms of security, being Colombia the only country in the region that has experienced a sustained improvement in the last two decades. From 1990 to 2008, the national homicide rate decreased from 70 to 36 per 100,000 inhabitants (Casas-Zamora, 2013). In fact, the country's capital city Bogotá represents one of the few Latin American cities that has experienced a significant decline in homicides "*decreasing from 38 in 2001 to 18 per 100.000 by 2011*" (Ardanaz, Corbacho, Ruiz-Vega, 2014, p. 2). Furthermore, over the last few years, there has been a decline in victimization rates¹ for crimes such as robberies and burglaries and the overall victimization rate has been stable during 2013 and 2014. Nevertheless, Bogotá's residents consider that crime is one of the most important problems of the city and extensive parts of the population feel afraid in their neighborhoods (LAPOP, 2012; CCB, 2014). As Ardanaz et al., (2014) point out, there seems to be a gap between the actual and the perceived security situation in the city during the last decade (2002-2012).

This disconnection between perception and reality might become a pitfall for policy makers and reduce general welfare of society (Lora, 2008; Vilalta, 2013). People may change their routines of participation and social engagement based on their biased perception of crime and the fear they experience. As Blanco (2011) and Corbacho as well as Philipp and Ruiz-Vega (2012) demonstrate, *fear of crime* undermines trust in institutions such as the police

¹ The victimization rate refers to the number or percentage of people who have been victims of criminal actions in any given period of time and space.

and the judicial system, debilitates *social capital*, and represents an obstacle to development. Moreover, when levels of *fear of crime* and criminality increase citizens tend to show less support for democracy and inhibitions for authoritarian measures dissipate. In addition, the conviction to use the law to combat crime is eroded and interpersonal trust and the disposition to foster diverse communities deteriorate (Casas-Zamora, 2013).

In light of these potentially severe consequences, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship between the relatively high levels of *fear of crime* that *Bogotanos*² experience and the city's actual crime rates. This thesis assumes as theoretical framework the model of *social networks/community concern* underpinned in the broader concept of *social capital* to analyze the gap between objective crime rates and subjective *feelings of (in) security* and *fear of crime*. This thesis relies on the evidence provided by semi-structured interviews made with thirty citizens of Bogotá in order to understand the aforementioned gap.

The structure of this paper is as follows: the theoretical framework spells out the assumptions and the hypothesis that this research aims to test. Then, a review of the relevant literature on the role of *social networks* in inhibiting levels of *fear of crime* is presented. In the subsequent chapter, a characterization of Bogotá is complimented by statistics and pertinent information regarding objective crime rates and historical perceptions of security in the city. In the following part, the methodology is discussed briefly. The consequent chapter describes the results and provides and analysis according to the socio-economic strata of the neighborhoods under study. The thesis ends with the respective conclusions and some recommendations to improve *feelings of security* in citizens of Bogotá.

2. Theoretical Framework

Individuals are shaped by forces of their environments. Nevertheless, they are able to create and transform the conditions and features of their milieu. The agency that individuals possess empowers them to influence how events unravel and take control in shaping their lives. Individuals are motivated and guide their actions because they believe that this will

² Demonym of the inhabitants of Bogotá (Spanish).

have an effect on their personal lives (*personal efficacy*). However, individuals do not live their lives isolated. As Bandura (2000, p.75) points out, “*many of the outcomes individuals seek are achievable only through interdependent efforts. Hence, they have to work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own.*” In this sense, the field of social cognitive theory extends the concept of human agency to collective agency and notes that “*people’s shared beliefs in their collective power to produce desired results are a key ingredient of collective agency*” (Bandura, 2000, p.75). Hence, the results that a group attains are not only a product of the skills and knowledge brought in by the participants, but also of the cooperation and synergistic dynamics of their relations. This reality is embodied by the concept of *social capital*, which is useful to analyze collective actions and communal initiatives.

Vast arrays of authors have discussed the concept of *social capital*. Following Ostrom and Ahn (2003), the concept can be categorized according to three main ideas: The minimalist, transitional and expansionist visions. In this study, the author adopts the expansionist vision of *social capital* because it takes into account the common interests that individuals have and the requirements to advanced communal goals. Based on the theoretical work of Ostrom (1992, 1994) and Putnam (1993, 1995) the expansionist vision of *social capital* is “*explicitly placed in a collective action framework and addresses important public policy problems with the perspective of collective action/social capital*” (Ostrom & Ahn, 2003, p.164).

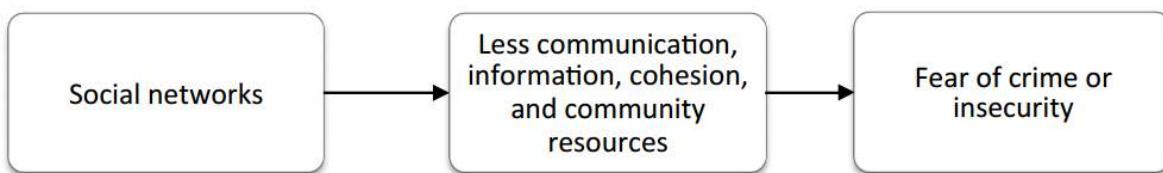
This thesis will rely on Putnam’s definition, who describes *social capital* as “*features of social organizations, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions*” (Putnam, 1993, p.167). Later on, Putnam made a slight modification to his concept of *social capital* and defined it as “*features of social life –networks, norms, and trust- that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives*” (Putnam, 1995, p.664-665).

Considering that this thesis will analyze the influence of *social networks* in the subjective feelings of insecurity of citizens in Bogotá, the definition of Putnam seems pertinent due to its emphasis on the value of *social networks* and the facilitating role that connections and

social norms of trust and reciprocity have on the collective initiatives of groups. Additionally, *social networks* influence the wellbeing of their participants and the attainment of communal goals (Gibson, 2014).

In a more specific way, the disciplines of Sociology and Criminology have developed theoretical models to explain *fear of crime* and *feelings of insecurity* basing their assumptions on the concept of *social capital*. According to Vilalta (2013), the *Social Networks Model* posits that “*involvement in social support networks generates higher levels of communication, community cohesion, and available resources to prevent and combat crime and the fear of crime*” (Vilalta, 2013, p.15.) producing a feeling of increased security among participants of the *social network*.

Figure 1 Social Network Theory: Causal Mechanisms



Source: Vilalta (2013)

In theoretical terms, a person who belongs to a *social network* benefits from greater security and security feelings concerning crime. The logic behind the model is that individuals who acquire information through *social networks* and are actively involved in community affairs such as neighborhood watch, public forums, meetings with police authorities, intergenerational monitoring programs, early warning systems or phone trees, tend to be better informed about criminal rates and activity in their local environments. Hypothetically, participants would have a more objective view of the situation, greater psychological support, and greater empathy from partners in the network. This should result in a higher level of collective effectiveness, confidence in other citizens, confidence in the local police and, finally, a feeling of greater security (Vilalta, 2013).

On a different note, the concept of *Community Social Disorganization* has been defined as the inefficiency of a community to realize the shared values of its inhabitants and maintain

effective social controls (Sampson, 2001). This conception relates to the definition of *collective action* given by Tilly (1973) as the application of the pooled resources of a community directed to common ends. Common ends include the aspiration of neighborhood residents to live in safe communities and have a sense of security and protection. Nevertheless, to reach these common goals through *collective action*, a community needs the fuel that enables the occurrence of these collective initiatives. Therefore, *collective action* is more feasible in communities with high levels of *collective efficacy* “which is meant to signify an emphasis on shared beliefs in a neighborhood’s conjoint capability for action to achieve an intended effect, and hence an active sense of engagement on the part of residents” (Sampson, 2001, p. 95). Actual participation of residents and the expectations that people hold of their neighbors in case of emergencies or communal actions are essential to understand *collective efficacy* levels in a given community.

The levels of *fear of crime* are inhibited when individuals feel their neighbors are trustful people, share compatible or similar values, and are inclined to address criminal activities in their environment (Renauer, 2007). Besides formal social control from the police and the government, informal social control is necessary to control criminal behavior and foster sentiments of safety. Informal social control is the “willingness of neighborhood residents to actively engage in behaviors aimed at preventing criminal and deviant behavior in the local area” (Silver & Miller, 2004, p.553.) Communities base their informal social control in the willingness of its residents to assume some responsibility for one another, related with the values of reciprocity and intervention for the common good (Renauer, 2007).

Taking into account the aforementioned concepts, the author proposes that the connection of *social capital*, *collective efficacy* and *fear of crime*, is:

People who live in communities high in social capital and collective efficacy are better able to achieve common goals and sustain social controls that support public safety and foster feelings of security among their participants.

In consequence, a research question and a working hypothesis emerge from this overarching theoretical framework:

Research Question: To what extend individual perceptions of collective efficacy in the neighborhood relate to levels of fear of crime in the citizens of Bogotá?

Hypothesis: People who perceive high levels of collective efficacy in their neighborhoods tend to feel safer and have lower levels of fear of crime in their places of residence.

3. Literature Review

Formally, the concept of *fear of crime* and citizens' perception of security emerged in the United States in the late sixties, when *fear of crime* was acknowledged as a social problem. This phenomenon was accompanied by an increase of crime within the urban residential environment, demographic growth, relevant changes in the composition of the population and the expansion of urban centers (Taylor, Gottfredson & Brower 1984; Taylor & Hale, 1986). Consequently, many academics from different disciplines, such as criminology, sociology and psychology, inquired into this phenomenon bringing about different models to explain it. This research "boom" was produced by the awareness that *fear of crime* has far more crucial consequences for society than just individual anxiety, providing fertile soil for policy initiatives and making it a lucrative issue for politicians seeking office (Hale, 1996).

The academic literature dealing with perceptions of security and *fear of crime* on the individual level has established three main conceptual models or theoretical frameworks, namely: *civil disorder*, *vulnerability* and *social networks/community concern*³ (Alper & Chappell 2012; Franklin, Travis & Fearn, 2008; Gibson, Zhao, Lovrich & Gaffney, 2002; Hale, 1996; McGarrell, Giacomazzi & Thurman, 1997; Taylor et al., 1984; Vilalta, 2013). These three models center their analysis and causal mechanisms in different variables and sometimes they are combined by academics in order to provide stronger models that explain *fear of crime*.

³ The field of communication sciences has linked the *social networks/community concern* model with *cultivation theory*, claiming that mass media communication channels "cultivate" *fear of crime* (particularly violent crime) especially among heavy consumers of television programs such as crime realities, sensationalist news and journalist chronics. The effects on *fear of crime* are stronger when individuals consume local news channels and interact through personal communication with close relatives, friends and neighbors (Romer, Hall Jamieson and Aday, 2003).

Nevertheless, these models are divided in two broad categories. The first comprises the *vulnerability* and *disorder* models, which center their explanations on facilitators of fear (victimization, gender, age, socioeconomic status, indicators of incivility such as abandoned buildings, graffiti, littered sidewalks, consumption of drugs/alcohol in the streets, prostitution). These facilitators lead rational individuals to feel more (or less) fearful of crime. The second category refers to the *social networks/community concern* model, which understands *fear of crime* through variables and milieu features that inhibit or reduce the causes of fear such as social ties, *collective efficacy*, community attachment, neighborhood cohesion, trust in neighbors and participation in clubs (Alper & Chappell 2012; Frankling et al., 2008). There is a vast amount of literature on the three conceptual models aforementioned. However, this review will focus on the current state of the literature concerning the *social networks/community concern* model.

In general, the model argues that socially cohesive and integrated communities provide support and self-help networks, which may mitigate *feelings of insecurity* and *fear of crime* (Hale, 1996). These networks also provide the basis for word of mouth dissemination of events regarding criminal activities in the localities. Through informal conversation, residents obtain detailed information on the hotspots of criminality, unsafe areas and criminal actions in the surroundings. Consequently, neighbors may feel that collectively they can endure the risk they may encounter. Stories and rumors are relevant for transmitting knowledge and creating crime avoidance strategies. Furthermore, Skogan and Maxfield (1981) point out that these rumors are helpful to understand *fear of crime*. People exposed to victimization experience shared by others might be subjects of “*vicarious victimization*”. Skogan and Maxfield propose that local networks of information disproportionately stress the violent component of the events leading to higher levels of fear. In conclusion, “*the social processes which underlie the spread of crime stories through a community may also account for the relatively widespread distribution of fear*” (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981, p. 162).

Following the same line of argument, regarding the emphasis on violent events depicted on personal or media stories and the word of mouth dynamic of interpersonal communication, it is relevant to mention the body of literature regarding media consumption of individuals,

and its influence on *fear of crime*. Several studies have shown the effect of mass media on public opinion formation about crime and security issues (Bandura, 2001; Boda & Szabó, 2011; Carli, 2008; Pfeiffer, Windzio & Kleinmann, 2005). For example, heavy consumers of media (T.V., Radio, Newspapers) tend to present higher levels of *fear of crime* leading to higher perceptions of risk of being victimized by criminals (Hanslmaier 2013, Rogers 2005).

As mentioned before, the effect that media has on public opinion and perception of security plays an indirect role through interpersonal communication (Busselle, 2003). People who are heavy consumers of media have easier accessibility to thoughts and memories of criminal events and tend to talk about these issues with relatives, friends or acquaintances, influencing the perception of risk, crime or *fear of crime* of these people (Lora, 2013). Another clear factor of *fear of crime* is victimization. People who have been direct victims of crime also spread their experience by word of mouth, influencing the perception of people around them (Hanslmaier, 2013).

In summary, three conceptual models and the studies of media influence on the perceptions of insecurity and *fear of crime* have emerged from the research literature. According to McGarrell et al. (1997), the *social networks/community concern* model remains the least developed of the three, mainly because much of the research has focused on the facilitators of fear. In addition, less attention has been paid to potential inhibitors of fear, such as government responsiveness, social participation and informal social control. Finally, the conceptualization and measurement of *social integration* has considerable variations among empirical studies of the model (McGarrell et al., 1997).

Research that studies the relationship between *social networks* and *fear of crime* has produced inconsistent results (Kanan & Pruitt, 2002). Nonetheless, as Hale (1996) points out, the *social networks/community concern* model has proven its validity among academics and practitioners. The inconsistency of the results might be related to the different variables and concepts taken into account by researchers when designing their models. For example, there are significant differences in the measurement and operationalization of concepts like responsiveness of neighbors, community attachment,

trust, social integration, social cohesion, willingness to intervene and perception of *collective efficacy*.

Additionally, the question of causation between *fear of crime* and the formation of cohesive social relations among neighbors is not resolved hitherto. As Gibson et al. (2002, p.560) inquire, “*Is it not possible for fear of crime to lead to residents’ unwillingness to form interpersonal networks in their neighborhoods, thus limiting the formation of trusting and cohesive relationships?*” Although some studies have indicated that increased levels of fear contribute to decreased levels of cohesion among neighbors (Markowitz, Bellair, Liska & Liu, 2001), many studies indicate that increased levels of social cohesion, civic participation and neighborhood integration decrease levels of fear and perceptions of insecurity in individuals that participate in such networks (Kanan & Pruitt, 2002). However, the search for causal pathways in both arguments remains rudimentary (Gibson et al., 2002).

As mentioned before, several studies find that social bonds significantly reduce levels of *fear of crime*. For example, Ferguson & Mindel (2007) tested a model of different variables related to *social capital* in neighborhoods of Dallas. Their findings were consistent with general propositions of *social capital* theory. There was a positive relationship between residents’ satisfaction with their domiciles and a trustful relationship with neighborhoods, leading to lower levels of fear of being victimized by criminals. In addition, citizens that actively engaged in efforts to enhance neighborhood well-being (Neighborhood Watch in this case) tended to be more satisfied with their surrounding environment, including safety issues. In terms of institutional resources (police presence, schools, churches, clubs and service organizations), neighborhoods with a diverse inventory were more likely to enforce social norms of acceptable behavior and provide venues and social loci for residents to participate in communal initiatives. This led to a decrease in their anxiety regarding crime and the probability of becoming victims. In this regard, (Sampson, 2001) claims that individuals with a higher perception of *collective efficacy* tend to feel safer in their local milieus.

Conducting a similar study in a middle size southeastern city of the U.S., Alper & Chappell (2012) confirmed the mediating effects of informal social ties on *fear of crime*, especially

trust. Individuals with stronger social ties tend to exercise informal social control that could lead to higher feelings of security. Nevertheless, organizational participation did not result in lower levels of fear. This might be related to the fact that citizens participating in formal activities in association with the police may raise their level of crime awareness, thus, increasing personal levels of *fear of crime*. The authors propose that the causal direction may work in the opposite direction as well, meaning that people join such organizations due to their fears.

Concentrating his analysis on ten neighborhoods of Portland, Renauer (2007, p. 55) supports the argument of the influence of “*both informal and formal social control perceptions on emotional fear of crime*”. More specifically, “*residents who sense cohesion, trust, and value sharing among their neighbors report less fear of crime*”. A higher perception of social cohesion might have an inhibiting effect on security feelings especially in the most disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, perception of police effectiveness reduces levels of *fear of crime*. Lastly, negative encounters with the police experienced by citizens contribute to higher levels of emotional *fear of crime*.

In addition, according to the study of Schweitzer, Kim & Mackin (1999), conducted in the city of Lansing, Michigan, the existence of a sense of community is strongly associated with lower levels of *fear of crime*. Nevertheless, a strong sense of community was not significantly related to the incidence of real crime in the neighborhood. In this case, given the same levels of objective risk, well-connected residents felt lower levels of *fear of crime* than their poorly connected peers.

Markowitz et al. - (2001, p. 313) using data from a British survey and employing a “*three-endogenous-variable model*” - conclude that “*cohesion reduces disorder, disorder increases fear, and that fear reduces cohesion*”. The debilitation of social links and lower rates of social participation facilitate criminal offences and disordered neighborhoods, which rise *fear of crime* and consecutively, further decrease cohesion and the capacity of informal social control to curb crime.

Two studies are particularly noticeable given the approach of this thesis. The work of McGarrell et al. (1997), as well as Gibson et al. (2002) concentrates on the *social*

networks/community concern model. In the first one, the authors clarify the roles of the variables normally used in this model, i.e. perceptions on the responsiveness of government, social control and neighborhood integration. Making use of data from the city of Spokane, they confirm that the “*perception of informal social control, social support, and integration relates to lower levels of fear*” (McGarrell et al., 1997, p. 494). Equally important, community responsiveness, beside from formal institutions responsiveness, relates negatively to *fear of crime*. For their part, Gibson et al., (2002), use data from three cities located in the U.S. to find out that social ties lead to attachments that result in trust among neighbors as well as an expectation that peers will be willing to intervene in pertinent contingencies as enforcers of informal social control. More importantly, they conclude that “*increased perceptions of collective efficacy had a relatively large impact on alleviating fear of crime among residents, even after the effects of other known predictors of fear of crime were controlled*” (Gibson et al., 2002, p. 559). Their model suggests that social integration operates through perceptions of *collective efficacy* in predicting *fear of crime*.

Some studies have found absence of significant relations or weak associations between social networks and perceptions of safety or *fear of crime*. For example, Funk, Allan & Chappell (2007) found out that social involvement and perceived safety did not relate significantly. Nonetheless, length of residence and trust in neighbors had a strong association with perceived safety in the neighborhood. Furthermore, Kanan & Pruitt (2002) concluded that neighborhood integration and attachment to the community (emotional and investment) do not significantly affect measures of *fear of crime* and risk perception, finding that neighborhood physical conditions where more relevant to explain fear.

To date, there exists no literature on the *social networks/community concern* model from a qualitative approach. Additionally, the academic study of the perceptions of insecurity and *fear of crime* in Colombia is very rudimentary. The Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá has applied the “*Survey of Perception and Victimization for Bogotá and its Localities*” over a decade, producing a useful data set to compare trends and evaluating the performance of the government in turn on security issues. The recent study of Ardanaz et al. (2014) shows that exposure to objective and easily understandable information about crime rates improve

perceptions of safety, police effectiveness and lower distrust in the police. The information conveyed in a pamphlet depicted trend info-graphics and statistics of crime rates of the decade 2002-2012, showing a significant decline in burglaries and homicides in the city of Bogotá. However, exposure to objective information is not effective among individuals that hold relatively high biases about the crime situation and the effect of the treatment tends to weaken over time.

The work of Moros (2014) looks into the effects of subjective *feelings of insecurity* on the disposition to cooperate and levels of trust among residents of rural communities in the context of the Colombian armed conflict. People with higher perceptions of insecurity, tend to be less cooperative, but have higher levels of trust. The author concludes that people tend to participate less on communal initiatives when they are afraid, but present higher levels of trust for their social nucleus.

Regarding studies of life satisfaction and welfare, Romero (2014), using data from the Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá, claims that crime has a positive impact on the life dissatisfaction of *Bogotanos*. The effect seems to be mediated by general perceptions of insecurity and not victimization rates of the households. The perception of insecurity has a significant positive impact on the levels of unhappiness of those individuals that changed their perceptions due to criminal events. The author points out that “*the public policies not only should be orientated to reduce the levels of criminality but also must reduce the social pathologies that are associated to the crime in order to have a significant impact on the people’s welfare*” (Romero, 2014, p. 195). In conclusion, policy makers must not only reduce criminal activity in Bogotá but also communicate and improve the security perceptions of citizens (Romero, 2014).

4. Case Study: Bogotá, Colombia

4.1 Generalities

Bogotá D.C. is the capital city of Colombia. According to the Global MetroMonitor 2014 report⁴, the metropolitan area of Bogotá has a population of 9,135,800 inhabitants ranking it the 36th most populated city in the world. The city has a GDP (PPP, \$Million) of \$159,850 (81st) and a GDP per capita (PPP) of \$17,497 (255th) with an employed population of 4,741,600 (27th). Bogotá sprawls over an area of 492 square kilometer where the population density is 16,600 people per square kilometer, making it the seventh densest urban area in the world (Demographia, 2015). Due to the Colombian armed conflict, Bogotá has received an uprooted population of approximately 600,000 in the last years (RNI, 2014), mainly inhabiting the outskirts of the urban area.

As reported by DANE⁵, the percentage of people living in *poverty* amounted to 10.2 % in 2013, while in 2002 it was still 31.8 %. This considerable 21.6% reduction was accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of people living in extreme poverty: While in 2002, 7.2% of the population lived in this condition, 11 years later it was only 1.6%.⁶ Regarding income inequality, the Gini coefficient in Bogotá in 2013 was 0.504, while for the rest of Colombia it was 0.539. In 2002, both Bogotá's and Colombia's Gini coefficients were 0.572⁷. While this represents a reduction in the overall income inequality, Colombia still ranks as one of the most unequal Latin American countries in terms of wealth distribution.

⁴ The Global MetroMonitor is a yearly publication that evaluates the economic performance of the 300 biggest metropolitan areas in the world.

⁵ Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (National Administrative Department of Statistics)

⁶ In 2013, a person is classified as poor if her monthly income is lower than 204,270 Colombian pesos (approximately 100 US\$), which is the minimum amount to acquire a basic basket of alimentary and non-alimentary goods. People living under the line of *extreme poverty* do not have the minimum monthly income to buy the basic basket of alimentary goods with a cost of 92,312 Colombian pesos (DANE, 2013).

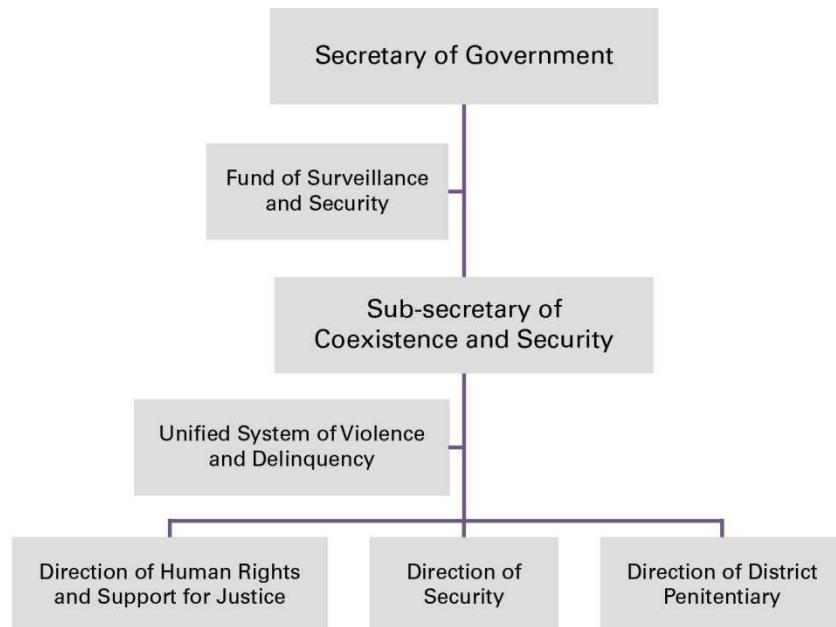
⁷ According to the World Bank (2015), the “*Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution*” (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>).

4.2 Institutional Framework

The Mayor of Bogotá is the first political and administrative authority of the city. The district administration is composed of 13 sectors that implement the government plan of the mayoralty. A lower Mayor for each of the twenty localities supports the administrative and political functions of the mayoralty. Complementarily, the City Council is the legislative branch of the district and exerts political and administrative control over the executive power.

According to the Colombian legislation, the Mayor is the superior chief of the Police in the territory of jurisdiction. The Mayor has the competence to delegate the security issues to the Secretary of Government, which is supported by the Sub-secretary of Security and Coexistence in the design of policies to prevent crime and improve the conditions of security for the citizenry.

Figure 2 Organizational Chart of the Secretary of Government, Mayoralty of Bogotá



Source: Author's elaboration based on (Acero, Parra & Castillo, 2012)

Furthermore, adding to the institutional framework regarding security issues in Bogotá, there are monthly meetings called “*Security Councils*”, in which the Mayor and the local enforcement authorities analyze the rates of violence and delinquency to maintain public order and promote a more peaceful coexistence in the city. These meetings direct their efforts towards understanding the hot spots of criminality, the factors that facilitate crime and its consequences, with the goal of delineating strategies and policy measures to reduce levels of violence and insecurity (Acero et al., 2012). Involving the civil society sector, the “*Zonal Assembly of Security*” is a monthly meeting between community members and public entities with the purpose of generating and negotiating actions of high impact against crime that contributes to the treatment of the different security and coexistence problems that afflict civilians in a determined sector. The Lower Mayoralty of the respective locality organizes these assemblies in coordination with the commander of police of the same jurisdiction and neighborhood leaders.

Moreover, the “*Committee of Public Order*” is composed of the Mayor, the Commander of the respective military garrison and the Commander of the Department of Police. This committee is responsible for the coordination of public force, and executes the security plans and the expenditure of the budget managed through the “*Security Funds*”. Finally, each Mayor must establish a “*Security and Coexistence Plan*” by law. This plan needs to be embedded in her “*Development Plan of Government*”, where the administration elaborates policies of coexistence and citizen security. In order to foster the participation of civil society and the respect for *Human Rights*, the plans do not only stress coercive measures, but also preventive and participatory actions (Acero et al., 2012).

Since 1995, Bogotá has had an integral policy of security and coexistence. As mentioned before, every administration has formulated integral plans combining coercive and participatory measures. Under the governments of Antanas Mockus (1995-1997/2001-2003) and Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2000), the security policies focused on citizen culture and civil coexistence (responsible consumption of alcohol, total disarmament of the city and respect for life). In consequence, the homicide rate dropped from 71 for every 100.000 inhabitants in 1994 to 25.4 in 2003 (Acero et al., 2012).

During the last year of the Mockus administration (2003), the government designed the “*Master Plan for Equipment of Security, Defense and Justice*”, defining the urban parameters and programs necessary to expand the infrastructure and services of the law enforcement agencies. The government of Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004-2007) inherited this plan and made the appropriate investments to equip the Metropolitan Police of Bogotá, improved the “*Coexistence Centers*” of the city, fostered respect for coexistence norms, promoted mechanisms for peaceful resolution of conflicts and strengthened the local justice and social organizations for security on the neighborhood level. During the government of Samuel Moreno Rojas (2008-2011), the “*Master Plan*” was paid little attention and the pertinent investments were reduced. The administration of Moreno Rojas was embroiled in one of the biggest corruption scandals of Bogotá, leading to interruptions in government programs and constant changes in the cabinet of the District. Finally, the current administration of Gustavo Petro Urrego (2012-2015) has proposed its own plan known as *PICSC*⁸, which relies on the concept of *Human Security* - proposed by the United Nations in the Human Development Report of 1994. In the *PICSC*, the concept of *Citizen Security* is integrated and harmonized with the concept of *Human Security*. With a holistic approach, the plan intends to prevent violence and conflict by securing the different dimensions and conditions that people require to advance their own life projects, protecting *Human Rights* and providing alimentary, health, political, environmental and economic security to all the residents of Bogotá, especially those in a more socially vulnerable position.

In conclusion, there has been a sustained effort from the city governments to implement and advance a rational and comprehensive public policy of security and coexistence; nevertheless, the District Overseer of Bogotá has pointed out several drawbacks and weaknesses. For example, there is a lack of political will to continue programs of security as an institutionalized policy, hindering the progress made by the former administration. Most of the security plans are adopted in the last year of the period and the incoming government does not feel committed to execute them. This dynamic breaks the continuity of sound policies, wasting valuable monetary and time resources. The necessity to formulate the security plans with more participation of the judicial branch and law enforcement agencies has been disregarded. Lastly, the “*Master Plan*” for financial funding

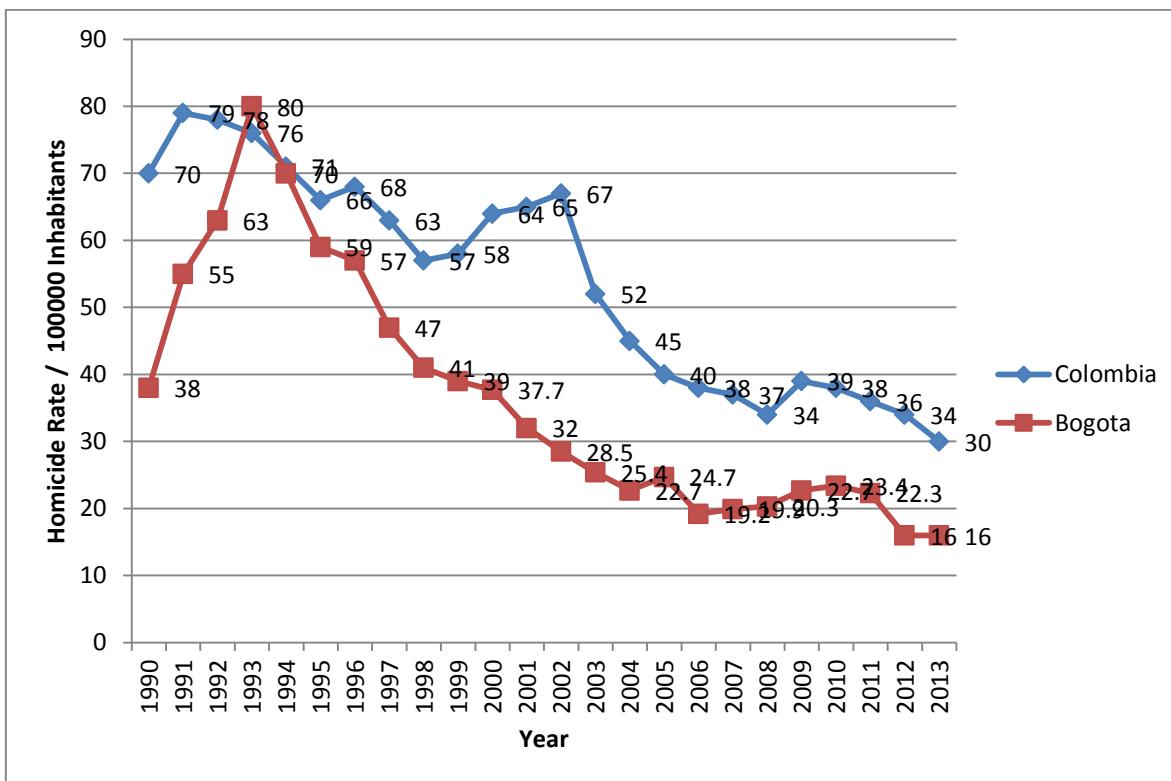
⁸ Plan Integral de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Integral Plan of Coexistence and Citizen Security)

has not been updated, hindering the acquisition of pertinent equipment to maintain the security operations in the city (Acero et al., 2012).

4.3 Objective Crime Rates and Subjective Security Perceptions in Bogotá

The trends of criminal activity in Bogotá are not homogenous. In the case of homicides, considered as a crime of high-impact, the city experienced significant declines during the last two decades. According to the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences of Colombia, homicides per 100,000 decreased from 63 in 1992, to 16.9 in 2012. In 2013 the homicide rate was 16.33, being 83% of the victims men and 17% women.

Figure 3 Homicide rates in Bogotá and Colombia 1992-2013

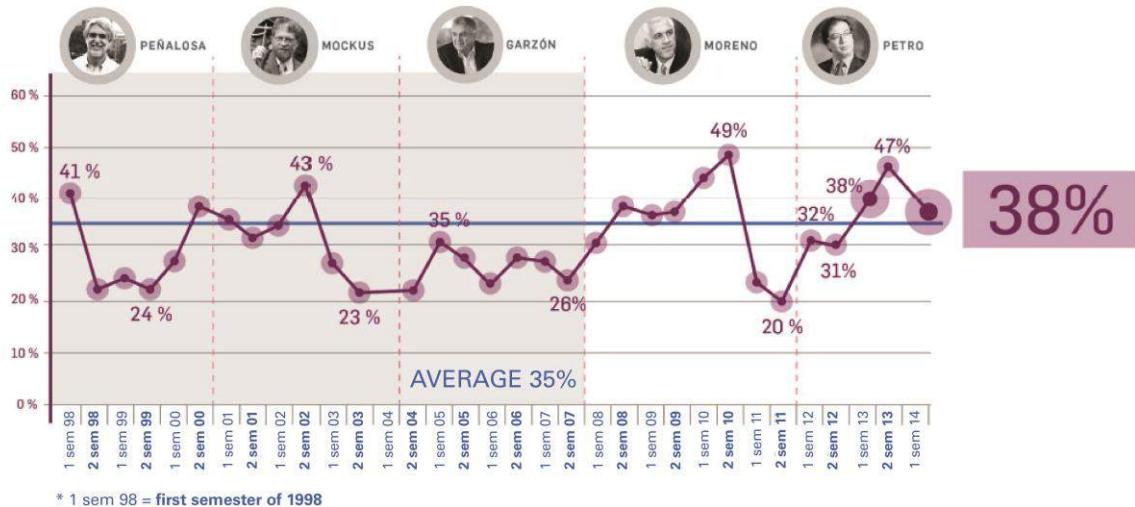


Source: Author´s elaboration based on Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, (2013)

Regarding crimes such as robbery, burglary and personal attacks, the numbers have varied ostensibly over the last decade. Numbers of the Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá show

that during the last five years, the victimization rate has been “normal”⁹, with victimization percentages that oscillate between 20% and 47%. Nevertheless, there has been a decline in victimization rates in crimes experienced individually, including personal robbery with and

Figure 4 Victimization percentage in Bogotá 1998-2014, Direct and Indirect Victimization



without use of violence over the last three years (2011-2014).¹⁰

Source (CCB 2014)¹¹

The percentage of occurrence of crimes during the first semester of 2014 amounted to the following numbers: “*Personal Theft*” 73% of the total crimes, “*Burglary*” 8%, “*Commercial Theft*” 8%, “*Robbery of Car*” 6%, “*Personal Attack*” 3% and “*Others*” 2%. Regarding “*Personal Theft*”, the most coveted item by criminals were mobile phones with 34% of the total of stolen objects. When asked, “*Which is the criminal modality that*

⁹ The victimization rates over the last five years are found within normality, taking into account rates of victimization of the last 15 years (see graphic).

¹⁰ The percentage of people who became victims of personal robbery declined from 83% in the first semester of 2012 to 73% in the first semester of 2014. The use of violence for this modality of crime decreased from 50% to 46% in the same period (Percentage calculated from total victims of any crime) (CCB, 2014).

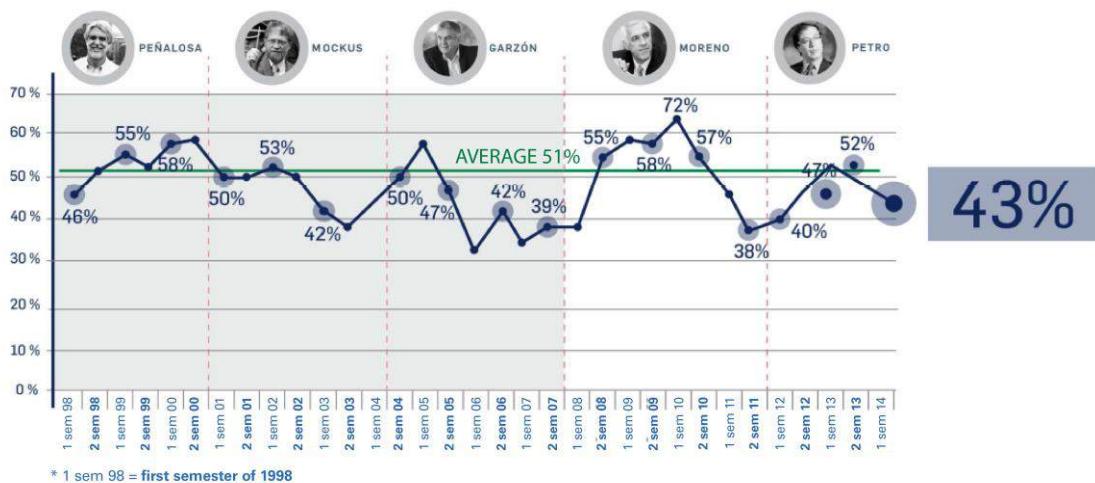
¹¹ The victimization percentage is the total sum of “*direct victimization*” captured by the question “*In the course of this year, have you been victim of any crime?*”, and “*indirect victimization*” captured by the question “*In the course of this year, has any member of your household been victim of crime?*” For the year 2014, the sample was 9527 individuals, 12, 6% were direct victims (approximately 1200 individuals) and 25, 5 were indirect victims (approximately 2429 individuals) for a total victimization rate of 38, 1%. If a person is victimized directly and indirectly, in the same period, the CCB registers this as “*direct victim*” just once.

worries you the most?”, the top 3 modalities that worried Bogotanos were “*Personal Theft*” with 49%, “*Common Homicide*” with 15% and “*Sexual Assault*” with 6% (CCB, 2014).

According to statistics of the Secretariat for Women of Bogotá, there were 3,215 cases of sexual abuse in 2012 and 3,548 in 2013, corresponding to an incidence of 82.1 and 89.4 per 100,000 women respectively. In addition, the femicide rate has been steadily declining: While in 2009 there were still 164 cases, by 2013 it had dropped to 131 occurrences (Secretaría de la Mujer, 2014).

In order to assess the factors associated with the perception of security in the metropolitan area, the Chamber of Commerce presents a perception report every year. According to the 2014 edition, 43.4% of respondents considered that the insecurity in the city had increased, 47.4% thought that the security levels had remained the same, while 9.2% perceived it as safer. On the one hand, people who considered that the city was more insecure pointed out several reasons such as “*Presence of Groups*” with 51%, “*Socioeconomic Conditions*” with 25%, “*Conditions of Public Space*” with 7% and “*Lack of Institutional Presence*” with 6%. On the other hand, people that perceived Bogotá as safer in the first semester of 2014 did so because of “*More Institutional Presence*” (58%), “*Less Presence of Groups*” (20%), “*Better Conditions of Public Space*” (7%) and “*Information of Media*” (3%) (CCB, 2014).

Figure 5 People who consider that insecurity had increased (in contrast to the previous year)



Source (CCB, 2014)

Regarding insecurity perception in the public space, the situation has generally deteriorated for the period 2013-2014. People perceived more insecurity in public transportation, streets, parks, public spaces with high presence in commercial establishments and public events. Only commercial centers were perceived as safer in the same period.

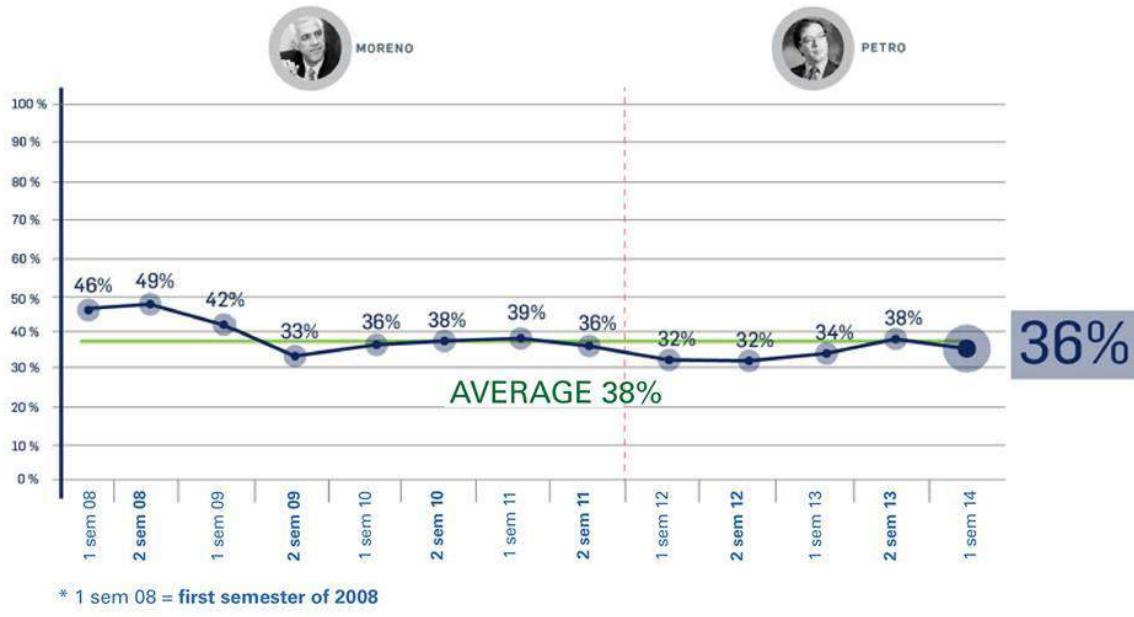
Table 1 Percentage of people who think insecurity has increased in...

	2013	2014
Public Transport	46	55
Streets	37	45
Parks	34	43
Public Space/Commercial	36	37
Cultural and Sport Events	24	29
Commercial Centers	16	11

Source (CCB, 2014)

Perceptions of safety in the neighborhood have remained stable over the last five years with numbers around the average of 36% of the population that considers their neighborhood as safe. Bearing in mind that neighborhoods are locations of communal life, participation and familiar to their inhabitants in geographical and social terms, the high percentage of people that feel insecure in their places of residence is problematic.

Figure 6 People who think their neighborhood is safe



Source (CCB, 2014)

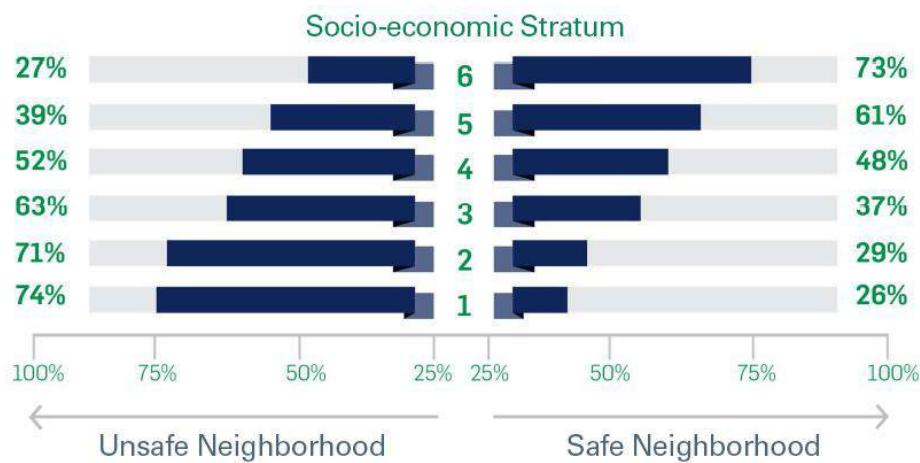
People that perceived their neighborhood as safe mentioned the following reasons: “Nothing happens” (65%), “Presence of police” (15%), “Private security” (14%), “Citizen solidarity” (3%) and “Other” (3%). In contrast, people who felt that their neighborhood was unsafe pointed out the following reasons: “Too many thefts” (42%), “Presence of Common Criminals” (27%), “Commercialization/Consumption of Illegal Substances” (9%), “Presence of Homeless Population” (7%), “Presence of Gangs” (5%), “Not enough police” (5%) and “Other” reasons (6%).

Disaggregating by socio-economic stratum¹², there is a clear tendency in the *feelings of (in) security* within the neighborhood. A higher percentage of people living in high-income residential zones perceive their neighborhood as safe compared to residents living in lower

¹² In Bogotá, there are six “Socio-economic Strata” in which housing and/or land property are classified in a system of subsidies and contributions to cover the costs of domiciliary public services (water, electricity, gas). The order from lowest to highest is: (1) Low-Low, (2) Low, (3) Middle-Low, (4) Medium, (5) Medium-High, (6) High. From these, the strata (1), (2) and (3) correspond to the lowest strata composed of users with fewer economic resources and are beneficiaries of subsidies for domiciliary public services; the numbers (5) and (6) correspond to the higher strata composed of users with more economic resources. These users have to pay extra charges (contribution) on the value of domiciliary public services. The strata (4) does not benefit from subsidies, nor has to pay extra charges, it pays the cost of the provision of the service. The classification on the six strata approximates to a hierarchy of socio-economic differences (poverty-wealth or vice versa).

stratum zones. Taking the simple average of people living in strata 5 and 6 (corresponding to higher income population) 67% of inhabitants consider they live in a safe neighborhood, whereas only 27, 5% of people living in residential zones corresponding to strata 1 and 2 (lower income) consider their neighborhood as safe .

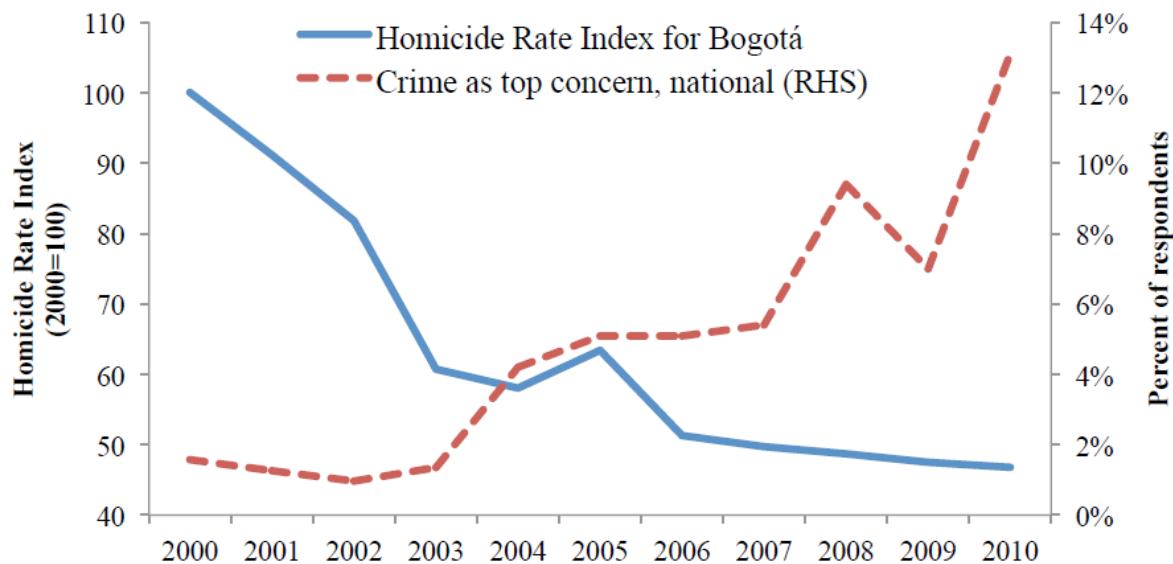
Figure 7 Percentage of people that consider their neighborhood as safe or unsafe, 2014



Source: (CCB, 2014)

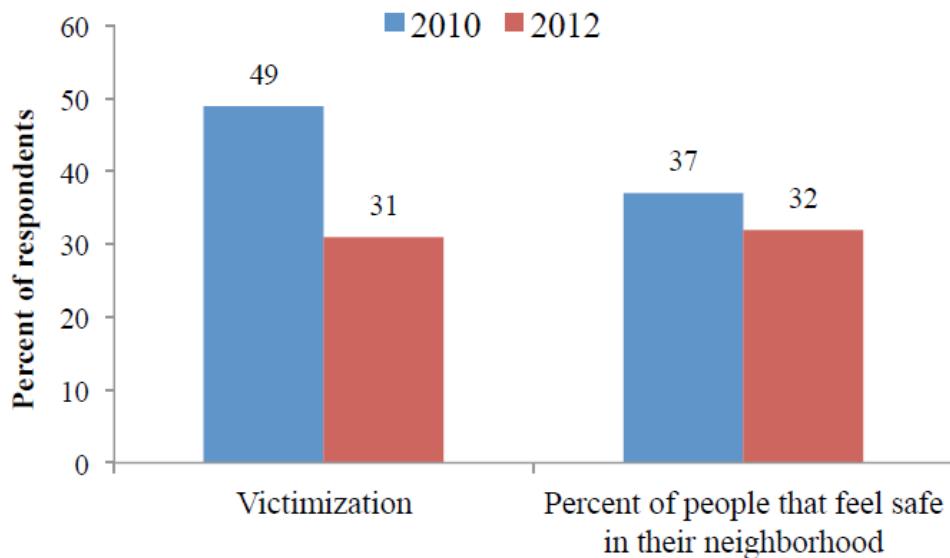
Despite the ostensible decrease in homicides in the last two decades and the overall stabilization of victimization rates around the average in the last years, residents of Bogotá consider that crime is one of the most important problems of the city and extensive parts of the population feel afraid in their neighborhoods (LAPOP, 2012; CCB, 2014). Following the hypothesis of Ardanaz et al., (2014) there seems to be a gap between the objective crime rates and the perceived security situation in the city.

Figure 8 Homicide rate in Bogotá and concern for crime, 2000-2010



Source: Ardanaz et al. (2014) based on Latinbarómetro and National Police of Colombia

Figure 9 Victimization rate and perception of security



Source: Ardanaz et al. (2014) based on Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá (2012)

5. Methodology

In order to analyze the perceptions of security and the levels of *fear of crime* of Bogotá's population as well as the perceptions of *collective efficacy* in the neighborhoods of the city, a qualitative methodology was adopted to conduct this study. The information and evidence gathered to test the working hypothesis stem from 30 semi-structured interviews conducted during the second and third weeks of February 2015. Three conditions were required to be eligible for the interviews, (1) above 18 years old, (2) Bogotá as current place of residence, and (3) at least three years of residence in the city. These conditions were established due to the following reasons: People who fulfil the age requirement are able to participate in formal politics through voting and are eligible to be presidents of "*Communal Action Boards*"¹³ in their neighborhoods. In addition, the author considers that a person who has been living for three years in a city has developed individual perceptions and knowledge of

¹³ Communal Action Boards are civil organizations that seek to foster civil participation in the management of their communities. In cities, they are usually organized around neighborhoods. From now on the author uses the abbreviation *CABs*.

its physical environment and milieu. Since conducting in-person interviews was not feasible, the interviews were conducted via *Skype* instead.

The interviewees were contacted through the personal network of acquaintances of the author. Additionally, “*snowballing*” was used with the intention of drawing a sample as diverse as possible in terms of socio-economic strata, locality and neighborhood of residence. The sample is composed of 15 females and 15 males. None of the participants had familiar bonds or close friendships with the author.

Interview questions referred to perceptions of *fear of crime* in its cognitive, affective and behavioral realms; perceptions of *collective efficacy* in the neighborhood; initiatives of *collective action*; patterns and spaces of interaction and participation in the neighborhood; individual impressions about norms of reciprocity, solidarity and trust within and outside the area of residence; perceptions on the support of authorities and, possible solutions to improve feelings of security and criminality rates. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, recorded, transcribed, and submitted to content analysis in order to test the working hypothesis and describe the results.

To organize the qualitative information derived from the interviews the author used the software package MAX QDA 11. The software is designed for qualitative and mixed methods data, multimedia and text analysis. It provides a working space to organize, codify and retrieve information segments. With the help of this software, the transcribed interviews were codified to analyze the content of the conversations. The process of “*coding*” or “*indexing*” consisted of labelling phrases or sentences relevant for the research. The next step was to group the codes into categories to conceptualize the evidence and identify how these categories were connected to each other. The categories used to organize the qualitative evidence were: (1) Socio-Economic Strata, (2) Individual Perceptions of Fear of Crime, (3) Social Capital of Neighborhood, (4) Collective Efficacy of Neighborhood, (5) Other Neighborhood Features, (6) Individual Recommendations to Improve Feelings of/and Security. The categories reflect the most relevant pieces of evidence to tackle the research question and to make policy recommendations from the citizens’ perspective.

The main objective of this procedure was to describe and interpret the relation between the levels of *fear of crime* that individuals have and the *social capital* existent in their communities, along with their perceptions of *collective efficacy* of the neighborhood and other features of the residential areas. The socio-economic strata of the neighborhood played a pivotal role in understanding the different factors that account for *fear of crime* within the neighborhood.

Table 2 Characterization of Interviewees, Citizens of Bogotá

Sex	Socio-Economic Strata	Name of Neighbourhood	Locality	Years of Residence
				in Neighbourhood
F	1	Santa Cecilia	Suba	14
F	2	Tuna Baja	Suba	17
F	2	El Rincón	Suba	18
F	2	Alfonso Lopez	Usme	0.5
F	2	Leon XIII	Soacha	6
F	4	Contador	Usaquén	3
F	4	La Soledad	Teusaquillo	1.5
F	4	Gran América	Teusaquillo	10
F	4	Quinta Paredes	Teusaquillo	1
F	4	San Cipriano	Suba	1
F	5	Gratamira	Suba	15
F	5	Multicentro	Usaquén	3
F	5	Niza	Suba	25
F	6	Chicó Oriental	Chapinero	5
F	6	Chicó Navarra	Usaquén	8
M	2	Diana Turbay	Rafael Uribe	12
M	2	Las Mercedes	Suba	24
M	2	Bachué	Engativá	4
M	3	El Codito	Usaquén	0.5
M	3	San Cristobal	Usaquén	30
M	3	Santa Isabel	Puente Aranda	9
M	3	Timiza	Kennedy	25
M	3	Candelaria	La Candelaria	3
M	3	Marly	Teusaquillo	2
M	4	Lourdes	Chapinero	4
M	4	Pablo IV	Teusaquillo	7
M	4	Zarzamora	Engativá	25
M	4	Mirandela	Suba	25
M	5	Los Lagartos	Suba	9
M	6	La Calleja	Usaquén	10

Source: Author's elaboration.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Results

This section presents the conditions under which people feel secure or insecure in their respective neighborhoods. Although the interviews express the individual conditions and perceptions of each participant of the study, it is possible to generalize patterns and factors that give account of the levels of *fear of crime* felt by *Bogotanos*. In order to present the results in a general manner, the six socio-economic strata were divided into two groups: (1, 2, 3) and (4, 5, 6).

6.1.1 Fear of Crime in Neighborhoods of Socio-Economic Strata (1), (2) and (3)

On the one hand, in neighborhoods belonging to these strata people feel secure in their communities when there is constant presence of acquaintances and friends in the residential, commercial and recreational zones. This feeling is reinforced when individuals have lived long periods in their neighborhood and have developed good relations with the people around them. Nevertheless, this *feeling of security* is existent if people consider that their neighbors are “*good*” people - in other words - people similar to them, who share the same values i.e. workers, people with families, relatives and owners of the property. The perception of solidarity is accompanied by feelings of trust for neighbors but only in reduced perimeters (blocks).

Residents of these strata feel secure in the presence of police agents and their patrols. Nevertheless, only those who live very close to the police station or CAI¹⁴ have this feeling. The existence of government social programs in the zone makes people feel secure because of the presence of personnel deemed as trustworthy:

“Even if this neighborhood is very complicated, lately, I have felt very secure because I have seen a lot of police, army and a lot of soldiers confiscating guns and drugs” (Woman living in stratum 1).

¹⁴ Centro de Atención Inmediata (Center of Immediate Attention of the Police)

“I feel secure in my street because there is a lot of movement, people who know me and know what I am up to, there is also a subsidized lunch program in the block so there is a lot of people around” (Man living in stratum 3).

On the other hand, in strata (1), (2), and (3), people feel insecure in their neighborhood due to several factors. First, problems of coexistence and intolerance among neighbors are influential on the *feelings of insecurity*. People who identified their neighbors as “*bad*” feel more insecure in their areas of residence. A “*bad*” neighbor is defined as not respecting norms of coexistence and civility:

“You cannot trust your neighbors because they are your worst enemies. Maybe you have problems with them because their music is too loud, or maybe they have dangerous dogs and you have small children, there is a lot of conflict due to these things, there is no solidarity” (Woman living in stratum 2).

Second, the absence of police agents and private security services in extended areas of these neighborhoods also decreases the residents’ *feelings of security*. The lack of any sort of enforcement authority or protective entity makes people feel insecure. In the study, unlike people from higher strata, residents belonging to strata 1, 2 or 3 perceived the police of their community as corrupt, acting in connivance with gangs or being lenient with criminals. This perception stems from the ineffectiveness of the police, who arrive late in case of emergencies, neglect calls of the community when something is suspicious or even fail to show up in case of a criminal event.. The relation between civilians and police forces varies according to the quadrant¹⁵: sometimes the relations are close and trustful but other times they lack fluent communication and trust.

Third, the awareness of the presence of criminal gangs, operating in the neighborhood, makes people feel uneasy and insecure. The youngsters without a job or formal education, who hang out in the streets and have fallen prey to established gangs, are seen as a source of criminality that increases *fear of crime*:

¹⁵ A quadrant is a division of territory assigned to 6 policemen in charge of providing security to the citizens in the area under surveillance.

“You see a lot of rotten apples in the little ones, kids that are 10, 11 or 12 years old, you already see them smoking marihuana and stealing from neighbors, they can be very violent and stab you if you don’t give them your cell phone...those kids between 10 and 19 should receive more support from the government” (Man living in strata 2).

Fourth, levels of *fear of crime* are higher among people who have witnessed robberies, attacks or burglaries on many occasions. These feelings are exacerbated when a person has been victimized several times. Episodes of lynching of alleged criminals also produce a perception of insecurity, chaos and desperation among residents. Nevertheless, some participants agree with these practices in order to expel “*undesirable*” individuals from the neighborhood especially in areas where people feel “*abandoned*” by the government.

Fifth, signs of civil disorder and abandonment of public spaces also make people perceive their neighborhoods as insecure. Among the influencing factors are: the presence of floating population (homeless people, street vendors), consumption of alcohol and illegal substances, zones of adult entertainment without proper control from the authorities, violent quarrels among neighbors, abandoned buildings used for illegal activities and signs of decay in public spaces:

“It is impossible to hang out in the parks. The addicts and depraved are walking around, it is a very serious problem, the worst part is that they are not people from the neighborhood, but from other places” (Man living in stratum 3).

“The government should fix the streets. I mean you simply do not enter certain streets, there is no lightning, anything could happen, those streets are completely destroyed... particularly around here in “La Candelaria” there are two or three streets that serve as toilets for the homeless, in those blocks anything could happen” (Man living in stratum 3).

Finally, feelings of *fear of crime* rise to very high levels in communities of the periphery of Bogotá. Usually these are zones of strata 1 and 2 whose dwellers have very low incomes. Next to these areas, illegal slums with very poor housing conditions have extended. The population is usually composed of uprooted persons coming from all regions of the country, who left their homes due to the Colombian armed conflict. Dwellers of these zones are very afraid of crime since the territorial control belongs to well-organized and powerful

criminal gangs, who dedicate themselves to drug trafficking and extortion and thus, exert their own form of justice and rules. In addition, the perception of abandonment by the government exacerbates this *feeling of insecurity*.

6.1.2 Fear of Crime in Neighborhoods of Socio-Economic Strata (4), (5) and (6)

On the one hand, residents of these strata feel secure due to the presence of private security services, protecting enclosed residential units and apartment blocks. This feeling is stronger when guards are not frequently replaced by new ones and are known by the residents. The presence of police and CAIs also makes people feel secure. The vicinity of government buildings, malls, firms and guarded recreational facilities also provide a sense of security to people living around them. In strata (5) and (6) people whose neighbors are tycoons, diplomats, politicians or high ranked officials of the Armed Forces, feel secure due to the presence of constant military personnel and bodyguards in the area:

“I feel safe because we have an armored door, you can be relaxed around here...this is like a strong box... I feel secure because there is a lot of private security” (Woman living in stratum 6).

“My neighborhood is very safe, now with the presence of “Santa Fe” Mall the security has improved a lot and there are not many cases of armed robbery, it is very difficult that a crime in the area goes unnoticed, there is a lot of people on alert” (Man living in stratum 4).

On the other hand, levels of *fear of crime* among residents of strata (4), (5) and (6) increase when they are subjects of victimization and are aware of criminal events in the area by word of mouth. People who live in areas of higher income feel insecure because they perceive that their material possessions make them a target for thieves in the streets and burglaries in their homes. In certain areas where there is presence of non-permanent population and big conglomerations of people, the residential character of the neighborhood is lost. The presence of unknown people is another source of *feelings of insecurity* especially for residents of stratum (4).

6.2 Discussion

This section presents the role that *social networks*, institutional resources and norms of trust and reciprocity play with regard to the levels of *fear of crime* that individuals experience in their neighborhoods.

6.2.1 Role of Social Networks in Neighborhoods of Socio-Economic Strata (1), (2) and (3)

The prevalence of *social networks* manifests itself especially in informal interactions. These interactions usually take place on weekends and in the street where people gather to comment on various issues concerning their daily lives. The informal meetings are local in nature and usually only happen among people living on the same blocks. Their scope of *collective action* is very narrow because they only coordinate and agree on security measures for the block and between very few families. Therefore, the *feelings of security* that these citizens can derive from relations with neighbors are only present in very small areas of the neighborhood.

Other sources of *social capital* are formal institutions like the “*Security Council of the Locality*” or the *CABs*. In the case of the former, people usually do not know these councils or perceive them as very distant from the community. In the case of the latter, the residents acknowledge the existence of *CABs* but few people participate in them. In low income strata, the Boards are usually not effective mainly because they do not have economic or human resources available to advance their goals. Additionally, they do not possess the means to exert any obligatory contribution from the occasional participants. The lack of resources and government support renders into poor results, decreasing people’s motivation to participate. The activities and projects of the *CABs* depend on the voluntary contributions of the members. For people of scarce resources it is very difficult to create and maintain an effective *CAB*.

In areas of strata 3, corresponding to middle-low income areas, it is possible to find formal interaction and participatory spaces of private nature such as neighborhood management committees of enclosed residential complexes. The *CABs* tend to have more resources and work in synergy with the neighborhood management committees. The relations among

neighbors are more frequent because they share communal spaces and participate in the management committees. The contributions to the neighborhood management committees are mandatory in order to look after common property and provide services within the boundaries of the complex. These permanent organizations provide interaction spaces and together with physical places of gathering as well as civil encounter, create an environment of support and relative security for residents:

“The convenient store, the bakery, the park...those are the spaces of interaction with my neighbors, I live in an enclosed residential complex, it makes me feel secure” (Man living in stratum 3).

“In my former neighborhood, one felt that there was more cooperation among neighbors, for example if someone was getting robbed in the neighborhood, the people from the convenience stores, the guards of the buildings, everyone was going to be aware and did something about it” (Man living in strata 2, formerly living in strata 3).

Social networks inhibit levels of *fear of crime* among their participants when people have known their neighbors for several years and thus, perceive them as trustful and supportive in case of emergency. People who consider their neighbors as part of a more or less homogenous group (being home owners, families who assist to the same church, people with children who attend the same school, similar professions, compatible habits of coexistence, and shared hobbies) believe that their levels of *collective efficacy* are relevant to face security challenges, and actually advance proactive and preventive actions against criminality. As mentioned before, these initiatives are only limited to one or few blocks, given the difficult conditions for coordination on a broader scale and the limited economic and time resources of people with low incomes. Nevertheless, most interviewees who participate in or belong to these networks consider that they contribute to their feelings of security:

“We are very united people, very united, we all have alarms, if someone activates it, a lot of people come out and help or alert the authorities” (Women living in stratum 2).

"I feel relaxed in my neighborhood, you know that people who you see in the neighborhood are proprietaries, workers... decent, good people, but in other neighbors there are many beggars and strange people" (Men living in stratum 3).

People in these strata are conscious that the situation of security and their *feelings of security* depend on their organizational capabilities and coordination. This does not mean that they think the government should not intervene and support them in solving problems. It is precisely because of the incapability or unwillingness of the enforcement authorities that people start communicating and looking for collective solutions to secure their areas of residence, prevent harm or loss of property or lives and increase *feelings of security* in their residential zones:

"It is necessary to participate because the action of the authorities (police) is not enough, they are not able to cope with criminality, when we feel that the situation is getting worse, we react and start thinking how to solve the problems...we have protected some blocks here in our neighborhood, we have alarms and there is always someone around...when something happens we all go out to the street and take care of the situation, we also call the police, obviously, but it is rare for them to arrive on time, for example, one day we armed ourselves with sticks and kicked out some vandals that were selling drugs to the kids" (Man living in strata 3).

The *social networks* are particularly weak in these neighborhoods where residents have very long workdays and do neither have the time nor the money to contribute for collective goals. Additionally, most people do not use their free time to interact with neighbors or participate in communal activities because there are no spaces to do so. In consequence, the creation of community ties is hampered.

The intertwined coexistence of small numbers of criminals and wide numbers of regular community members presents a pitfall for coordination and strengthening of *social networks*. A reduced number of criminals are able to weaken community ties because of their use of violence. In addition, the fear of retaliation prevents many residents to get involved in ambitious initiatives of neighborhood safety:

“Many times people prefer to stay quiet and passive because criminals are members of the same community” (Woman living in stratum 2).

“Well you can talk to people and say: all right let’s do this and that to prevent crime, but it is very difficult to mobilize an entire neighborhood because it is also composed of the parents, brothers, relatives, friends of the crooks...that’s the problem” (Man living in stratum 3).

“It is very difficult - people want to collaborate but in our city the criminals never attack alone, there are people who study the zone, the victim and the movements, if one intervenes there is a high risk of getting hurt, it is not possible to measure how dangerous it actually is to help someone” (Man living in stratum 3).

6.2.2 Role of Social Networks in Neighborhoods of Socio-Economic Strata (4), (5) and (6)

In strata (4), (5) and (6), *social networks* experience a higher degree of consolidation than in lower strata. The higher degree of institutionalization is explained mainly due to two reasons. First, the pooled resources that these communities have in order to achieve collective goals are higher in terms of monetary, wealth, cognitive and political terms. Second, the physical configuration and infrastructural conditions in these areas allow for better-coordinated collective actions on a broader scale and with wider scope than in lower strata. These two factors are strongly related to each other and have a synergetic effect on inhibiting *fear of crime*.

The majority of people living in these strata live in either apartment blocks or semi-closed or closed residential complexes. These units usually are administered by neighborhood or administrative committees of private character. The economic contributions to these organizations are usually mandatory in order to maintain and provide services to the members of these groups. The participatory spaces range from regular meetings to general assemblies of proprietaries and residents in order to address issues of management accountability, voice complaints and concerns of participants, or to have dialogues about contingencies and issues of common interest:

“We are concerned about security, we unite and procure that this is better every day. But if we want this to improve every day we have to hire private security” (Woman living in stratum 4).

In some cases, these administrative or neighborhood committees organize regular meetings with the police of the sector. During these gatherings, citizens provide opinions and suggestions to enforcement agents in order to improve the security of the area:

“We see that there is interest of the authorities, the meetings focus on suggestions given by the residents to the police regarding times and zones where their presence is needed” (Man living in stratum 4).

Additionally, people recognize that these spaces provide valuable information such as criminal activities and modalities in the area, preventive measures, and proper handling of risky situations. Moreover, it is where people get to know their neighbors and interact with them. Meetings of this kind are of great benefit to generate *feelings of security* in the neighborhood and foster bonds of solidarity and reciprocity, which consequently increases the perception of *collective efficacy* that the community has of itself:

“I believe that information is important (to feel secure in neighborhood), there are meetings with people from the area and the police and you realize who lives nearby and stay informed about the neighbors, that helps to increase solidarity and to really feel it” (Woman living in stratum 4).

The existence of other neighborhood organizations - originated solely by initiative of citizens - also improves the *feelings of security* of the participants and other beneficiaries of its activities. These clubs take care of public space and address issues of urbanism, security and citizenry coexistence. It is important to point out that in strata (4), (5) and (6); persons with relevant knowledge and access to institutional resources lead this type of organizations. Some of them are actually completely dedicated to this task and have professional staff and working space paid by the contributions of the neighbors. Working full time in addition to increased monetary resources and knowledge, allows them to advance collective goals with the support of local mayors, enforcement authorities and deputies of the locality. The presence of clubs or groups concerned with improving the

coexistence of citizens reinforces the sentiment of belonging to a community and provides interaction and coordination among neighbors.

People who perceive their neighborhood as an “*active zone*” with constant presence of acquaintances in public spaces, and who recognize and see private security guards and police from the sector, feel safe in these areas. The use of digital social networks allows participants to be more active and take part in strategies to alert in the moment. Through indirect actions, they do not only circulate critical information among their contacts, but by doing so, contribute to preventing potential harm. Additionally, people who actively participate and care for their community are better informed and follow norms to prevent crime and offer reciprocity in case of emergency:

“In my neighborhood there is a lot of movement...people you know in your daily life, people hanging out in parks, the commerce is very complete and that creates a pleasant environment for people to live here...there is union between the people and the guards, that keeps thieves at bay...I am part of the security of my neighborhood” (Man living in stratum 4).

“In every house and block of apartments there is a guard, therefore, you could think of the existence of a network of people who is aware in case of emergency... you talk to the neighbors about what we can do and we start making a security map and that lets you know where is safe to walk and which places to avoid at certain times”, (Man living in stratum 5).

Another source of social cohesion and support from networks in these areas come from the existence of some government buildings, recreational and commercial facilities of private nature and shopping centers. Moreover, Corporate Social Responsibility programs impact the physical and social environment of neighborhoods positively:

“As part of the CSR program there are meetings of security, they make events with the CABs, even in the parks where people are relaxing they have made informational sessions with the police, they print a weekly publication where there is information about what is going on in the zone regarding security, improvements of infrastructure, the security zones

and quadrants under police surveillance...I think people show a lot of interest even though everyone is minding his or her own business" (Women living in stratum 4).

"In places with a lot of security and important commercial stores people scream or alert of a crime...they do so because they feel safer in those places, there are more means to condemn criminal actions" (Women living in stratum 5).

6.3 Causality Issues

The evidence collected sheds some light on the direction of the causal mechanism of the *social networks/community concern* model. As mentioned in the Literature Review of this thesis, the causality between *fear of crime* and the formation of cohesive social relations is not clear hitherto. This qualitative study - although not exhaustive - has identified some cues to draw patterns in this regard.

For the case of Bogotá and its neighborhoods, the author argues that increased levels of social cohesion, civic participation and neighborhood integration decrease levels of *fear of crime* in individuals that participate in such networks. Nevertheless, this affirmation holds true only under certain circumstances and conditions because these networks do not materialize in the same form across the socio-economic strata in which the city is sharply divided. The quality and amount of institutional, social and economic resources at the disposition of citizens depend on their place of residence. Furthermore, the causal relation reverses in extreme cases of government weakness and incapability i.e. lack of control over territories in the periphery of the city accompanied by parallel governance structures led by illegal actors. In this exceptional case, increased levels of *fear of crime* contribute to decreased levels of cohesion among neighbors.

In general, when neighbors of Bogotá perceive deterioration in the security conditions of their areas of residence they initiate communicative activities and look for spaces of interaction to coordinate their actions against criminal activities. In this sense, an increase in the general *feelings of insecurity* i.e. higher perception of risk in the area, leads to higher participation in communal meetings, neighborhood associations or informal spaces of dialogue. The activation of participation and communication initiatives is possible due to the already existing *social networks*. In order to raise awareness and call for institutional

support, the activation of horizontal networks of communication goes along with a coordinated use of vertical communication channels to reach the pertinent authorities, in this case, police commanders of the area, local security councils and local mayoralties. Usually, these participatory initiatives are triggered by criminal events of high impact for the community or the constant perceived deterioration of the security conditions of the neighborhood.

In neighborhoods of middle, middle-high and high-income populations,¹⁶ the causal relation among *fear of crime* and social cohesive relations seems to fit the theoretical proposal, because civic participation and neighborhood integration decrease levels of *fear of crime* in individuals that participate in such networks. In this sense, belonging to a cohesive community inhibits levels of *fear of crime*. This participation might be direct i.e. attending regular meetings of neighborhood associations, knowing the neighbors or being in constant communication with people who are part of the daily life of the local community; or indirect, by belonging to neighborhood management committees with professional staff that take care of administrative issues regarding the maintenance of the residential facilities and the security in apartment blocks and close/semi-closed residential units. People who live in closed or semi-closed neighborhoods enjoy more stable networks and more reliable communicative channels given the positive features that these residential configurations provide. Among them are the existence of professional neighborhood management committees of permanent functioning, the provision of private security services, controlled access to exclusive areas, enclosed boundaries of recreational facilities, constant surveillance by technological and human resources and generalized dissuasive devices such as alarms, video cameras, security doors, electrical fences or canine guards. Additionally, these areas have the presence of commerce, offices or government institutions that unintentionally provide a higher sense of security to their local residents given their physical and human resources who also have in place their own *social networks* and communication channels.

In areas with prevalence of middle low income residences (Stratum 3), the aforementioned causal relation is maintained, but neighbors have to rely more on the participatory instances

¹⁶ Socio-economic strata (4), (5) and (6).

and informal communication channels to address security issues, contact authorities or create citizens initiatives to prevent and diminish the occurrence of criminal activities and improve their perception of security. Less economic resources and more necessities to resolve compel people in these neighborhoods to maintain closer relations with their peers, initiate collective actions to call for the attention of authorities and coordinate themselves in times of urgency. The reliance on *social networks* underpinned in private services, economic advantages and better infrastructure is replaced by more personal and intimate circles of neighbors who know each other for a long time and have achieved certain agreement on how to handle criminal situations collectively. Volunteers or civic leaders integrate the neighborhood management committees; they do not receive payment as the professional staff in higher income areas so their monetary and time resources are very limited. Additionally, their scope of action is not clearly limited because there are no enclosed residential units. This physical feature of the neighborhood makes it more complex to coordinate actions in certain areas because it is more difficult to compel residents to participate or contribute if there are not clear physical boundaries of action.

The scope of the participation initiatives in terms of number of people and geographical boundaries of the network depends on the physical characteristic and socio-economic stratum of the residential area. In low-income neighborhoods (strata 1 and 2), where there are no closed units of residence and private security is unusual, it is very difficult for citizens to coordinate entire neighborhoods and exert informal social control in significant areas. The informal and personal networks tend to be weak due to the characteristics of these social milieus. According to the evidence gathered in the interviews of residents from strata (1) and (2), the negative social features of these neighborhoods are: (1) some criminals belong to the community, (2) it is not unusual that police is perceived as corrupt and acting in connivance with delinquency, (3) population is very diverse in terms of regional background¹⁷, (4) high number of renters or floating population and, (5) low participation rates in formal spaces of dialogue given the lack of time and motivation of people who have long work days. These features lead to a sense of low levels of trust and

¹⁷ This feature is exacerbated in neighborhoods where uprooted population originated in the Colombian civil conflict find their new places of residence.

solidarity among residents. Since these impressions foster beliefs that neighbors do not share the same values, the sense of *collective efficacy* is affected in a negative way.

Even under these circumstances, people organize themselves in blocks and assume security measures to protect themselves in very small areas. These block initiatives are more feasible because people interact in informal spaces to get to know their closer neighbors and reach an agreement on how to improve the sense of security, assume preventive measures and help each other in case of emergency. The relationships between neighbors of the same block are potentially strong because they have known each other for a long time, are owners of their houses and share preventive measures such as alarms, video cameras, phone-trees or light reflectors. Real state ownership for long temporal periods is more usual in low-income neighborhoods because people invest their lifetime income in a fixed property and mobilization is unusual. Nevertheless, these initiatives are very limited in physical terms and lack synergy to coordinate with other blocks in order to improve the overall sense of security of the neighborhood.

It is in residential areas of strata (1) and (2) where the relation between *fear of crime* and social cohesion reverses under certain conditions, that is, increased levels of *fear of crime* contribute to decreased levels of cohesion among neighbors. In Bogotá, many residential areas of low income are surrounded or intertwined with urban slums located in the geographical periphery of the city. These areas are characterized by illegal settlement, poor infrastructure, difficult social milieus and substandard conditions of housing. Moreover, illegal armed groups dedicated to the traffic of drugs exert de-facto control over the lives of dwellers and have extended their influence over the last years. In words of Thomas Risse, these territories could be understood as *Areas of Limited Statehood* concerning “*those parts of a country¹⁸ in which central authorities (governments) lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions or in which the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence is lacking, at least temporarily*” (Risse, 2011, p. 4).

Consequently, in very deprived areas, people are not able to build trustful relations and the existent *social networks* are weakened by the intimidation of illegal groups, provoking a

¹⁸In the case of this thesis, the unit of analysis is not “country” but the city of Bogotá. The concept of *Areas of Limited Statehood* is useful for the purpose of argumentation.

debilitation of the existing *social capital* and hampering any potential initiative of the citizens to advance collective goals. People living under the control of criminal organizations have to adapt to the imposed rules or otherwise face serious consequences for their lives and their relatives. As an women living in a stratum (1) zone comments: “*the paramilitaries [Sic] have informants and that is why it is for us, the people, very difficult to do something about crime, we get even more protection from the paramilitaries [Sic] than from the Police, you cannot get close to the Police to denounce anything related to drugs or extortion because they (paramilitaries) know who you talk to and have your phones intervened. They also extort bus companies and charge everyday a fee to the bus drivers to leave them alone, we have seen them counting the money in restaurants, we know who they are, we can recognize them but you cannot talk about them, that is why it is a red zone¹⁹ where I live*”. The authoritative logic of control imposed by criminal gangs, former paramilitary groups and urban cells of guerrillas stifle the norms, rules and networks that constitute the already low levels of *social capital* of Bogotá’s slums.

The poor presence of the Colombian state and its institutions, along with the low levels of trust and reciprocity among neighbors lead to negative perceptions of *collective efficacy*. People believe that their neighbors will not engage in collective actions to intervene for the common good in case of a criminal event and consider that their conjoint capability for action is very limited. The relatively high levels of *fear of crime* prevent citizens of these zones to create communities that are more cohesive and communicate with their peers.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the role of *social capital* and perceptions of *collective efficacy* regarding the levels of *fear of crime* that Bogotanos experience in their neighborhoods. The pooled resources -in terms of *social networks*, norms of trust and reciprocity and institutional resources- that neighborhoods have influence the levels of *fear of crime* of their residents. Nevertheless, the pooled resources to advance collective goals

¹⁹ *Red Zone* in the Colombian context means an area of active confrontation between the Colombian Armed Forces and illegal armed groups such as guerrillas, paramilitary or drug traffickers.

are not enough to inhibit *fear of crime*. The perception of *collective efficacy – shared beliefs in a neighborhood's conjoint capability for action to achieve an intended effect* (Sampson, 2001, p. 95) - must be consolidated in order to decrease levels of *fear of crime*. The signs of *collective efficacy* are the active sense of engagement of the residents and the expectation of assistance from their neighbors in case of criminal offence.

The role of *social networks* in inhibiting *fear of crime* among residents from strata (1), (2) and (3) is deemed as irrelevant. *Social networks* only matter in very exceptional cases and when they do, people feel secure only in reduced areas (one or a few blocks). Long workdays, limited perceptions of solidarity and reciprocity in large neighborhoods, low economic and time resources to support formal or informal institutions of participation, lack of safe public spaces to interact with neighbors, and the weakness of civil society to build significant relations with government institutions are signs of low levels of *social capital* present in the majority of these communities.

For strata (1), (2) and (3) the gap between the perception of security and the objective crime rates in the neighborhood could be explained due to the much higher presence of facilitators of *fear of crime*, -i.e. direct and indirect victimization, signs of civil disorder, poor infrastructure, presence of groups and awareness of criminal activities. On the contrary, the inhibitors of *fear of crime*, such as *social networks* are very fragile, and the perceptions of *collective efficacy* are low.

Social networks in strata (4), (5) and (6) inhibit feelings of *fear of crime* among their participants. These networks provide spaces of interaction, information, coordination and channel resources to advance collective goals pertinent to security issues. People who perceive their communities as capable of achieving communal goals and expect reciprocity from their peers benefit from a reduction in the levels of *fear of crime* caused by facilitators. The pooled resources and physical configuration of the neighborhood support the existence and maintenance of *social networks*.

Taking the aforementioned arguments into account, the gap between subjective *feelings of (in) security* and objective crime rates in Bogotá could be explained by the following reasons. First, there are large swaths of the population living in areas of strata (1), (2) and

(3), who account for the groups that feel more insecure in their respective neighborhoods. Out of the 2,251,170 households registered by DANE and the District Secretariat of Planning in 2011, 1,841,042 are classified as strata (1), (2) or (3). This figure represents more than 80% of the total households in Bogotá. In the same year, out of the 7,467,804 inhabitants registered by the same institutions, 6,312,953 lived in strata (1), (2) or (3), representing 84.53% of the total population of Bogotá. These populations also perceive factors classified as facilitators of *fear of crime* as the main reason for their feelings of fear.

Second, the role that *social networks* play in inhibiting levels of *fear of crime* is stronger in neighborhoods given the defined spatial boundaries of these residential configurations. In large and sharply socially divided cities like Bogotá, the inhibiting effect of *social networks* on *fear of crime* outside the neighborhood is nonexistent. Most of the interviewees consider that “*individualism*” and “*apathy for the common good*” is one of the features of the typical inhabitant of Bogotá. A vast majority of the interviewees do not expect any reciprocity or help from citizens in case of a criminal event outside of their neighborhood. The main reason for this lack of solidarity –identified by the participants of this study– is the fear of violent retaliation on behalf of the criminals in the case they support or assist a victim of crime. The lack of inhibitors of *fear of crime* outside of the areas of residency could also explain the large discrepancy between subjective *feelings of (in) security* and objective crime rates in the whole city.

From an academic perspective, it seems that in order to understand the levels of *fear of crime* in a given population, the combination of theoretical models that take into account factors that facilitate as well as inhibit levels of *fear of crime* is more useful to understand the specific situation and consider possible solutions. This observation stems from the interviews conducted and the recommendations given by the citizens in order to reduce their individual levels of *fear of crime*.

8. Policy Recommendations

Apart from exploring the effects of *social networks* on the levels of *fear or crime* in the neighborhoods of the metropolitan area of Bogotá, the interviews also inquired about facilitators of *fear of crime* in the whole city and the opinions of citizens on how to improve the current security situation and their *feelings of security*. The following policy recommendations are informed by the experiences of the participants of this study and their perspectives on the issue. The recommendations revolve around ways to improve solidarity and trust among citizens, prevent crime and increase citizens' reciprocity and commitment to act in favour of the common good in case of criminal events.

Judicial System: People consider that solidarity is affected because criminals are not punished for their offenses. The perception of impunity affects citizens' involvement in preventing crimes and fosters criminal habits among delinquents. According to the participants, it is not only important to increase judicial punishments for minor crimes but also reduce impunity rates to control criminality. The judicial system is perceived as slow and obstructed. This must be improved in order to motivate people to denounce crimes, a necessary procedure to prosecute alleged criminals.

Police: Citizens demand more integration and interaction of the police with the citizenry. Neighborhood initiatives could be more successful if the police is involved and supports them by providing knowledge, information and organizational skills. Participants would like to see a more proactive police of the quadrants in building trustful relations with residents of the area and in intelligence operations to countervail crime. Educational programs should be established to create better civil-police relations. The presence of police -especially in neuralgic areas and late hours- makes people feel more secure and in “*good company*”. The placement of more mobile CAIs could reduce levels of *fear of crime*.

City Government: People consider that the recovery of public spaces and the creation of new ones could improve *feelings of security* in the city. From experience, citizens think that investment and urbanistic intervention of disordered, chaotic and abandoned places could reduce their levels of *fear of crime*. Among the most relevant suggestions are the installation and improvement of street and road lightning in terms of coverage and intensity

of the light, the recovery of parks, squares and buildings to advance cultural, recreational and athletic events to integrate the citizenry as well as the strengthening of constructive habits among neighbors. With proper physical spaces for civil interaction, the city government could implement participatory spaces and campaigns to prevent criminality focused on the most vulnerable population groups i.e. youngsters without jobs or formal education. According to some of the participants, the city government should support the creation of neighborhood networks and “*bring the institutions to the territory*” in order to attend security issues and improve participation and solidarity among residents.

In general, participants believe that educational programs could improve the security of the city and the *feelings of security* of its inhabitants. These educational campaigns should focus on strengthening a culture of civility, responsible citizenry and coexistence among *Bogotanos*. Other educational programs should concentrate on preventing violence within the family and in educating younger populations in order to have tolerant citizens, respectful of difference and life. For the neighborhoods, the city government should advance educational campaigns in order to reduce violence among these more prompt to commit crimes and to foster feelings of cooperation and participation in communities. The creation of programs that recognize security leaders as civic guards to organize and educate communities and support authorities in their tasks should be established with the pertinent incentives. As one of the participants said: “*feelings of security without citizen coexistence are impossible*”.

Finally, participants requested the creation of opportunities for social development aimed at poor and vulnerable citizens. Many participants identified social inequality, inequity, and injustice as the main sources of violence and criminality. For some citizens the desperation to cover basic needs leads them to act illegally and due to the lack of consequences and alternative options of livelihood, they stick to antisocial behaviors. Without justifying violence, criminality is still an alternative of survival for a part of the population.

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Appendix

Semi-structured Interview (Spanish)

A. Información General

Sexo:

Barrio donde reside:

Tiempo de residencia:

B. Miedo al Crimen

-En términos generales, ¿siente miedo frente a la criminalidad común en su vida cotidiana?

¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?

-¿Qué es lo que más lo asusta?

-¿Qué le preocupa?

-¿Ha cambiado su rutina o hábitos por miedo al crimen?

C. Sentimientos de Seguridad

-¿Se siente seguro en su barrio? ¿Por qué?

-¿Ha vivido en barrios diferentes durante los últimos 5 años? ¿En cuál se sentía más seguro y por qué? ¿Cómo era la relación con los vecinos? ¿Considera que la comunidad tenía que ver con su sensación de (in)seguridad?

D. Percepción de Efectividad Colectiva

-¿Cree que sus vecinos son personas solidarias? ¿Son personas confiables? ¿Considera que sus vecinos comparten sus mismos valores?

-¿Considera que sus vecinos asumen medidas de prevención del crimen que lo puedan beneficiar a usted también?

-Dentro/Fuera de su barrio, cree que alguien le ayudará si usted fuera víctima de robo, atraco, amenaza o abuso sexual? ¿Por qué?

-¿Qué lo motivaría a involucrarse en una iniciativa de su barrio para combatir el crimen y mejorar la sensación de seguridad de su lugar de residencia? ¿Considera que sus vecinos estarían interesados en este tipo de iniciativas? ¿Cómo les podría ayudar la Policía o el Gobierno de la Ciudad?

-¿Alguna vez ha participado en una iniciativa similar en su barrio? ¿Cómo fue la experiencia? ¿Por qué cree que fue exitoso/fracasó?

-¿Por qué cree que la gente es solidaria/apática (indiferente) frente al crimen?

E. Actitudes/Opiniones de Solidaridad/Involucramiento

-Dentro/Fuera de su barrio, ¿usted intervendría si presencia un acto de delincuencia? ¿Por qué?

-¿Se siente más obligado a hacer esto dentro de su barrio?

F. Recomendaciones/Opiniones Ciudadanas

-¿Cómo cree que sus vecinos y las personas de su barrio pueden ayudarlo a sentir más seguridad?

-¿Qué acciones cree que puede hacer con sus vecinos para mejorar el sentimiento de seguridad y reducir el miedo frente al crimen en su área de residencia?

- Personalmente, ¿cómo cree que usted se sentiría más seguro en su barrio? ¿Qué tendría que cambiar para sentirse protegido y sin miedo?

-¿Cómo cree que se puede disminuir la apatía frente a la necesidad de ayuda o la prevención de los delitos en su barrio?

-¿Cómo cree que se puede mejorar la solidaridad de los ciudadanos en Bogotá frente al crimen?

-Personalmente, ¿cómo cree que usted se sentiría más seguro en los lugares que frecuenta o sus rutas cotidianas? ¿Qué tiene que cambiar para sentirse protegido y sin miedo en Bogotá?

G. Estrato- ¿Cuál es el estrato en el recibo mensual de servicios públicos domiciliarios para su hogar?