THE CITYSCAPE
AND THE MODERN GAZE IN BOGOTÁ, 1930-1950

BY

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DISSEbATION

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Abstract

In recent years Colombia has attracted worldwide attention for its promising economy, for its flourishing cities, and more recently because of the peace talks with rebel groups. In spite of its thriving economy, Colombia is among the Latin American countries with the highest levels of inequality. Scholars from different fields have addressed this problem and it has also become part of the national agenda to find strategies to reduce the gap between rich and poor. Through the analysis of cityscapes and representations of the built environment produced during the 1930s and 1940s in Bogotá, this research presents an approach from the perspective of aesthetics to the problem of inequality. Through discourse analysis this dissertation shows how the images produced during the early capitalist period of Bogotá reflect the social tensions and configured a scenario of symbolic violence that would lead to the actual violence that erupted by the end of the 1940s. The results show the correlation between one type of violence and the other and how they would settle the basis to silently perpetuate a system of classes and inequality reflected in the cityscape.

Keywords: symbolic violence, Bogotá, visual studies, discourse analysis, cityscapes, architecture, built environment, aesthetics, urban history
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the winter of 2011, while pondering a way to tackle my dissertation, I came across an image that was generating, at the time, a huge controversy in the papers and media in Colombia, my home country. The image accompanied an interview article in Hola, a Spanish tabloid magazine, about some of the “richest and most powerful women” in a certain region in Colombia. The image itself revealed a great deal about the editor’s—and perhaps the general public’s—understanding of gender, race, and class.

The scene was composed of six women, four of them white and two of them of African descent (Figure 1). The white women were in the foreground, with sober expressions on their faces. They were wearing designer clothes and appeared comfortably seated in a tropical living room, on two white sofas and two wooden chairs. Despite the attenuated view of the room, the architecture of the place was clearly upper class.

The photograph was symmetrically divided by an imaginary vertical axis that was defined by a flower vase and a palm tree in the distance. In the background on a secondary level, two African-Colombian women were standing, stiffly, face-to-face, and in a way that was reminiscent of some ancient columns or caryatides; these women, who were part of the domestic service, were carrying trays with a tea service. The white women in the foreground were divided from the others, the African-Colombian, by an imaginary horizontal axis determined by the pool. Furthest in the background it is possible to appreciate the immediate surrounding of the house, showing a tropical landscape, vegetation and, further away, the mountains and the city outskirts.

The image immediately reminded me of baroque paintings and the way they depict power. In all of its aspects, the *Hola* magazine picture was also a visual representation of power. Clothes, architecture, landscape, sight and vision within the photograph and outside of it, body
postures, furniture, and even the caption comparing the locale and people with Beverly Hills, helped to reinforce this concept.

The image immediately incited controversy and many in the general public were uncomfortable with the publication of this image. For most it was tangible evidence of how racism and classism in Colombia are active, though not fully acknowledged, forces. From an art history perspective, this image appears to represent the continuation of an old tradition of the representation of powerful people through portraiture. In Europe, space, power and image have been linked to several kinds of representations. One such type of representation, of particular interest here, are the gardens and villas of eighteenth century Italy and France. These landscapes were conceived as apparatuses to display power and lend it visibility and legitimacy.²

In Latin America, since colonial times, representations of people in power have been primarily shown in the form of portraits and landscapes. During the colonial period, paintings displayed wealth, lineage and power. Different categories of these paintings include portraits of nobility;³ the crowned nuns, conceived to make visible the lineage of young women about to take their vows as nuns;⁴ and the *casta* paintings that visually depicted the different hierarchies according to race and social status.⁵

Associations between sight and a racialized and stratified landscape of power can be observed in the *Hola* example I began with. The visual elements in the magazine photograph reinforce the culturally embedded notion of hierarchy, while the distribution of the elements closely follows the classic rules of composition. The horizon in relation to the frame follows the rule of thirds and establishes the separation between the two main parts of the composition: in this case, it serves to divide classes and races, background from foreground, and the domestic from the landscape.
There are three reasons for using this image to introduce my discussion on the power of images to convey messages and ideologies in a country like Colombia. First, this image generated an enormous public outcry against demonstrations of racism and classism. The image alone was enough to put racism into discussion in a society where racism presumably did not exist. It also demonstrates that images have gained more visibility and have prompted discussions about the values of contemporary Colombian society. Second, the Hola image highlights the role images play in perpetuating inequality and promoting symbolic violence by tacitly endorsing obsolete hierarchical colonial structures. Third, the controversy the Hola magazine image helped to exactly figure out what kind of images I wanted to work with. In contrast to the explicit nature of the Hola image, my images represent the positive values of a society materialized in urban planning and architectural views of the city. The images that are part of this research would never trigger the same kind of emotions the Hola image did. The images that are part of this research can be described as pleasant, beautiful, nostalgic, and even boring. That is exactly where their problematic nature resides. Through the Hola image, I had a glimpse on how images can provide us with a different approach, even when they seem innocuous, to the hidden faces of the Colombian conflict.

**Antecedents**

The story of this dissertation does not begin with my reflection on the *Hola* magazine photograph, but it is informed by the same concerns that emerged with the circulation of this image in Colombia. However, there is a meaningful difference between this image and the ones I am going to analyze as part of this research, particularly concerning the reception and nature of those images. The images that are part of this research are mainly images of the built environment and of the material culture that represent the discourse of modernity in the mid-
twentieth century in Colombia. These images are not particularly controversial but rather widely accepted and even admired for what they represent in present-day Colombian society: history, patrimony, and a nostalgia for past values and ways of living. They represent idyllic visions of the past that do not usually give rise to suspicion. These idyllic visions have been and are still part of the historical narratives of Colombian society and can provide insights into society’s construction and distribution of urban space in terms of race, class, and gender.

My concerns about the uses of images date back to the late 1990s when I was writing the Historical Atlas of Bogota, 1538-1910, a book I coauthored with two other urban historians. The book, as the title suggests, is a survey of Bogota, from the point of view of its built environment and its development during the first three centuries of its existence. The project was ambitious in terms of the time period we covered and the amount of information we collected and handled. We were convinced of the importance of this work, particularly as we discovered that there were many gaps in the physical history of Bogotá that needed filling. Additionally, compared to Europe and North America, and in spite of significant advancements in the field of archival science in Colombia, graphic information about the city and its urban development was still difficult to obtain. So, one of the main objectives of this project was to gather the largest amount of visual imagery related to the city possible that we could later combine with written sources.

Because images were a paramount part of the research, we created a database to help us organize the vast amount of visual information we were collecting. The challenge was to make sense out of the aggregation of historical visual material we had collected, and to use this material to provide new perspectives on how to understand the city. Our assumption was that we would be able to understand and reconstruct the urban history of Bogota using mainly historical images rather than exclusively written documentation. Rather than dismissing written sources entirely, we hoped to establish a dialogue between them and Bogotá’s visual history. With this in
mind, our goal was to produce a reconstruction of the territory and the built environment using different methodologies, such as historic cartography, and then to create digital databases to keep track of the maps, data or images that we found. In this way, we sought to fill the gaps left by traditional historiography.

This research began in the late nineties and parts of it overlapped with my master’s thesis, which was also about the built environment but from the perspective of the ancient indigenous settlements that were later transformed into indigenous reservations. More specifically, I was interested in looking for the persistent physical presence of indigenous settlements in the city, their imprint on the territory, and the visual impact on the landscape made by the pueblos de indios. At first I examined this phenomenon from a distance, in a very academic manner, until I realized that it was also about my own history. Consequently, something that started as a purely academic reflection became an introspective view of my own personal history. As a person from a family with the history of mestizaje deeply embedded for generations, I began to establish connections from multiple perspectives. As a consequence, I was forced to move back and forth between my own subjectivity on the one hand and academic analysis on the other. This two-sided perspective of the same story, the Hispanic colonial city on the one hand, and the pueblos de indios on the other, raised questions about the uses of images, both as subject matter and as historical sources, and impelled me to consider the ways that the research and writing of the Historical Atlas of Bogotá could have been influenced by the same underlying structures of Colombian society that allowed the production of the Hola magazine photograph. The latter was produced less than three years ago, and the majority of the images we used as historical sources for the elaboration of the Atlas were produced more than a century before. Despite this fact, I have found that images like the Hola photograph and seemingly disinterested images, like the historical images of the city, both reveal unsettling aspects of Colombian society.
Statement

The aspects I have introduced so far are part of a broader reflection on the role of images in Colombia. Through a piece of contemporary popular visual culture I introduced the context and the reasons of why I consider it important to take a fresh look at Colombian history through its visual imagery. To this end, I will study a set of images dated from 1930 through 1950 and take a closer look at their role in implementing ideological discourses in Colombia, particularly the discourse of modernity in its connection with class struggle.

The 1930s in Colombia are considered the starting point of industrialization in Colombia, when the official discourse was based on the ideal of progress through industrial and economic development. I examine and explain how the images contributed to creating a *scopic regime* in which relationships among “sight, space, and social order” can be discovered.

My assumption is that Colombia’s colonial past and colonial scopic regime continued mediating the production and circulation of images for most of the twentieth century and overlapped with the implementation of new visual codes. By analyzing how these images perpetuate, challenge, or problematize the deeply rooted class system in Colombia, my aim is to provide a complementary understanding of the period between 1930-1950 that has been traditionally approached from the perspective of social sciences.

A key element of my study concerns the imagery Latin American elites developed pertaining to modernity, found in the images they consumed or commissioned—images that could have helped reinforce their sense of superiority or class-consciousness, or helped them to preserve their families’ status. I therefore consider what the new *scopic regime* meant to a Colombian society, which was both thrilled by and wary of the promises of modernity as result of persisting pre-modern values.
Research Assumptions

This dissertation is driven by the conviction that visual culture can provide a perspective from which to reinterpret history. My assumption is that urban visual imagery produced between 1930 and 1950 was used as rhetorical tool with many different purposes: to legitimate people in power and to secure privileges of class, to ensure the status quo of Colombian society, to educate the populace about the ideals of modernity, and to accompany the dictums of transnational ideologies. I assume, however, that the reception of these images was frequently complicated by the persistence of pre-modern values, resulting, in some cases, in contradictory meanings. Thus, I assume that the reception of urban/modern-related visual imagery did not go uncontested, but rather was challenged and appropriated in ways that provide different insights about the cultural syncretism that characterizes Colombian society. Moreover, I examine the role of urban visual imagery in the construction of a new kind of citizenship and a new urban identity in a transitional period from a rural-based to an increasingly urban-based society in Bogotá.

Definition of Terms

The historical nature of this dissertation compels me to start by defining the terms that have to do with periodization, especially given the impact they will have in my approach. I will start by taking a closer look at the term pre-modern that is often used to refer to the period before industrialization. It also has been used to reference things that are not part of western society. Some terms are exclusively defined according to the geographical, social, and political context of this research. Such is the case of the terms middle-class, Liberal Republic, and mestizo.

Pre-modern

The term pre-modern does not seem to be problematic at first sight. The term is frequently used to describe the period before modernity and it is characterized by a feudal, and
subsequently non-centralized, kind of government. For example, Giddens characterizes pre-modernity as a period in which the stability of social relations is assured by kinship instead of personal relationships or friendships. It is also a period in which religion is thought to provide the general framework for the interpretation and understanding of life. “Tradition” is used by pre-modern societies to maintain a connection with the past, to assure stability and cohesion. In contrast, the notions of “future” and “progress” define modernity. Giddens locates the boundary between pre-modernity and modernity at “about the seventeenth century.”

Berman describes a boundary between the promises embedded in modernity and the subsequent loss of a pre-modern paradise. To do so, he uses Goethe’s *Faust* to depict a transitional character that sacrifices the stability of his pre-modern environment in order to follow what he considers to be modern ambitions guided by reason. According to Berman’s periodization, what is called pre-modern goes until the end of the fifteenth century when people start to “experience modern life” but still do not know exactly what it is about; this is in clear reference to the beginning of European Renaissance.

Elias provides a more general framework by which to understand the idea of the pre-modern in Latin America by talking about the process of civilization. In doing so, he poses the counter notions of “civilization” and “dis-civilization” or “barbarism.” He argues that modern societies form when the state or a centralized power has a monopoly on the use of violence and taxation. What authors like Giddens and Berman have labeled pre-modernity corresponds in Elias’s formulations to a society’s inability to concentrate authority in a single figure and to exert the monopoly over different apparatuses of power.

In this sense, Colombia, as well as other countries in Latin America and Africa, could be seen to fit the above description of pre-modern. For instance, Colombia’s territory has been divided between different rebel groups since the 1950s and there are still parts of the territory
that are being taxed by guerrilla or paramilitary groups and, of course, controlled by the same. To describe this persistent “pre-modern” situation, García-Canclini posited the term *hybrid* to describe the phenomenon observed in Latin America where “traditions have not yet disappeared and modernity has not fully arrived.”

Elias’s theory of the monopoly of violence as a condition for modernity makes it difficult to classify Colombia as a fully modern society. My proposition is to label Colombia a “hybrid” society, following García-Canclini, rather than “pre-modern” or “backward”; indeed, it is a society that has developed strategies to deal with its multiple identities. Thus, Garcia-Canclini’s and Bhabha’s uses of the terms “hybrid” and “hybridity” are well suited to this analysis because they allow the characterization of Colombia’s particularities as strategies of resistance and as means of reacting against cultural domination. Hence, the term pre-modern will be used to make reference to Colombian colonial society and its hegemony until some point in the nineteenth century, but it is also used in reference to the persistence of those colonial values during the twentieth century in Colombia.

**Modernity**

Modernity is a term that is used to define a period of time in which major changes in history occurred, particularly societal and aesthetic changes. Naturally, broad terms used to designate a historical period are always subject to discussion and nuances depending on the context and background. Nonetheless, modernity is widely accepted as describing the emergence of a new social order no longer based on aristocratic privileges but based on the capacity to have access to raw material and to transform it into commodities. Industrialization and capitalism transformed the ancient structures of European monarchies, as the development of science and technology ushered in widespread change.
From a different point of view, Baudelaire associated modernity more with aesthetic experience. But this view is, undoubtedly, a product of living in industrialized cities. In the “Painter of Modern Life,” he provides a full list of adjectives to describe the experience of modernity: “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.” What is most interesting about Baudelaire’s outlining of modern experience is his underlying nostalgia for the aristocratic values that were supposedly lost with the onset of modernity. He uses the term flâneur to describe a modern, refined gentleman who is fascinated with life in a modern city but retains his aristocratic stance. Close to Baudelaire’s notion of modernity, Benjamin also thinks of being modern as something attached to the experience of living in the city and he remarks on the impact of mechanical reproduction and reproducibility in mediating this experience. By contrast, his notion of aura represents the loss of authenticity of works of art under the rule of modern values.

Habermas, in tracking down the concept of modernity, identifies its use by philosophers like Hegel as an “epochal concept.” Modern times, according to this view, gravitate around certain historical events like the discovery of America, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. This threshold between ancient and modern times is roughly situated around the year 1500, when each of these events took place. Another notion Habermas borrows from Hegel’s approach to modernity has to do with its reliance on rationality and consciousness about time. Both concepts were symmetrically opposite to the values of theocentrism and a conception of time based on the repetition of cycles.

In a similar direction, Giddens dates modernity from around the seventeenth century, and describes it as a new and different way of organizing life that was grounded on a different conception of space and time. For instance, pre-modern time was largely ruled by agrarian constraints like seasonal changes and harvesting, in addition to canonical time as demarked by
the bells of the churches; these were the ways western society dealt with the notion of time prior to the mechanical clock.27

Changes also occurred in the notion of space as it is intimately related to the changes in the conception of time. The perception of space and distance changed as societies developed new ways to favor the flow of people and commodities. Additionally, Giddens stresses how the development of what he calls an “empty space” alters human perceptions of space in general.28 To Giddens, the separation of space from time provides modernity with its characteristic dynamism. Standard ways of organizing time in cities like timetables and time charts allow for the dislocated perception of space, and also provided the basis for the bureaucratic organization of modern life.29 For instance, trip-planners or time tables made it possible for city administrators to rationalize movements around the city and to dismember the direct relationship between cause and effect. Transport authority’s decisions could be transmitted and put into effect immediately without the necessity of being physically present. Of course technologies like the telephone and the telegraph, among many others, made this possible. Giddens also identifies four elements that give structure to the institutional dimension of modernity that are attached to the new conception of time: surveillance, capitalism, military power and industrialism.30 These aspects of modern rationality helped guarantee the monopolistic function of the state, as mentioned by Elias.

Postcolonial authors have challenged the applicability of this term to refer to developing societies. García Canclini contested its applicability due to the lack of synchronicity and the different socio-economic conditions observed in Latin America.31 On the other hand Bhabha questioned the success or even the existence of an actual modern modernity based on the absence of the ideals of the French Revolution in the so-called modern societies.32

In this research, modernity refers to the values connected to the formation of industrial society that were supposed to be opposite of those that belonged to the so-called pre-modern or
pre-industrial tradition. This shift occurred roughly between the discovery of the New World and
the French Revolution. However, following García-Canclini, Latour and Bhabha’s contested
notions of modernity, this time frame will require further analysis and consideration due to
special characteristics that need to be considered in the study of Latin America and Colombia.
The use of the term will also take into consideration the late industrialization that did not take
place in Colombia until the 1930s.

*Hybrid/ Hybridity*

The use of the term hybrid in biology was originally used to designate an aberration from
non-mixed or pure species. The term *mestizo*, used to designate a hybrid “racial” condition
during the period of colonization, thus likely gained popularity due to its familiarity in describing
everyday livestock activities. The first Spanish official reference to the word *mestizo* appears in
the *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Spanish Dictionary of Authorities) in 1734. It defined it as “an
animal that comes from a mother and a father of different castes.”³³ No reference to the word
*híbrido* (hybrid) could be found in Spanish dictionaries until 1837. Rather, the term used was
*mestizo*, which closely parallels the word *hybrid* in English: “the offspring of two animals or
plants of different species, or (less strictly) varieties; a half-breed, cross-breed, or mongrel.”³⁴
The first reference to the term *mestizo* in the English language was likely from a travel journal by
Richard Hakluyt in 1600 that defines mestizo as “one which hath a Spaniard to his father and an
Indian to his mother.”³⁵

To Donahue-Wallace in her study of colonial representations of race, the term *mestizo*
and others used to differentiate ethnicities are used to reinforce Spanish superiority in which
white Spaniards represent the top of the classification while Black and nomadic *Amerindians* are
at the bottom.³⁶ Due to the political implications of the terms throughout history, Donahue-
Wallace proposed that neither of the words, hybrid and mestizo, can be considered neutral. The hierarchical structures and the asymmetrical divisions of power and wealth between white people and non-white people are some of the many reasons to be aware of the political effects these terms retain today.

García-Canclini used the term hybrid in an approach to outline a framework for the better understanding of Latin American modernity. In doing so, he identified the special characteristics that modernity had in these territories and stressed how Latin America lived modernity without modernization. The first has to do with the multi-temporality with which each nation had to deal with their modernization processes. The second has to do with the involvement of different models of thinking in the construction of the modern project. Since those models were depending on multi-temporality, in many cases they implied the coexistence of antagonizing models such as feudal patterns along with institutions guided by liberal ideas. The notion of hybrid in the sense proposed by García-Canclini raises the idea of recognizing it as an opportunity to rethink Latin American identities. Therefore, hybridization is the process of recognizing the dialogue between the traditional cultural practices and the new ones, as part of the same identity, in spite of their apparently contradictory nature.

From a different perspective, Rose thinks of cultural hybridity as the dislocation of place that also represents an alternative way to define otherness. For her, the notion of cultural hybridity is a way to balance marginality against the hegemonic. This means that in places where processes of foreign intervention or colonization took place, the situation must be understood as an interactive, dialogical event where all the parts in play are affected. Subsequently, neither of the societies involved in the conflict remain the same.

This project uses the term hybridity to describe a society in which most of its cultural values represent the conflicting nature of its own origins. Applied to Colombia, it is intended to
give an account of the combination of cultures, ethnicities, and temporalities coexisting at the same time and space in history. In interpreting Latin American cultures, the term hybridity acknowledges the particularities of the context but does so without the negative connotations from the past.40

**Visuality**

The use of the term visuality, for the purpose of this research, can be combined or used interchangeably with the term *scopic regime*. The term scopic regime was originally coined by Metz, in the field of media and film studies, and was later adopted by Jay to describe the cultural complexities involved in the act of vision instead of thinking about it just as a mechanical act.41 This term makes reference to all the possible ways in which vision can be constructed. Everything that affects the process of vision is embedded in this notion. Visuality denotes vision as being a cultural construction rather than a biological fact. It is a term derived from an ocular-centric society in which images and the act of seeing are part of everyday life. In his definition, Foster counterbalances vision and visuality in which the former is a physical operation and the latter is linked with sight as a social fact.42 In the same sense, in his studies of fifteenth century Italian painting, Baxandall presented visual processes as being strongly mediated by the cultural. For the purpose of this dissertation, visuality is to be understood as the social construction of sight and all of the elements that could affect it.

**Visual Education**

Building upon the term visuality, visual education, whether formal or not, is the process by which people’s visuality is shaped. In my research, this education is more of a non-normative process rather than any kind of proactive doctrinaire or national agenda. Despite this, I will not dismiss the impact of both local and international educational and cultural agendas in shaping
Colombia’s scopic regime. Such is the case of the policies implemented by liberal governments and by the international agendas of U.S. programs, such as the Good Neighbor Policy.43

**Ideology**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ideology is “the study of ideas [and a] branch of philosophy or psychology which deals with the origin and nature of ideas.”44 In Spanish, the word officially appeared until 1822 with a close definition to that of English language as “science that deals with ideas.” The Latin etymology connects the word to the term idēa that means, “ideal image of an object,” which at the same time is derived from the Greek root ēidon or “I saw” that in Latin translates as vidēre or “to see.” Vidēre is synonymous with the terms, idea, figure, image, form, symbol, and notion, all of which make reference to the way one can shape things in one’s mind like a prototype.45

During the eighteenth century, the term was used in relation to scientific ideas but its political connotations are attributed to Napoleon during the early nineteenth century.46 Napoleon used the term to attack the proponents of democracy and the “principles of the Enlightenment as ‘ideology’.”47 By the mid nineteenth century, Marx and Engels elaborated on the notion of ideology as a set of ruling ideas of an epoch, an “ideal expression of the dominant material relationships.”48 Marx believed that during the peak of industrialist and capitalist western society, “those who own the means of production are also in control of the ideas and viewpoints produced and circulated in a society’s media venues.”49 This Marxist interpretation of the “dominant ideology thesis” is based on the assumption that the dominant class controls what the subordinate class thinks and produces.

Abercrombie among other thinkers challenged the validity of this theory by stating that during feudalism and early capitalism, ideology was more important in terms of the
“conservation of property within dominant families” than in terms of its capacity to incorporate and dominate a subjugated class.\textsuperscript{50} Abercrombie’s observations are based on the analysis of various authors that took a closer look at the early stages of capitalism in England. Based on these observations, Abercrombie concludes that the bourgeoisie in England was actually unable to overthrow the feudal society. Furthermore, the feudal elites did manage to assimilate and blend under the ideals of the bourgeoisie, resulting in the failure to “counter the symbolic universe of the aristocracy.”\textsuperscript{51} As a result, the capitalist industrial dominant class that was supposed to have replaced the aristocracy remained subjugated by the same financial and land-ownership interests, which were supposed to be characteristics of the pre-industrial elites.\textsuperscript{52}

Colombia’s transition from the colonial government to a constitutional democracy in the nineteenth century was similar in many aspects. First, landed and financial interests were still a dominating element after the independence from Spain. Second, there was not a meaningful change in values and institutions; the symbolic universe of the new elites was not new but remained close to that of the colonial aristocratic elites. In an oversimplified understanding of this transitional period, the creole elites took the place of the Spanish noblemen and became the new ruling class. In spite of the time and geographic differences between England and Colombia, in both cases the middle-class constituted a buffer zone between the lower and upper class that changed the way the ruling cultural codes and values were negotiated.

That negotiation was, in most cases, mediated by cultural productions that provided aesthetic experiences and because of the ability of the aesthetic to speak directly to the senses and convey messages, different authors have insisted on the inseparability of \textit{aesthetic} and \textit{ideology}. The intersection between these two terms is paramount for the comprehension of the negotiations that take place in a given cultural site. In order to understand how these terms interact, Williams divides the aesthetic experience into two different parts: the \textit{aesthetic effect}
and the *aesthetic intention*. The *aesthetic effect* is related to the sensorial, and the *aesthetic intention* refers to the way the experience tends to sway our beliefs.\(^{53}\)

In the same direction, Rampley remarked on the way style used to be regarded merely as appearance and how it is “now focus[ed] on how visual culture is enmeshed with strategies of social power and ideology.”\(^{54}\) Duncum stressed that independent of the nature of the cultural site, “the goal of aesthetic lures is always to achieve consent.”\(^{55}\) According to him, the emphasis must not only be on the importance of questioning how one can be affected by aesthetic experiences but also on the forces behind their production.\(^{56}\)

The use of the term ideology in this research is understood from its interaction with aesthetics. However, the connection between ideology and aesthetics will not be reduced to its understanding as a form of imposition or alienation, in which the cultural productions are all subjected to the interests of the superstructures of religion, politics, or economy. Rather, the term is used in reference to everyday life processes and aesthetics, looking for insights about the set of values of a given social group in their interaction with different forces. Also, the appearance of the middle-class represents a significant change in the understanding of the relationships between lower and upper class in terms of ideology. The adoption, appropriation, negotiation, and creation of new cultural codes by this new class, challenges the suitability of the “dominant ideology thesis.” Although the present study focuses on the ideological narratives implied in the cultural productions of the Colombian elites, it also pays constant attention to and acknowledges the importance of the processes in which those values are being contested.

Since the word *ideology* has been historically used in association with hegemonic discourses and dominant thought, I would rather use the word *discourse*. Foucault’s notion of discourse analyzes the construction of historical narratives by exploring the relationships of power that were involved in that process. From that point of view, discourses act as statements
that determine what to include or exclude in a historical narrative. From this perspective, the
cultural productions that are part of this research are understood as sites of conflict where
discourses are being created, circulated, and contested, but also where identities are being created
and negotiated.

Aesthetics

Williams locates the origin of the term in ancient Greece where it was defined as
perception by the senses.\(^{57}\) The Greek sense of the original term *aesthesia* or senses was
rediscovered and used by Baumgarten in the mid-eighteenth century. What was then known as
“the theory of beauty” was replaced in the nineteenth century by “the philosophy of the
aesthetic.”\(^{58}\) The use of the term during the eighteenth century was associated with the rationalist
deductive method by Baumgarten who also coined the term. In establishing his aesthetic theory,
the German philosopher defined the process of perception as a lower level of cognition but with
its own laws as part of the faculty of knowledge.\(^{59}\) Baumgarten’s elaborations on aesthetics
represent the emergence of a new branch of philosophy concerned with the sensuous experience
of art and nature. By the late eighteenth century, Kant synthesized this relationship between art
and nature in his philosophical production under the terms *beauty*, *sublime*, and *picturesque*.\(^{60}\)
These terms were used to describe the aesthetic experience derived from contact with art and
nature.

By the late nineteenth century the discussion on aesthetics focused on the notion of taste
and was used as part of class warfare. The emergence of a new social class and the changes in
the status quo in terms of social structure introduced new moral standards and also leaned the
discussion on aesthetics towards matters of social distinction and class struggle. Regarding the
notion of taste during this period, Bourdieu challenged the Kantian notion of disinterestedness,
and remarked on the superficiality of the codes used to identify the cultivated intellect and the alleged extraordinariness of the modernist aesthetic experience. To him, the notions of disinterestedness and taste were the result of class struggle more than anything else.61

Other sociologists like Elias also elaborated on the style of late nineteenth century Europe, and characterized it as a moment in which many changes in cultural productions occurred in terms of style.62 Elias focused on identifying the correlation between the changes occurring in society after the emergence of a new class, and the changes in style during this transition. To him, the changes observed during this period were exceptional, especially when compared with the changes that took place in previous years in terms of style and the visual representation of class. While the previous changes happened in transitional historical periods but within the same social stratum, the stylistic change that took place by the turn of the nineteenth century took place amongst classes that were different and divergent. Elias proposed the use of the term kitsch to describe the “greater formal uncertainty inherent in all artistic production within industrial society.”63 Also, he pointed out the persistence of aristocratic values in bourgeois society, particularly in everything regarding taste.

Postmodern aesthetic theory acquired its shape in the second half of the twentieth century, being nurtured by the ideas of thinkers from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century such as Nietzsche, Marx, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Freud. Early twentieth century Marxist approaches to aesthetics like those of Adorno and Kracauer understood cultural productions as one of the outcomes of the overarching superstructure of capitalism. By contrast, late twentieth century thinkers like Foucault, Foster, Baxandall, and Mitchell remarked on the centrality of vision in western societies and presented it as the result of a social construction rather than reducing its understanding to its connection with a superstructure. These authors challenged the modernist approach comprised in the allegedly stable set of rules established by
modernity by taking into consideration elements of psychoanalytic theory and the role of emotion and desire\(^6^4\) in postmodern aesthetics.\(^6^5\)

Regarding the material and the period that form the core of this research, modernist theories about aesthetics frame my understanding of the forces involved in the production and reception of the images that circulated among the elites in Colombia during the 1930s and 1940s. Subsequently, the use of the term aesthetic in this research will have a manifold perspective that will vary in terms of complexity depending on the context and the nature of the case studies. Overall, my approach is informed by postmodern theory, but I will also explore modernist notions of aesthetics and the way they influenced Colombian cultural productions in the 1930s and 1940s. The term has both modernist and traditional meaning in my research. Likewise, aesthetic is used in connection with the notion of taste and how this notion was used to establish boundaries between classes. The notion of taste that was paramount in the change on the discourse of aesthetics in Europe only appeared in Colombia in the 1940s.

The term aesthetic is also used in reference to the quality and intensity of the emotions that visual imagery can arouse in the spectator, but also makes reference to the way in which these emotions can be intentionally controlled and calculated. The quotidian use of aesthetic is connected to the ordinary; everyday aesthetic experiences can teach people, in an unconscious manner, more about themselves and the world than high art-related experiences.\(^6^6\)

The use of the notions of kitsch and taste are related to the transitional character of Colombian society during this period. Kitsch is used in reference to the “formal uncertainty” of cultural productions of the emergent industrial/bourgeois elites, while taste will make reference to the way in which the display of cultural productions and its permanent assessment can be seen as part of an underlying class warfare.
**Proposed Methodology**

The methodological approach of this research responds to the nature of the sources that are predominantly, although not exclusively, images. The use of visual imagery as a site of study is to be alternated with sources that are different in nature, such as journals, chronicles, newspapers, and several other accounts produced during this period. The methodological structure of this research is guided by the concept of discourse analysis in which the alternation of sources contributes to the understanding of the predominant discourses that could be implicit in the production and reception of images during the period of study.

The use of discourse analysis as the main methodological approach is also the result of a critical stance towards the way visual imagery has been either overlooked, taken for granted, ignored, manipulated, or misunderstood in the construction of historical narratives. In this particular sense, it implies a critical stance towards the construction of historical narratives in my own academic production.

Although discourse analysis constitutes the central part of my analysis, I supplement it with theories like formal analysis, neo-Marxism, semiotics, and post-colonialism. The main sources for this research, as already stated, are urban images that were produced and put into circulation, mainly through printed media, in Colombia during the 1930s and 1940s. The images are mainly views of the city, but I also take into consideration images depicting everyday scenes that could have contributed to the construction of visuality, like advertisements, photography and some other allegoric images of modernity. The urban area of Bogotá during the 1930s and 1940s delimits the geographic boundaries of this research. I specifically focus in downtown Bogotá and the recently created suburban developments. Other cities in Colombia as well as international references are sometimes used to contrast, compare and establish parallelism when needed.
Limitations

My research is limited by the availability and the nature of the primary sources, namely, pictures and writing in cultural magazines and archival documentation. Time constraints limited the amount of source material I was able to collect in 2012 in my travels to the archives and libraries in Bogota. In Bogota, other problems arose. The archivist was absent during my stay in Bogota, preventing me from solving some problems concerning the meeting minutes from the Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato de Bogotá or Society of Improvements and Adornment archive (henceforth referred as SMOB). In addition, the meeting minutes describing preparations for the 400th anniversary of the city were missing. I tried to compensate for this gap by reviewing the Minutes of the Bogotá City Council, but the new information was not enough to fill the gaps left by the lost volumes at the SMOB.

Regarding the nature of the sources, there are limitations in terms of production, perspective, reception, and in the use of some concepts. For the most part the images studied come from archives, repositories of images, and cultural publications. Unfortunately, these publications and institutions are hardly representative of the culture at large. Most of the images were commissioned, produced, and consumed by the elites, not by the lower and middle-classes. Because the upper class controlled the institutions and the print media, the sources display an upper class perspective. None of the sources consulted reflect or pretend to portray the lower and middle-classes’ perspective. For the comprehension of the popular, this project largely relied on the works of Renán Silva on education and culture during the liberal republic. Although Silva’s sources are also institutional, they at least provide a glimpse into the reception of these campaigns and the impact they could have had among the lower and middle-classes.
The reception of the publications and images is another limitation. Most cultural productions in this era were class monologues created by the elites and received by the elites, though they did eventually influence a broader social circle. The minute meetings provide insights about the receptions of images, publications, and modern city life, but again, they are mostly from an elite perspective.69

Conceptually, the notion of aesthetic experience and the scope of this study also represent a limitation. Although the aesthetic experience involves all senses, this research mostly acknowledges the visual rather than the entire aesthetic multisensory experience. Theoreticians that have worked around the idea of space as a phenomenological entity, such as Baudrillard, De Certeau, or Fu Tuan, have posited the importance of understanding the aesthetic experience as a whole. However, it is important to emphasize the visual nature of this dissertation and the fact that I will intentionally forgo the whole bodily experience and most of the sensorial spectrum. This does not mean that I will force the exclusion of these considerations or that I will not consider them. Rather, I will point them out and acknowledge their relevance in a given case, but they will necessarily be subordinated to the visual as the leading sense.

Lastly, and in spite of the importance of the creation/emergence of the middle-class during this period, this research does not go into this matter in depth. Regarding the middle-class, I largely relied on the studies of Abel Ricardo López and the compilation of studies on the Latin American middle-class made by Theo R. Crevenna in the 1950s.
Chapter 2: Vision, Ideology, Space, and Post Colonialism

A fundamental premise for this research is the understanding of visuality as a cultural construction. I will identify the most important variables that played a part in the construction of Colombian and Latin American visualities in the 1930s and 1940s. Two of these variables are the Catholic Church, an institution that created a scopic regime based on their doctrines, and foreign technologies that were appropriated during the economic policies of the 1930s and 1940s.

In exploring the cultural construction of images in Latin America, this study sheds light on the conflicts and issues that have persisted throughout history relating to aesthetics. The history of images in this context tells us how they were used to communicate meanings and indoctrinate people. Images may have been a primary way of communicating with and indoctrinating the illiterate, as illiteracy levels ranged between 40 and 50 percent in the 1930s and 1940s. Understanding images from the perspective of Colombia’s sweeping illiteracy could lead in the direction of the dominant ideology thesis. However, I problematize this viewpoint by showing how aesthetics and ideology were not necessarily used to dominate and differentiate social classes, but instead to encourage class cohesion and a sense of class identity.

In this section, I develop two topics around the role of images in western modern society. First, I take a look at the different ways scholars have thought about images and vision, and, more specifically, I explore their most representative ideas about the centrality and importance of vision in the modern era. Second, I examine the relationship between visuality and ideology to describe how scholars have connected aesthetic cultural productions in Western societies with the dominant ideologies of the societies that produced them. Additionally, I show how, after the second half of the twentieth century, art historians and cultural theorists began to think of
cultural productions from manifold perspectives in which ideology no longer was the dominant perspective. This section serves a double purpose: first, to set the stage for later reflections on visual aesthetic experiences, and second, to clarify the different theoretical stances from which I propose to observe and rethink the historical images of the city.

**Turning Around Vision**

When did vision become so central to scholarly reflection? Why are images so powerful, and why do people in academia care so much about them? In this segment, I investigate the moment in which the visual realm became paramount in academic discussions. Although I do not privilege the sense of sight above others, an aspect of modernism that has been continually disputed, I do assume that vision gives us primary access to an aesthetic experience in certain situations.

Here, I present different twentieth-century authors whose study of vision and imagery was central to their scholarly activity. It is generally held that these thinkers helped to establish vision as essential in the development of modern Western thought. It is also widely agreed that the term *pictorial turn*, coined by Mitchell, refers to the point in the history of Western thought where intellectual and scholarly activity started to revolve around the visual. With this term, Mitchell tries to describe the change that took place in the history of philosophy around the 1960s that in the U.S. found its voice mainly through Peirce’s semiotics, and Goodman’s elaborations on the “languages of art.” Both approaches were based on the study of nonlinguistic systems, which they used to challenge and undermine the prevailing “assumption that language is paradigmatic for meaning.”

Mitchell traces the genealogy of the *pictorial turn* to the beginning of the twentieth century and the Frankfurt School. He remarks on the relevance of the Frankfurt School’s
investigations on modernity, mass culture, and visual media. He also notes the importance of Foucault’s poststructuralist approach, particularly his way of identifying the dual relationship of the visible/invisible in the construction of historical narratives. Foucault contributed to the understanding of history as the result of the dialogical relation between power and knowledge, as observed in the “scopic regimes of modernity.”

Another attempt to de-center the processes of communication from the phonocentric model of language was made by Derrida through his *grammatology*. Through this notion, Derrida shifted the attention towards the very same “material traces of writing.” Finally, Mitchell identifies the beginnings of the pictorial turn through the struggle of two theoreticians of linguistic philosophy, Wittgenstein and Rorty. Both thinkers used images as part of their theoretical constructions but also maintained conflicted relations with them, almost to the point of iconoclasticism. The conceptual proximity between these two philosophers lied in the apprehension they felt toward images, especially because of their potential to subjugate speech. Rorty’s and Wittgenstein’s concern about the prevalence of the visual, and their need to defend speech against the visual was, to Mitchell, “a sure sign that a *pictorial turn* was taking place.”

Also in the sixties, but in the field of psychology, Arnheim claimed the importance of recovering the interdependence of reason and perception. He sought the origin of the separation and reflected on the fact that in academia, thinking and perception have been taught separately, and that the former was often thought to be hierarchically over the latter. According to Arnheim, the origin of this division takes us back to Descartes and his definition of sensory experience as something that must be subjected to reason and must therefore be regarded as an inferior process. Leibniz, a century later, recognized perception as part of the cognitive process but of a lower order. The idea of the separation between reason and perception has deep roots in the history of philosophy, going back to Plato. In his *Republic*, Plato argues that imagery is
inferior to other reason-based disciplines like mathematics and the sciences. He assumes that pictures are just an imitation of reality and, as such, cannot be considered a good source of knowledge.\textsuperscript{81}

Against these traditions, Arnheim posits that rationality and intuitive perception do not operate separately from each other. He illustrates this by presenting several examples that show how “perception transcends constantly and routinely the mere mechanical recording of sensory raw material.”\textsuperscript{82} For Arnheim, seeing is a complex process and can be divided into two modes: the intuitive and the intellectual. The intuitive mode refers to the physical attributes the eyes can perceive, and the intellectual mode refers to the brain’s gathering and organizing of this information in a “highly organized structure.”\textsuperscript{83} The result is “\textit{true cognitio confusa},” a term he uses to describe how each part of the sensory system is dependent on the others, and the cognitive process happens when all those elements interconnect and generate that experience. Arnheim asserts that “the structure of the parts control the whole and vice versa.”\textsuperscript{84} The term \textit{cognitio confusa} makes direct reference to Leibniz’s distinction between reasoning and sensory experience, which has to do with the knowledge acquired by intuition. Leibniz, according to Arnheim, described the intuitive knowledge or the sensory experience as \textit{confused} after the “original Latin sense of the term” in reference to a process in which “all elements are fused and mingled together in an indivisible whole.”\textsuperscript{85}

In the same direction, art historian Baxandall proposed what he called the \textit{period eye}, also acknowledging the importance of cognitive processes in which sensory perception/intuition and reasoning are interconnected. In his studies of fifteenth century painting in Italy, he concluded that it was important for both artist and viewer to acquire and use visual skills. He showed how the paintings of Piero della Francesca and Paolo Uccello were based on the mathematical skills of merchants and others who visually gauged things in real life.\textsuperscript{86} The continual visual
assessment of objects in everyday life contributed to a tacit agreement on the standard notion of beauty during this period, both in works of art and in ordinary things. Baxandall’s theoretical constructions about fifteenth century visual codes are close to Mitchell’s definition of visual culture, to Foster’s definition of visuality, and to Metz’s notion of scopic regime. Besides acknowledging the fact that vision is a standard mechanism for every human being, Baxandall presents visual processes during this period as being strongly mediated by the cultural background of each individual, a background that is itself mediated by the social codes regarding the visual that developed in each period. For Baxandall, the assessment of beauty, composition, and harmony was connected to and consistent with the mathematical skills used in daily activities during the fifteenth century.

In studying landscape, Cosgrove also used Baxandall’s findings on fifteenth century painting in Italy. Cosgrove tracked down the ideological implications of the development and use of perspective in the Renaissance on the evolution of the idea of landscape, and he established a relationship between visual representation and power over the territory. More specifically he asserted that the Tuscan Renaissance revolutionized the way western societies apprehend spatial relations. Baxandall’s findings emphasized how Renaissance artists and tradesmen developed visual skills and the ability to visually gauge things to survey large portions of land.

The transition to the modern gaze

According to Foucault, the enlightenment rationality was mostly based on activities related to classification and control: classifying nature, discovering new species of animals and people, dissecting things and animals, and controlling and transforming natural materials into goods. Consequently, the centrality of vision in Western culture has been proclaimed in many different ways, while rationality and vision, hand-in-hand, established the tenets of modern
rationality. According to Jay, modernity and modern society became ocular centric with the beginning of the scientific revolution by the fifteenth century in Europe. He remarked on the role of technology and its prominence in the establishment of the new modern scopic regime, which materialized in the form of new inventions like the printing press, the telescope and the microscope. The centrality of vision in western societies is ratified by Jay’s categorization in three different foci: 1) Rorty’s mirror of nature, 2) Foucault’s elaborations on the notion of surveillance, and 3) Debord’s theoretical constructions around the society of the spectacle. All these notions are directly connected to vision, and they are part of everyday life in contemporary societies. However, Jay does not feel that these perspectives lead to a conclusive approach. Rather, he challenges their applicability and universality by proposing a better understanding of them as a part of a “contested terrain” that is permanently being constructed.

Based on the point of view of philosophers like Kant and Descartes, Jenks pointed out how the cognitive process was greatly influenced by the senses, but chiefly by sight. While noting that the invention of the printing press strongly contributed to the predominance of the visual in Western culture, he added that the visual was also well suited for political and ideological purposes. The ideological implications of the invention of the printing press were strongly felt during the Enlightenment, a word that actually embedded clarity and light in the notion of vision; seeing was equivalent to knowing.

Ideology, Vision, and Images

The connection between the scopic regime and ideology has often been discussed among twentieth-century scholars. There are multiple connections between them, especially in industrial societies where vision and the production of images became pervasive elements of western cultures. In order to clarify the connection between ideology and scopic regimes, I present here
some of the key authors that, by the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, had debated the link between images, vision, and ideology. The rationale about the connection between the aesthetic experience and ideology is commonly associated with Marxist theoreticians in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. In spite of the apparent chronological order, I present the authors in two different groups according to the way they connect image and ideology: those whose theories affiliate images and vision with ideology and those who understand ideology as only one variable in the analysis of visual aesthetic experiences.

In talking about the city and its emergent cultural productions, Baudelaire identified the correlation between ideologies and the aesthetic almost a century before Kracauer. Ideologically, he stood for what he considered appropriate artistic expressions, but, at the same time, his perspective shaded the status quo of the prevailing theories of art in nineteenth-century Europe. There is little doubt that Baudelaire’s aristocratic condition and affiliation with traditional art and cultural productions influenced his views of photography and other forms of mass cultural production.

By the 1920s, Kracauer--based on the Marxist assumption that aesthetics is always derived from material interests--presented his theory on the pervasiveness of ideology in all forms of cultural productions. He supported his argument with case studies from architecture, film and dance. One of his examples is “The Tiller Girls,” a dance company famous in Europe at the beginning of twentieth century that, according to Kracauer, mirrored and glorified the tenets of industrial capitalism. Describing their mechanized movements, their perfect coordination, the serial production of the spectacle and the serialization of their choreographic movements, he established a connection between the Tiller Girls’ choreographic spectacle and the industrial,
war-related serial production. What he calls the mass ornament, the Tiller Girls in this case, is “the aesthetic reflex of the rationality to which the prevailing economic system aspires.”

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Benjamin elaborated on Baudelaire’s reflections about the experience of living in modern cities by pointing out the political values of the new modernistic cultural expressions. He particularly criticized the passive role of the spectator in both photography and cinema, especially because of their potential to alienate the viewer. Specifically, he stood against fascism and communism and questioned the way those ideologies used art as part of their political strategy. In a criticism of the Third Reich’s use of propagandistic art, he denounced how it gave the masses the illusion of agency while preserving the property structure that the masses were struggling to abolish.

Benjamin’s criticism of Marinetti’s Futurist Manifesto was also a warning about the perils of falling under the spell of industrialist-modern aesthetic experiences, which eventually would lead people to believe in their own destruction as “an aesthetic pleasure of the first order.” His writings were directly influenced by his experience of war and by the fact that he was a first-hand witness of the consequences of the propagandistic Nazi apparatus. Agreeing with Kracauer’s view of the mass ornament, he asserted that mass movements, including war, “constitute a form of human behavior which particularly favors mechanical equipment.”

Adorno was also influenced by the events preceding the Second World War and the post war period. Together with Benjamin and other members of the Frankfurt School, he was a tough critic of mass-produced cultural expressions like photography and those of the film industry. He was also convinced that the existence of technology-reproduced mass art was part of the scaffolding system that supported the modern world and the culture industry, as he called it. In spite of his proximity to Benjamin, he did not hold an optimistic view of the “emancipatory potential of mass art.” Rather, for Adorno, cultural productions were mostly under the scope of
modern institutions and their existence was justified because of their effectiveness in preserving the *status quo* and serving “the totalitarian impulses of modern capitalist society.” Art was transformed into commodities, and people into passive, alienated consumers under the influence of a sort of delusional art, the result of a “combination of stereotypes, advertising, and propaganda.”

As part of his theories on the function of art in modern society and its political-ideological implications, Adorno proposed a two-fold reading of artworks. On the one hand, *content* made reference to the artwork’s inherent meaning and its possible interpretations (a hermeneutical approach), while *function* involved investigation of the artwork’s connection with social variables (an empirical approach). He did not see these processes as separate but as part of a complex operation in which content and function must be “understood in terms of each other.” His overall theory is based on the Marxist assumption that through art it is possible to change the world, but it is also informed by Hegelian concerns about the many threats that art would face in a capitalist society. In sum, for Adorno the ideological implications of art were latent in modernity, especially since the overarching production system of industrial society permeated each cultural production. Adorno’s assumptions are characteristic of European thought after World War II, a body of thought that was characterized by self-consciousness and reflection on the conflicting role of ideology and the instrumental use of culture by capitalism.

Two decades later, Foucault reflected on the role of vision and its relationship with architecture, and the institutions of control developed following modern logic. He elaborated on the importance of vision as a mechanism of control in his writings about prisons, which is something he fully develops in his study on surveillance in the penitentiary system. In doing so, he borrows Jeremy Bentham’s term “panoptic” as the physical representation of the role of the gaze as an all-seeing power that keeps control by disciplining and policing individuals in modern
One of his conclusions is that the Western obsession for shaping, training, and normalizing individuals has to do not only with prisons but with a prison-like style of life at all levels.

Foucault’s method of spatial and cultural analysis can be understood better through his study of Velázquez’s Las Meninas. He focused on the relationship between vision and power and introduced the notion of archaeology, which he used to describe his approach to the writing of history as a way to understand the present. Foucault’s use of the term archaeology is linked with the Greek root episteme that makes reference to the “deep rooted, unconscious structures for organizing knowledge.” He remarked on the way Velázquez subverted a set of pictorial conventions by returning the painter’s and the painting’s gaze to the spectator. In this way, he focused on how space and gaze couple in configuring relations of power.

When Foucault described the interconnecting gazes and roles in Las Meninas, including the one from the spectator, he defined a visual structure of power in which everything in the painting seemed to be hierarchically related to the two main characters’ gazes—King Philip IV and his wife Mariana of Austria. The painting allowed him, through all the possible connections between the characters and the containing space, to explain the term “archaeology” and how it serves to reveal the underlying structures of power. Las Meninas represents his idea about the existing order that underlies every single cultural manifestation, in that they belong “to a certain unspoken order,” an order that certainly exists but is not evident to the bare eye and that is based on the pervasive influence of the ruling ideology.

Foucault’s often visual accounts of events and his use of paintings throughout much of his work does not arise from a concern with what things are made to look like in representation, but with how things came to be considered appropriate for codification as visual ‘data’; how knowledge could be founded upon ‘sight’ […].
In the seventies, Berger followed a similar direction to Foucault’s by emphasizing the connection between vision and power in the history of art. He, along with the many authors cited on this point in my review, is convinced that each art production of any given period in history has served the interests of the ruling elites. Berger asserted that “oil painting did to appearance what capital did to social relations,” which was to reduce everything to the category of objects. The latter is close to the Marxists’ point of view in which aesthetics is always derived from material interests. By establishing parallels between present day and historical imagery, he removed the traditional hierarchical classification of images between high and popular art. To Berger, the use of images has manifold purposes. On the one hand, he explored the possibility that historical images are part of our existential quest to give meaning to our lives, and we become active agents of our own history through them. On the other hand, he decidedly advocated for the understanding of art history and all images coming from the past as a political issue. Berger’s statements in this regard are particularly appealing in my case, especially since most of my work has explored the notion of cultural heritage. The problem for me lies not in the notion of cultural heritage itself but in its application in the Colombian context. In this context, notions of cultural heritage mystify the past, support the persistence of hegemonic discourses and silence other possible historical narratives. This mystification leads to a static comprehension of the past and, subsequently, of the present.

The Study of Images in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

Hereto, the connection between ideology and vision appears as a point of convergence for scholars from different backgrounds. Nonetheless, there have been art historians who, in spite of their Marxist affiliation in some cases, have refused to constrain the understanding of images simply as ideological instruments of power. For instance, Clark’s analysis on Courbet and
Manet’s paintings represented an alternative standpoint to the prevailing formalist and iconographic approach in the study of art history. Clark proposed a social history of art based on the analysis of the two Impressionists in which he understood and presented them and their productions as the result of the political and social forces that were acting in nineteenth-century France. Although political and ideological forces were taken into consideration, they were not considered to be conclusive for the comprehension of the artworks. This does not mean that Clark’s studies overlook or neglect the notion of ideology but consider it as one more variable of study. To Clark, artworks “may have ideology,” yet, due to their capacity to create new forms, they may also have the power to signify “a subversion of ideology.”

This is a slightly different variant to the ones offered by deterministic approaches that consider ideology a hierarchical imposition. Otherwise, Clark concedes agency to the act of producing images and to the images themselves, as processes that are not necessarily subjected to an overarching super structure. His studies in the 1970s on Courbet and Manet’s paintings presented a renewed and nuanced approach to the understanding of visual imagery beyond the constraints of ideology.

The way of scholarly looking and thinking about images throughout the twentieth century has been characterized by small changes from one view to the other. A newer theory does not completely replace the old ones but complements and builds upon them. Despite having started this chapter talking about two different groups of authors with different perspectives on the study of images, my intention was not to point out a moment or author that represented a radical change in the paradigm of art history. However, it would be fair to acknowledge Gombrich’s significant contributions to the study of images. His inclusion of popular imagery in his writings and presentations fostered a more contemporary and wider approach and broadened the scope of art history. While acknowledging the traditional approach from the perspectives of
connoisseurship, iconography, and style, he also opened the path for acknowledging the existence of non-high art images. Moreover, it was one of his students, the above-mentioned Baxandall, who along with Alpers helped to shape the contemporary notion of *visual culture*.

Baxandall’s term the *period eye* contributed to the understanding of images from manifold perspectives through the recognition of the influence of the cultural milieu in the production and reception of images. In spite of their role in coining the new terms, Baxandall and Alpers’s theories did not represent a rupture with traditional scholarly production around the study of images but were consistent with the spirit of their time while correspondingly acknowledging the importance of that tradition. Thus, these newer theories build upon previous theories rather than supplanting them. For example, the art historian Clark, a neo-Marxist who persisted in the idea that the economic structure is central to any analysis of cultural production, also acknowledges the validity of methodologies inherited from more traditional approaches. For instance, Alpers still used traditional approaches as a starting point in her analysis of Dutch painting, despite the fact that she questioned Panofsky’s iconographic approach. Such is the case as well for more contemporary thinkers like Elkins and his constant quarrel with linguistic semiotics. In trying to give images independent attributes he uses language-based semiotics as a starting point but argues that a visual communicative structure exists that is not necessarily dependent on language.

*Visual Culture in Latin America*

The challenge from now on will be to prove the suitability in the application of these theories for the understanding of Latin American visual culture. *Visual culture* includes a wide array of perspectives ranging from formalist, iconographic, and semiotic approaches through gender, queer and postcolonial theory. For the purposes of this research, the term as it
specifically applies to the Colombian context, will be understood as the set of cultural
productions in which social interaction and cultural negotiations took place. Visual culture has
also been a space for the construction of class and race identities in Colombia. Visual culture is
understood as the pivoting center of different phenomena, including ideology, in their connection
to aesthetics. This perspective, however, does not imply the denial of historical facts that were
decisive for the establishment and persistence of certain particularities of the Latin American
ethos. Thus, I do not ignore the importance of the power structures and hierarchies inherited
from Latin American’s colonial past. In this sense, it is important to consider the way visual
imagery was rhetorically used to “gain the consent of the others or to mask the actual (and
manifold) operations of power.”

As noted by Duncum, aesthetics and ideology remain in tension because of the
contradictory nature of their relationship: something that can provide a bewilderling aesthetic
experience can also carry controversial and conflictive meanings. Since historical images of
Bogotá city have been both overlooked and hyper aestheticized, it is convenient to review them
from the point of view of the different underlying discourses behind their creation.

**Sight and Space**

This section explores the relationship between sight and the social construction of space
through the lens of some of the most representative authors of different perspectives and
intellectual backgrounds. Having explained the centrality of vision for western society in the
former section, I go further into detail about the connections between the cityscapes and the
historical role they have had in the construction of the notions of space, visuality, and cultural
identity, as well as on their meaning applied to the context of Latin America.
On the Notion of City

I will begin by defining the notions of city and cityscape and the origin of the term city. Many authors have tried to determine this, especially as cities became central to the development of modern, western societies. When did this happen and when did cities became so central to the West? The answers to these questions vary from one author to another and also vary depending on the context. According to Williams, the term city was first used in the English language around the thirteenth century to designate a “large or very large town.” Williams remarked on its use becoming more generalized during the nineteenth century as a result of rapid urban development during the Industrial Revolution. This change marked a demographical shift in which people increasingly populated industrial areas, leading to changes both in the ways of inhabiting space and in the attendant social conventions. Williams stressed that the term city is commonly used to make reference to administrative hubs rather than to suburban spaces. These sorts of financial and administrative city-cores are what he called inner cities: spaces “often left to offices, shops and the poor.” Williams’s assumptions are based on the state of things in the seventies, when gentrification had not yet become a widespread phenomenon.

In this context, he established a parallel between the city and the country by contrasting some of the popularly attributable values for each of these spaces. For instance, cities are supposed to be centers of learning and places of communication and enlightenment, while the country offers the promise of living a peaceful, simple and innocent life. City dwellers are thought of as overly ambitious, noisy, and materialistic, whereas country dwellers are often seen
as backward, ignorant, and simple-minded. Thus, the country represents nature and a set of positive values while the city represents the main core of modernity where individuals find themselves lost and soulless. To Williams, this contrast makes city dwellers conscious about the crisis experienced in transitioning from one space to the other.

An interesting aspect of Williams’s study on the city and the country is his use of literature sources. His conclusions about literature and the images derived from it are especially pertinent to my own study of images. For Williams, literature helps us to fully understand the historical complexities of urban environments. He reflects on how the mental images people derived from literature could have skewed perceptions, creating a nonexistent, binary, city/country antagonism. This caveat is of particular importance to consider in my research since the historical sources I am working with are comprised of visual imagery and documents that describe the transitional moment between rural and urban Colombia. The literary narratives accompanying the images in my study were produced by the same educated elites who were in charge of the magazines where these images were published. Therefore, this element must provide insightful perspectives that will certainly help in understanding the context in which these images were conceived and put into circulation.

From another view and within a different geographical framework, Weber defined the city as the natural result of commercial route crossings that became perfect places for market settlements. His views on the city parallel Williams’s in regard to the city being a place that holds large numbers of people, but he also characterized cities by the economic roles of their inhabitants. That is, cities contain consumers, producers, and merchants. From a sociological perspective, Weber defined cities as “settlements of closely spaced dwellings which form a colony so extensive that the reciprocal personal acquaintance of the inhabitants, elsewhere characteristic of neighborhoods, is lacking.” Both Williams and Weber shared the idea of
cities as places of anonymity, crisis and conflict, but they also maintained that cities were the main venues of a modernity fostered by economic forces that profoundly altered the social mesh.

The association between modernity and cities is something that has been extensively and variously discussed. Baudelaire’s reflections on modern living in nineteenth-century Paris is probably the most common starting point. To him, the city represented the cornerstone of modern society. Baudelaire’s reflections were focused on the experience of living in a modern city, condemning some of its “vices” and praising some of its virtues. These thoughts are constantly present in his poetry\textsuperscript{145} as well as in his reflections on photography\textsuperscript{146} and painting.\textsuperscript{147} His considerations are mostly based on the embodiment of the aesthetic experiences derived from living in a modern city. These aesthetic experiences included the annoyances, the boredom, the crowds, and the hassle of city life, common motifs in his theory and writings.

In the early twentieth century, Benjamin’s reflections on cities were also based on the phenomenological experience of living in them more than their physicality. His theorization on modernity is grounded in the analysis of the aesthetic experience of individuals strolling in the city, which included the joy of being immersed in the crowd, to observe, and to be seen.\textsuperscript{148} He extensively used the term coined by Baudelaire—\textit{flâneur}—to refer to a new kind of city-dwelling individual, and to also represent the emergence of a new state of mind. To Benjamin, most of the aesthetic experiences provided by the city lacked what he called “aura.” The term was used to make reference to the spiritual, phenomenological part of the aesthetic experience that is considered conflicted or lost in modernistic aesthetic. The notion of aura characterizes the loss of that spirituality in the production of images brought on by the invention of photography, and expresses the diminishing quality of the aesthetic experience derived from the mechanical reproduction of images.\textsuperscript{149}
Simmel also made a contribution to the understanding of the city, likewise as a sensory experience. That is, the experience of the individual in modern cities means being lost in the midst of a materialistic society in which one’s subjectivity seems to roam adrift. While big cities offer plenty of sensory stimuli to individuals, they lack opportunities for emotional and personal involvement, which is available in small communities. According to Simmel, individuals living in modern cities developed aversion and evasion mechanisms to cope with the daunting amount of sensory stimuli. This, of course, had a deep effect on people’s psyches and their reactions to stimuli, and it also contributed to perceiving the cityscape not only as a physical space but also as a metaphysical one.

Sennet, in a more contemporary approach, thought of cities as the places where individuals’ psyches and identities are challenged and developed in different ways. He identified a change in individuals’ roles that took place in the transition from antiquity to modernity. This change had to do mainly with the relationship between the private and the public, with the latter a noticeable outcome of industrial society. According to Sennet, individuals during the so-called ancient regime performed as actors with assigned roles and clear behavioral guidelines. The apparel, the spaces, the language, and the manners were part of the setting in which individuals played different roles. Another group he called the spectators did not participate in social life as fully, but slowly started to gain agency through their gaze which would give origin to the modern notion of spectacle. Until the emergence of modernity, the nonexistent duality between the private and the public led to conflicts between an individual’s intimate sphere and public behavior. Sennet illustrated this by making reference to the role played by politicians in modern societies: politicians were always expected to maintain congruency between the way they displayed themselves as politicians and the way they behaved in private.
De Certeau also dealt with the metaphysical qualities of urban spaces. He categorized cities according to a displacement between what a city is “supposed to be,” and what he calls “urban practices”—that is, the ways individuals appropriate generic urban spaces and make sense out of them. De Certeau went on to categorize three aspects of cities derived from what he called the “utopian and urbanistic discourse” of modern urbanism: (1) the rational organization of space; (2) the rigorous control of time and flow (in contrast to pre-modern notions of time which were uncertain or uncountable, and (3) the creation of universal, anonymous subjects.

Similarly, Mumford thought of cities as essential to human culture and personality development. He advocated for understanding cities as spaces where physicality and its economic functions were, ideally, subjected to “the spiritual values of human communities.” Since my dissertation reflects a great deal on the changes in the physical structure of the city, I find Mumford’s thoughts on the ideas that influenced twentieth-century urban planners compelling. One of his central ideas, following Sennet, is that we think about the city as a sort of theatrical scenario where people play roles and human drama takes place. His definition of a city comes from sixteenth-century English historian John Stow, who defined the city as a place where men congregate for the sake of morality, religion and alliances. Building on Stow’s definition, Mumford added that a city is a fixed site that provides permanent shelter. It is also a place where cultural processes occur, processes that influence the city’s development. Subsequently, despite being organized around the division of labor, cities could not be defined by economic forces alone, Mumford argued: “The city […] is a geographical plexus, an economic organization, an intentional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity.”

Mumford also reflected on the identity of cities as large and densely populated spaces, and particularly on Le Corbusier’s assumptions about the ideal number of people required for a
city to be sustainable. Le Corbusier thought of cities as machines for living and that they should not exceed three million people in total. By contrast, Mumford argued that size is only important if expressed “as a function of the social relationships to be served.” He was particularly reluctant to concede the widely accepted assumption that any growth of the city should be regarded as a sign of progress. Rather, he agreed with Le Corbusier in terms of limiting demographic density, and also proposed the establishment of multi-nucleated cities in contrast to the old single-centered ones.

In urban history, various cases show the relationship between the physical world and the society that produced it. For instance, the renovation of Paris under Haussmann’s baroque ideals during the second French Empire is a well-known case among urban planners and historians. For Harvey, Haussmann imposed an ideological model on his organization of spatial relations. In his renovations, he facilitated the flow of goods and people according to bourgeoning capitalist principles, but he also directed the flow of troops to control the mob when needed, according to Marxist critiques of capitalism. Therefore, both Paris’s urban plan and its built environment between 1848 and 1853 embodied the struggle between capitalist and Marxist ideologies that were ascendant at this moment in French history.

**Cities in Latin America**

In Latin America, cities have been primarily explained from the perspective of the hegemonic power inheritance, especially in the cases where pre-Columbian cultures did not leave material evidence of their existence. Besides Aztec, Mayan and Inca architecture, where physical evidences of the city remained, in countries like Colombia, invaders simply eradicated the majority of the material traces of pre-Columbian cultures. Furthermore, unlike Mayans, Aztecs and Incas, the Muiscas did not develop a perdurable architecture because of their
seminomadic nature. This situation has made it difficult to include the pre-Columbian past as part of the historical narrative of Colombian cities.

Instead, studies of cities in Latin America explore their colonial condition, their connection to and dependence on Europe, predominantly Spain and Portugal. For instance, Romero thought about Latin American urbanization as a process of European expansion towards the periphery. This idea that Europe was the center and its colonies the periphery reduced the understanding of the relationship between Europe and their colonies.

Romero asserted that the expansion toward the Americas constituted the second part of a process that had started in the eleventh century with the expansion through the Mediterranean. In the process of the conquest of America, a militia was delegated in the initial stages, while religious orders later took over. In some cases, cities were founded in the same place where ancient civilizations were settled, while others were established in new areas. For instance, Mexico City was founded on the same site of the most important Aztec settlement, Tenochtitlan.

To Romero, the acts of conquest and settlement in the new world were intended to establish an urban ideology. According to this theory, the new world was created after the suppression and denial of the preexistence of the ancient one and, subsequently, new settlements were meant to represent a totally different order. Romero characterized three different stages in the history of Latin American urban development as noblemen’s cities, bourgeois cities, and mass cities. Noblemen’s cities (ciudades hidalgas) described early colonial-period settlements immediately after the conquest. During this phase, Spanish colonizers struggled to legitimize settlements through the use of military and political power, while giving support to the Spanish and Portuguese mercantilist economy. These cities were ruled by the local power of the noblemen and clergy that represented both the Spanish Crown and the Church. Due to the effects of distance, noblemen and clergy increasingly gained power in the colonies, creating an elite
class semi-independent from Europe. These Latin American elites wanted to maintain their noblemen’s privileges, but also to benefit from the bourgeois opportunities to be found in the new world. The consolidation of the noblemen’s cities fostered the formation of a baroque society, organized around the local courts and characterized by stasis in all matters.167

The setting of the colonies made it possible to consolidate a local elite but, also, after a few generations of “Spaniards” born in America, to create a local creole identity. This sentiment was reinforced by the arrival of enlightenment ideas and the importation of European liberal/bourgeois thinking. These changes gave rise to a new conflict: the old society, that based its sustenance on the availability of cheap labor, was suddenly in contest with the new one based on trade, specialized labor, and manufacturing. This new form of society was marked by the construction of new infrastructure such as ports, marketplaces, and storage houses that coexisted with the old structures of a plantation-based society. A different balance between public and private affairs started to take effect,168 and the noblemen’s city evolved into a creole one in which an emerging middle-class began to gain notoriety, especially by the end of the nineteenth century.169

The second and third categories, bourgeois cities and the cities of masses, represent the transition to modern cities with infrastructures for production and commerce. Nevertheless, it is important to remember the lack of synchronicity between Europe and Latin America. As Romero argues, in this transition the influence of baroque’s urbanism applied by Haussmann in Paris greatly influenced the imagination of Latin American elites. These elite members traveled and had the opportunity to experience the modernity of European cities first-hand. The spectacle of European modernity led elites to develop an ideal about the appearances of the cities they ruled.

Needless to say, cityscapes in Latin America were quite distinct from the European ideal of the modern city. The elites were ashamed by the colonial look of their cities and strove to give
their cities a modern look in an attempt to both impress travelers from abroad and, subsequently, to be recognized as leaders of a modern society.\textsuperscript{170} Cityscapes in Latin America began to change, some faster than others. Early attempts to display modernity can be seen in the type of buildings and their appearance, as well as in changes in urban structure, inspired by Haussmann’s ideas.\textsuperscript{171} The changes that took place in the cityscape included the construction of wide boulevards and the opening of diagonal avenues that broke up the gridiron Spanish city plan in an effort to improve circulation. Certainly, this represented a change in the way people perceived and inhabited space and also represented a change in the scopic regime that was, thereafter, mediated by new technologies. The implications and particularities of these changes to Bogotá will be further developed in chapter 4.

\textit{Cityscape and Vision}

The centrality of the eye in western societies is intimately linked with urbanization and the growth cities experienced after the Industrial Revolution. The entire relationship between the individual and the cityscape can be seen as an act of visual communication. As Elias argues, the visual regulates interdependence among human beings, a conclusion drawn from his observation of the civilizing process of court society.\textsuperscript{172}

Thus far, most of the authors mentioned have explicitly or implicitly addressed the way visuality has changed or has mediated some processes. Baudelaire’s reflections on art and photography, and his poems on everyday urban life represent one example. Benjamin’s thoughts on modern means of mass production and the reproduction of images, mediated by the emergence and preeminence of photography, represent another. Likewise, Simmel’s ideas about the over-exposure of individuals in modern societies to an unprecedented amount of \emph{nervous stimuli}, is equally based on the significance of aesthetic experiences. Kracauer’s association
between hegemonic ideology and cultural productions as well as their pervasiveness to all of the levels in modern capitalist societies remains key to this work.

I have already mentioned how Baxandall, when studying fifteenth century painting in Italy, made a point of establishing a connection between visual skills in everyday life and the assessment of paintings. In his writings he makes reference to the importance of these skills in structuring the visual field and points out how geometrical bodies and spaces were understood by using them. Just like Baxandall, Cosgrove elaborates on the importance of the developments made during the Italian Renaissance in terms of vision, claiming that they “revolutionized spatial apprehensions in the West.” In the context of late medieval and Renaissance Italy, Cosgrove believes that the act of depicting the landscape during this period was a “way of seeing” and also a cultural production that was deeply embedded with values and symbolism. He traces the first reference of the term *landscape* to fifteenth century Italy where it was used as a way to understand the concept of space. From a cosmological point of view, the term *landscape* was used to describe the external world in opposition to the domestic one, but overall for him, it was a way to appropriate and take control over the territory. To Cosgrove, depictions of *landscape* in fifteenth-century Italy were as effective as scientific methods for land surveying and mapping in legitimizing the newly acquired estates in the hands of the emerging bourgeoisie. Because of the effectiveness of landscape depictions and because these representations were neglected or simply overlooked by scholars, Cosgrove considered it important to revisit them and think of them as visual representations of ideology. He supported his claims on the basis that the realistic illusions created by perspective served to control expansion and to legitimate the appropriation of territory. The very popular bird’s eye views of cities in sixteenth century Italy were for him an “ideological expression of urban dominion” rather than “an accurate rendering of the urban scene.”
Williams also made reference to the connection between landscape and ideology, but while Cosgrove focused on the idea of landscape in general, Williams focused on the city. His reflections and contributions to the understanding of space are informed by the connection between social class-consciousness and human geography. Like Cosgrove, Williams understood landscape, and particularly the urban landscape, from an ideological perspective, regarding it as the materialization of class-driven society. To Williams, landscape is a way of accessing social power, and representations of landscapes can be used as mechanisms of acquiring power. Consequently, he considered landscape to be a fundamental part of the social, political, and economic activities of any given society.

Vision and Land/Cityscape: some case studies

In different contexts, whether rural or urban spaces, contemporary authors under the influence of the ideas formerly exposed, have used different approaches to study the ideological and cultural implications of the representations of landscape. For instance, Mukerji’s studies on the French garden during the 1600s and 1700s revealed these spaces as representations of the ruling values of French aristocracy. French gardens represented the values, ideas and attitudes of a society that was fully organized around Versailles. Based on Elias’s concepts, Mukerji explores the connection between the social status represented by both material culture and visual imagery in early capitalist societies.

Mukerji saw French gardens as visual metaphors of power that allowed the French aristocracy to take control of the territory, and to legitimize its possession through a highly visible artifact. To Mukerji, seventeenth century French gardens were scenarios where political and territorial issues were addressed. Following Elias, she also pointed out the way in which gardens and material culture in general were not only acquired to escape from boredom but also
indispensable for Louis XIV to assist him in assuring control of the court. The apparatuses of power represented in the gardens were put into effect by means of visual and sensory experiences through the construction of follies, water fountains, and grottos among other things.

Taking up a more contemporary example of the ideological use of visual and material culture, Upton surveys the role of architecture in the construction of the social and physical space in American cities. In order to tackle such a vast task he establishes five different categories: community, nature, technology, and money/art (two together). Within these categories he identifies the connections between the architecture of the city and processes of identity construction, citizenship, and cultural heritage. One of the aspects he observed about living in modern American cities is the role played by citizens in order to guarantee a position in the cityscape or to guarantee citizenship itself. In contemporary society, that role is that of consumer. Subsequently, he stresses the connection between consumption and the possibility of not only constructing but also owning an identity based on acquisitive power.

Upton refers to Thomas Jefferson’s house, Monticello in Virginia, to establish a connection between the house and the surrounding environment in relationship to Jefferson’s public personality. Upton argues that the relationship of the house with the surrounding landscape can be seen as a metaphor for many aspects of Jefferson’s public life. The garden in Monticello represented Jefferson’s attempt to dominate nature in which its design contributes to this purpose by subordinating it “to the will and the gaze of the patriarch.” Likewise, the position of the house in relation to the surrounding landscape represented the eighteenth-century intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment that associated visual surveillance with power. The spatial distribution of plantation houses like Monticello reaffirmed the perspective of the master-slave relationship in which master and slaves never met in public spaces. Plantation houses’ designs were conceived to fully display the master while keeping away the slaves from the
visitors’ sight through the use of architectural and landscape modifications. On the inside, Monticello was full of technological inventions that show Jefferson’s aspirations of social recognition and his political ideals of progress. To Upton, the ambiguities of the house represent Jefferson’s contradictions. Overall, he considers late eighteenth-century houses as “technologies of the self, tools for defining their owners.”

Upton also remarks on the role of World Fairs in the visual construction of imaginaries about the city and also their role in reinforcing the construction of American national identities. Through these exhibitions, and through elite architecture, America found a way to display power and legitimize the establishment of what he calls “cultural authority.” For Upton, this led to architectural exhibitions full of ideological meaning, in which they all utilized the Bourdieuian notion of cultural capital coined in reference to the ways people can obtain social mobility by means other than money. World Fairs constituted the perfect venue for exhibiting these cultural productions that served to balance and validate American economic power through the acquisition of cultural capital.

World Fairs began to acquire relevance in 1851 after the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London. World Fairs thus represent a perfect scenario in which to display the progress and modernity that formed the basis for an emerging capitalist society. Therefore, taking a closer look at these spaces helps me to understand the connection between the built environment, the aesthetic experience, and ideology. These spaces were devised for displaying a great many of the values of modern society: progress, perfection, industry, beauty, and efficiency among others. Since their establishment, the fairs were places that also contributed to reinforce cultural stereotypes and to visually establish hierarchies among the participant nations. They acted as mirrors for nations to compare themselves with others in terms of progress but also in terms of constructing a mindset fixed on the visualization of national identities.
Rydell’s account of the World Fairs held in the United States from 1876 to 1916 includes perspectives that examine the relationship between architecture and social change as well as criticism of the values of imperialism displayed positively in these venues.  He approaches the study of World Fairs hosted by the United States as fabricated statements that legitimized a developed nation’s leadership in terms of progress. According to Rydell, World Fairs became schools to instruct the public about modernity. They played significant roles in the formation of racial, national, and regional identities, and also helped to re-define identities based on religious beliefs and gender.

With regard to the use of images as historical sources, Upton and Mukerji represent good examples of a contemporary perspective on the study of the built environment. Neither based their examinations exclusively on images as historical sources; conversely, the centrality of visual imagery in my research has to do with the particularity of my approach and my contribution to this field of study. In this sense, Harris’s study of eighteenth-century Italian villas is a key reference to my study. Harris uses Marc’ Antonio Dal Re prints to study the role of printed images in the configuration and legitimation of social hierarchies in this particular context. One of the things that Harris first identified when working with these images, was their role in displaying eighteenth-century Lombard nobles’ cultural and symbolic capital. She emphasized Dal Re’s expertise in producing and manipulating images, which is something he was very knowledgeable about. Dal Re’s experience in theatre made him very skillful in dealing with the visual codes and theatrical conventions of that period in order to obtain a desired result. This was evidenced by the way Dal Re used scaling, framing, skewing, vantage points, and birds eye views to satisfy his patrons’ requirements, that were usually mediated by their ambition for social recognition. Subsequently, the imagery generated around Italian villas eschewed accurate representations of the landscape in favor of visual representations of the aspirations and values of
the people who commissioned them. Harris’s understanding of visual and material culture in the aristocratic European milieu is also supported in Elias’s assumptions about the correspondence between cultural productions and social phenomena in which the former is a physical manifestation of the latter. Likewise, Harris found that visual and material culture from eighteenth-century Lombard villas were “means for the structuring and display of social stratification and for the maintenance of position.”

**Latin America: Post Colonialism and Colonial Visual Legacies**

Thus far, I have used the term *visuality* in the way Hall and others have used it: namely, to understand vision as the result of socially constructed processes. I have established a relationship between visuality and ideology as well as a relationship between ideology and visual imagery, particularly with respect to representations of cityscapes. Furthermore, I have surveyed the work of Hall, Berger, Williams, Baxandall, and Cosgrove, among others, who have dealt with these topics in the European and North American context.

To this point, the visual culture theories discussed have all been developed in Europe and North America. In this academic tradition, art historians have been most committed to the study of images, though cultural theorists have also focused their attention on this matter. However, the recent ubiquity of images has garnered them renewed attention from other fields of study, especially since the late 1960s. This has opened new ways of thinking about how images act as social mediators, and how they constitute a record of the social processes that take place in any given society. Nevertheless, the applicability of these theories to the understanding of the Latin American scopic regime still needs to be demonstrated.

There is, however, evidence that things have started to change. For example, in Colombia, writers have begun to reflect on the importance of aesthetic experiences and the role
of visual imagery as a fundamental part of the culture. Just to mention one example, since 2008, Antonio Caballero, a renowned Colombian journalist, has written a column dedicated to political analysis through the use of images from popular media. Nevertheless, questioning and contesting images in ways that do not simply illustrate history or address contemporary issues is relatively new in Colombia and in Latin America more generally.

In this regard, Noble remarks on the inclusion of scholars whose focus is Latin America in Mirzoeff’s *Visual Culture Reader*. According to Noble, Latin American theoreticians started to play since the mid 2000s an essential role in the analysis of contemporary visual culture. She acknowledges the importance of moving away from European and US perspectives and adding different perspectives. According to Noble, globalization contributed in large part to a renewed interest in the study of peripheral communities. This process that started in the eighties and continued in the nineties was accompanied by the implementation of economic neoliberal policies in several countries. As a result, the 1990s were characterized not only by the implementation of these new developmental models, but also by the emergence of voices coming from marginal communities that had theretofore gone unnoticed in Western academia.

*The Thriving Period for Postcolonial Studies*

The 1990s was the period when voices of authors like Said, Bhabha, García-Canclini, and Appadurai acquired more strength in academia. They all challenged the traditional dominant perspective in which the periphery (former colonies) was subjected to the center (Europe). In the context of globalization, discussions of post-colonial societies changed how people understood the relationships between the center and the periphery. These relationships had seemed, until then, apparently stable but top-down.
Since the mid-twentieth century, post-colonial scholars from different backgrounds have been committed to understanding the center-periphery relationship. As a result, the notion of *post-colonial* has been crucial to understanding the cultural and political processes resulting from imperial occupations in countries such as India, Indonesia, Palestine, Congo, and many others. This concept has also been labeled *after-colonialism* or *after-independence*, referring to the persistence of “subtle forms of neo-colonial domination,” and reinforcing the idea of a colonial structure still in effect in different forms.203 These terms have been used in reference to societies that have lived under colonial rule and have struggled to find a post-colonial identity. The issues post-colonial scholars usually address often have to do with matters of race, identity construction, class struggle, peripheral modernity, and nationalism.

One of the most frequently discussed issues about post-colonial societies is “race” and its often-complicated connections with modernity. As a result of the hybridization processes derived from conquest and colonization, race is a key element in the discussion on the structure that comprises present day post-colonial societies. Most scholars agree that race can no longer be conceived of as “a set of irreducible differences within human species,” as it was during the bourgeoning period of imperialism.204 Indeed the biological basis for race has been scientifically proven to be incorrect; according to the American Anthropological Association, what really determines behavior and personality is culture rather than race.205 In spite of this, and despite the lack of credibility of the “pseudo-scientific basis of racism,” discriminatory practices have remained active and have actually mutated into different forms in recent years, not only in Europe and the United States, but worldwide. For instance, the emergence of extreme right wing political parties in Europe, whose discourse is largely based on racist ideas, supports Gilroy’s assertion about the prevalence and development of new forms of “discriminatory profiling.”206 Nevertheless, to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, some appeasement can be found in the way
authors like Hill and Ahluwalia have described the civil rights movement in the sixties in the U.S., and the négritude movement in France in the thirties, as processes of reaffirmation of racial consciousness and resistance against colonization.

Bhabha elaborated on the notion of race as he challenged the stability and universality of the notion of modernity. He is particularly interested in the role played by the conceptions of time and space in the construction of race and collective identities throughout modern history. Bhabha described this discontinuity between the spaces of modernity and the historical construction of the notion of race by referring to minorities living in big cities in Europe or the United States. There, minority communities have to live their “unresolved transitional moment” in history in the “disjunctive present of modernity.” Therefore, within the framework of modernity, they are projected “into a time of historical retroversion or an inassimilable place outside history.”

*Post colonialism and Latin America*

By the mid-twentieth century, a group of Latin American scholars organized around The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) posited a different way to think about the region. This commission was created to figure out a way for Latin American countries to escape the cycle of underdevelopment. One of the main goals of ECLAC was to think about ways to reduce the gap between industrialized nations and Latin America. This implied the creation of a new framework to understand Latin American processes. In doing so, they coined the term *center-periphery* to describe the relationship between the hegemonic powers from Europe and North America and those from the so-called “third world countries.”
Although the post-colonial perspective has not—until now—traditionally been part of the study of Colombia, I find Bhabha’s theories well suited to this context. The period covered by this research, between 1930 and 1950, does represent a transitional moment in which the ideas of modernity struggle with traditional values. The result was that traditional values were pushed toward the outskirts of Colombian society, in an effort to reduce their visibility, as part of a modernizing effort. A simple illustrative case is the early twentieth-century criminalization of ancient cultural practices, such as the prohibition of fermented beverages derived from corn. This prohibition was done under the flag of modernity, which included the use of discourses based on the improvement initiatives related to hygiene, mental health, discipline, and progress.\textsuperscript{213}

Bhabha’s methodology of establishing dichotomies between terms such as: western/non-western, empire/colony, oppressor/dominated, and selfness/otherness would help to understand Latin America’s unresolved historical situations.\textsuperscript{214} The persistent situations and their negotiation with the present times institutions, result in the creation of “hybrid, inappropriate, [and] enunciative sites.”\textsuperscript{215} The terms “hybrid” and “inappropriate” are used to enunciate and describe what do not fit into the western definition of modernity.\textsuperscript{216}

From the point of view of material culture and consumption in post-colonial societies, Appadurai emphasized the role of consumer goods in contemporary societies and their usefulness in displaying aesthetic, political and economic values.\textsuperscript{217} He stressed the social and symbolic value of commodities and how they became powerful symbols in a globalized world. While it is true that the mobility of goods has not been as intense in the past as it is in the present day, he suggested that two different forces propelled cultural interaction in the past: warfare and religious conversion.\textsuperscript{218} Both the capacity of consumer goods to represent societal values, and the presence of the forces of religion and warfare that came from the colonial period are observed in Colombia between 1930-1950.
However, according to Mignolo, while the notions of modernity and postmodernity have been extensively studied in the Latin American context, post-colonialism has been overlooked or thought of as a remote phenomenon.\textsuperscript{219} Colombia is no exception to this oversight, which is particularly intriguing because several colonial structures remain actively in conflict with marginal communities, communities that are, at the same time, struggling to consolidate an identity. I use the term \textit{colonial structures} to refer to the colonial apparatus of power inherited by creole elites, whose legitimacy and permanence in power was guaranteed by assuring the status quo. In doing so, these elites faced the seemingly contradictory position of reinforcing archaic structures while also promoting the discourse of modernity.

The early establishment and consolidation of Latin American democracies during the nineteenth century, compared to other nations that gained their independence almost a century later, continued to accentuate the idea of Latin American countries of being already well-settled democracies. Conversely, Singapore, India, Algeria, and Nigeria gained their independence after 1945 and were the ones that embraced the post-colonial perspective. Equally, “post-colonialism” has been at most used in reference to nineteenth-century, but not present-day, Latin America.\textsuperscript{220} There has been reluctance on the part of Latin American scholars to adopt these perspectives, and many have challenged its applicability, based on the periodization and the many differences between Latin American countries and former British colonies.

On the other hand, Latin American scholars like García-Canclini and Mignolo, have utilized elements coming from post-colonial theory to create a framework for their research. In my introduction, I mentioned the notion of \textit{hybrid} as one of the terms used by García-Canclini to characterize Latin America’s post-colonial condition. He used the term to denote Latin American mestizo culture and the particularities of its multifaceted attempts to be modern while struggling to create an identity based on its hybridity. Following the same direction as Shohat, Garcia-
Canclini emphasized the necessity of challenging the traditional binary approach to power relations. Both authors claim to rethink post-colonial societies in a way that identifies possible nuances, rather than simply perpetuating the binary model.\textsuperscript{221}

Mignolo sees this conflict in Latin American history from the perspective of what he calls \textit{post-colonial reason}. He used this term to make reference to a diverse group of theoretical practices that emerge from colonial influence. The post-colonial remains at the complicated intersection between European modern history and counter-modern colonial histories.\textsuperscript{222} Mignolo used the expression \textit{post-colonial reason} in place of the notion of \textit{reason} coined by theorists of modernity. For Mignolo, this concept included some of the qualities that were put aside by modern rationality, such as emotions and passions, in order to re-think modernity in post-colonial contexts.\textsuperscript{223} In terms of aesthetics, Mignolo has recently elaborated and curated exhibitions around the idea of what he calls \textit{de-colonizing aesthetics}. This term has to do with the way in which post-colonial societies have aesthetically represented the process of \textit{decolonization}, a term that was used during the cold war.\textsuperscript{224} In the use of this term converged processes of resistance like the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the reemerging of indigenous insurgent movements in the sixties.\textsuperscript{225} Additionally, and in order to determine the most general characteristics of the transition between colonialism and post-colonialism, Mignolo used the categories outlined by McClintock to differentiate post-colonial societies.

According to McClintock there are three different categories of post-colonial societies: The first two categories are grouped under the general term of \textit{deeper settler colonization}, to make reference to the type of colonization some countries held to before and after the end of the World War II in 1945. For instance, countries like Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Algeria and Kenya, are among the countries that went through a process of \textit{deeper settler colonization} after WWII when “colonial powers clung on with particular brutality.”\textsuperscript{226} On the other hand, most Latin American
countries lived a process of non-violent *deeper settler colonization* before and after WWII but they were kept in control through the use of different forms of interventionism. The third category, *breakaway settler colonies*, is used to designate societies that achieved formal independence “from the founding metropolitan country to the colony itself” such as New Zealand, the United States, South Africa and Australia.\(^{227}\)

*Deeper settler colonies* like Latin American countries\(^{228}\) saw the implementation of interventionist measures such as *The Good Neighbor Policy* in the 1930s, and the *Alliance for Progress* in the 1960s.\(^{229}\) Interventionism is not a twentieth century phenomenon. U.S presence in Latin America has its deep roots in the beginning of the nineteenth century under different guises: the Monroe Doctrine since the 1820s,\(^{230}\) Filibusterism in the 1850s in Central America,\(^{231}\) and through the usage of treatises and constitutional amendments in the early twentieth century, as well as the creation of integrationist institutions like the Pan America Union, later known as the O.A.S.\(^{232}\)

Nevertheless, these policies of interventionism were met by different acts of resistance that took place in societies with a colonial past. There is also a tradition of decentralizing and appropriating historical narratives as part of the same strategy of resistance. Thus, resistance can take both cultural and military forms. Such is the case in several Latin American countries like Cuba, Colombia, and Uruguay. These countries have experienced many civil wars, the emergence of guerrillas, and have also developed several forms of cultural resistance to hegemonic power. Nonetheless, for a percentage of these populations, it remained easier to adapt and try to assimilate foreign interventionism under the guise of progress.
**Postcolonial Elements for the Study of Colombia**

All of these post-colonial characteristics can be observed in Colombia, a country that has not traditionally thought of itself as post-colonial. In particular, I focus on the identification of the post-colonial elements directly or indirectly related to the social construction of vision. Moreover, I study the persistence of colonialism under the different forms that gave origin to new forms of power structures and how this is evidenced through the scopic regime.

Following Bhabha, I also consider the nuances and the differences in the use of the term modernity to describe Colombia during the first half of the twentieth century. Additionally, and given Colombia’s present day situation of extreme inequality, it will be enlightening to see how some “unresolved transitional moments” from history remain active and continue to constitute an integral part of contemporary visual imagery. I use the term *persistence*, as posited by Adelman, to highlight the struggle between past and present that gives shape to present-day Latin American societies.

With regard to Appadurai’s reflection on consumer goods and the symbolic value they help to put on display, I establish a connection with the works of Martínez, particularly in the way he theorizes about the role of nineteenth-century Colombian elites and their constant use of references to Europe in the process of constructing a national identity. According to Martínez, the monopoly of the relationship with European society was a way for them to maintain their status. Following Appadurai and Martínez, I examine how the elites used consumer goods from Europe and the United States to not only add to their store of cultural capital, but to reinforce and promote national pride, and to shape Colombia’s visual identity. In this regard, McClintock’s categorization will be used to identify the underlying forms of colonialism through interventionism that were acting during the 1930s and 1940s in Colombia. García-Canclini and Mignolo’s understanding of hybridity, combined with Mignolo’s concept of de-colonial
aesthetics,\textsuperscript{236} will provide me with a theoretical framework that will help me find a balance between the overarching Euro-American perspective and the post-colonial approach in the field of visual culture studies.

**Colonial Legacies and Visuality in Latin America**

Just as post-colonial perspectives are rare in studies of Latin America, studies of Latin America from a visual culture perspective are also less common when compared to studies of Europe and North America. In what follows, I present an overview of some art aspects in Latin American visual culture studies that are relevant to my study. Likewise, I characterize some of the elements that have shaped visuality in Latin America, from a post-colonial perspective. For that purpose, I will present a couple of cases from colonial Latin America that will allow me to identify some of the visual elements inherited from the colonial period that have been persistent in the history of Latin American visual culture.

*The Council of Trent and the Colonial Scopic Regime*

As part of the Counter Reformation, the Catholic Church established the tenets for art production as part of the dictums of the Council of Trent.\textsuperscript{237} As such, the influence of the Council of Trent on the definition of visuality during colonial times has been widely accepted. For instance, Wittkower’s studies on Italian baroque art and architecture assumed the existence of a connection between ideology and the production of artworks. To Wittkower, this Council defined the role of art in terms of the Catholic Church’s political agenda. Also, the Hispanic clergy was clear about the pedagogical assets of religious imagery and the role they could play in terms of persuasion and control of the population that was being evangelized in the newly discovered territories. Visual imagery not only followed the principles established by the Council, but was also directly supervised by members of the clergy.\textsuperscript{238} For the Spanish Crown, it
was paramount to colonize and convert people in the new world, and images served that goal well.

Subsequently, images acted as educational devices that helped to magnify the experience of conversion for native people of the Americas, while serving as a reminder to guarantee their faith. According to Mills and Taylor, this notion of art as a pedagogical/ideological tool derived from the persistent Spanish conception of indigenous people as children. This is a notion that persists in one form or another throughout the colonial period and even still has some acceptance among the general public. According to Chasteen, European and North American scholars embraced this notion until the 1930s. To think about Latin America was therefore to see it in terms of “cultural, environmental and geographical determinism.” This was based on stereotypes about Latin people being “hot blooded,” lazy because of the favorable environmental conditions they live in, and lacking in the Protestant work ethic. Therefore, it will be relevant to track these stereotypes’ influence on the creation and reception of visual representations of Latin American societies’ cultural values.

Nonetheless, according to Bailey, the overarching baroque influence of the Church is not enough of an argument to explain the production and reception of Latin American arts. Indeed, such a traditional approach to Latin American art from the European perspective led to a detrimental perception of the visual imagery produced in the New World. However, it was because of its hybridity and cultural diversity that Latin American visual imagery represented the emergence of a type of visual imagery that was unseen until the conquest and colonization of America. Another important variable was the lack of synchronicity between Latin American and European times. While the Renaissance in Europe was happening, the production and value of visual imagery in Spanish America was still attached to the European medieval “belief that holy images possessed the presence of their subject.”
Bermudez and Duque, however, presented a different interpretation about the consequences of the Council of Trent. They pointed to the overarching effect the Council had in the production of artworks: in particular, the benefit provided to the bulk of the population by allowing them to access and enjoy aesthetic experiences that were previously reserved for the elites.²⁴⁵ Thus, where other authors see an act of imposition and cultural domination, Bermudez and Duque saw a one-way act of philanthropy.

This is not an opinion shared by Donahue-Wallace, who asserted that artworks produced during the colonial period in Spanish America were an essential part of a cultural negotiation, despite the fact that the bulk of visual imagery was indeed created to instill a sense of faith to a chiefly illiterate population. Hence, art operated as symbols of socio-political status, as tools of religious conversion, but also as a means of creating communal identities and, sometimes, “as means of self-expression”²⁴⁶ for those who were not members of the elite.

Edgerton and Pérez also embraced the notion of cultural negotiation and contested the passive role native people were supposed to have played in accepting the imposition of Christian art. The Church was convinced about the passivity of native communities, but unfortunately there is no record about the reception by the aborigine population of the new style brought by the Europeans.²⁴⁷ The authors refute the idea that societies unconditionally accept the imposition of a new ideology without offering resistance. Both Catholic friars and Indians confronted a complex process of sharing each other’s visual style. Therefore, both sides created their own codes to interpret and appropriate the visual values of the other, which resulted in the creation of a larger and new symbolic universe.

Based on the availability of the sources, it is nonetheless possible to observe a great asymmetry between the two types of cultural production. The national archives and museums offer plenty of historical sources to illustrate the European side of history in the colonization of
the Americas while indigenous and mestizo first-hand documents remain scarce in these same institutions. Therefore, visual evidence constitutes an invaluable asset to evaluate the construction of a new sort of hybrid visuality, yet to be found in the untold narratives that were obviously not included in the official history.

Representations of Class and Race

In terms of the depiction of race, one of the most well known genres in Latin American colonial art was *Casta* painting. This style was most popular during the eighteenth century, particularly in New Spain, or present-day Mexico. The emergence of this type of painting is explained by the social tensions derived from miscegenation. Casta paintings were commissioned to help reinforce the social hierarchies through the representation and classification of the different ethnic groups living in Spanish America. According to Katzew and Carrera, these paintings reflected the nascent creole elite’s effort to construct a nationalist consciousness through the production of these visual taxonomies.

Donahue-Wallace pointed out some compositional changes that took place in the production of these paintings. According to Donahue-Wallace, the paintings done at the turn of the eighteenth century were based on a nascent creole pride, while the ones done by the end of the century were focused on the differentiation between the different castes. In doing so, the *Casta* artists divided the canvas into twelve to sixteen smaller frames, organized top-down, left to right, showing the transition from lighter to darker-skinned people. Another characteristic noted in these late representations of castes was the representation of the roles enacted by each character, according to their social station. For instance, white men were usually represented in a standing position, showing their role of authority and as family providers. Conversely, representation of darker skinned men was not necessarily related to the idea of fatherhood, but
rather with labor. In many of the examples studied by Katzew and Carrera, they are also shown misbehaving, to reinforce their “barbaric” nature. Women in general were represented throughout as caring mothers and wives, independently of the caste they belonged to.

The scenarios, objects, and landscapes used, as well as the background accompanying the representation of each ethnicity, are of particular interest in this research. Indeed, I look for the persistence of these practices in later representations that combine class, race, and space in the same scene. In eighteenth-century Casta paintings, stylish furniture or writing instruments marked upper class status, while the lower classes were represented accompanied by animals, fruit, or tools. The setting for these scenes was mostly rural or semi-rural, but according to Carrera, “after the middle of the eighteenth century, […] the artists emphasized more complex urban or rural background settings for the figures.”

The Crowned Nuns (Monjas Coronadas) paintings, also popular during the eighteenth century in New Spain, are another example of the representation of race and class in Latin America. These were commissioned by elite families when sending one of their daughters to join a religious community; they were done by local artists and usually were on display in a highly visible public area of the house. The paintings represented the future nun carrying a flowered crown, a flowered scepter, a statue of their patron saint, a wedding ring, a badge or nun’s shield, a bouquet of carnations used traditionally to represent pure love, and in the lower part of the painting an inscription declaring the family ancestry. Therefore, the main purpose of these paintings was to portray the nubile girl with her dowry, and also to display a type of visual certification of the family’s lineage and wealth.

Yet another example of visual imagery in the representation of power structures is the biombos. Though not as popular as the Casta and Crowned Nuns paintings, they followed the same logic. The biombos were wooden folding panels, usually composed of three to five sections
whose function was to separate social from intimate spaces. Originally adopted from Asia, they were rapidly modified by local artists in Spain and, later on, in America. Since biombos were used as symbols of status, they represent well the social tensions of the epoch. “Fortune does not hide lineage,” reads one of the biombos studied by Donahue-Wallace.253

Blood purity and lineage are the two elements that clearly reflect the anxiety of the new and “formally insecure” emerging class.254 The ethos described by Elias in his Court Society permeated the Spanish court and their correspondent viceroyalties in the Americas. An emerging class of people, whose newly acquired fortunes usually derived from their colonial activities of extraction and plantations, surrounded both the French and Spanish court. In both cases, a courtesan system of signs and symbols reinforced the necessary distance between the elites, the emerging bourgeoisie, and the masses. There is no doubt this system was also active in their colonies.

Race and class, as I elaborate in later chapters, had a deep impact in the reception and production of space. In the particular case of Bogotá city, I focus on revealing the conflict between the persistence of colonial values and the ideals of modernity. The discourse, as well as the colonial scopic regime and ideals, was imported and appropriated by the creole elites, who used them to secure their dominant position.255 This led to a later situation during the twentieth century, in which the discourse of modernity was implemented at the cost of creating new marginalities and dislocating people both from the city and the countryside. The twentieth century represented to Latin America and Colombia the promise of progress, but also implied a structural modification of their cityscapes, both the actual and represented ones.
Chapter 3: A Post Structuralist approach to Methodology

From a methodological point of view this research is entirely based on the qualitative analysis of still images, more specifically on visual representations of urban landscapes. The analysis of the sources is mainly conducted under the methodology of discourse analysis. The selection of this methodology for the analysis of historical images is based on the belief that vision is a social construction that represents societal values, even those that are not necessarily acknowledged or stated. This is of particular importance in a period of transition to modernity in Colombia, a period in which many discourses idealized the image of the city as the maximum representation of progress.

In this chapter I first discuss the notions of discourse analysis and intertextuality as the central part of my post-structuralist approach. Second, I discuss the implication of this approach in terms of space, place, and historical periodization. Third, because this work builds upon my nearly 15 years of previous research and experience on cityscapes, I present an autobiographical account of the intuitions, certainties, concerns, and influences that led to my approach of using cityscapes to create historical narratives. Fourth, I synthesize and list the most influential ideas of my biographical approach and define the lines of inquiry that guide my methodology for the analysis of the images.

Discourse Analysis

The methodology of discourse analysis is based on Foucault’s notion of discourse, which he defines as a set of statements an individual or society creates to think about the world. Those statements and beliefs then structure the way in which the individual or society interact with the world. The notions of discourse analysis and visuality are both derived from post structuralist
and social constructionist theories. Both are critical responses to Marxism and Psychoanalysis. Marxism was influential in shaping the notion of ideology, in particular the “dominant ideology thesis” in which the elites in power controlled the production of ideas. This notion of ideology was contested by post-structural approaches that preferred to see the world as the result of social and cultural negotiations instead of as a set of fixed or pre-determined external circumstances.257

The notion of discourse in Foucault’s theory refers to modern institutions and their tendency to categorize and classify. This is especially clear in Foucault’s studies on sexuality and madness in the nineteenth century, a period in which desires and actions, formerly unnamed, were named and classified so that they could be studied and regulated (institutionally, legally, and medically).258 According to Foucault, modern institutions created discourses and categories to deal with sexual deviations and mental illnesses. The discourse of modern institutions generated a new subject that in this case was represented by the different and new categories of the mentally ill, such as deviant, maniac, and many others. The knowledge produced by the study of these subjects helped institutions define and classify individuals and led to new pharmaceutics and treatments for those suffering from these newly named maladies.259 Thus, the taxonomical nature of modern thought produced new identities and different ways to grant or deny citizenship to individuals. It was a way to discipline and control without using repressive force.

In that sense the notion of discourse in Foucault’s approach is related to a particular understanding of power: power is not exercised but possessed and is not based on the use of force but on its productive capacity. The subtle ways to discipline and control introduced by modern institutions became preferable to the repressive power of control and discipline. Power, then, cannot simply be possessed or exercised but is also disseminated throughout the
institutions. That diffusion is channeled through what Foucault called the “micro techniques” of power: devices intended to subtly enforce a given set of rules, social conventions, or norms.260

The invention of photography in the 19th century was one such device intended to subtly enforce the discourse of modernity. Photography contributed to the diffusion of power through social institutions in manifold ways. According to Sturken and Cartwright, since photography was invented parallel to the creation of the modern political states, it became a primordial staple of scientific categorizations and demarcations, but it was also used to regulate social behaviors.261 Photography granted the gaze a leading role in the history of western modern societies. Foucault introduced three central ideas about the gaze in modernity: panopticism, power/knowledge, and biopower. Panopticism, derived from his analysis of Jeremy Bentham’s prison designs, is about the practices of surveillance and self-regulation through the gaze. The power/knowledge relationship also has to do with self-regulatory processes in which power is not restrained to a group, but scattered throughout the system, endorsed by the society at multiple levels to produce what he calls the “docile bodies.”262 Knowledge is validated through hierarchical social institutions and professions. For instance, knowledge produced through certain circuits and institutions is better than the knowledge produced by those who do not belong to these institutions. The power/knowledge duality in modernity affects both the behavior of people and their physical bodies, producing a particular kind of subject (individual), which is linked to a particular notion of citizenship. This is what Foucault calls biopower in which the modern state secures a healthy population to be taxed and sent to war by regulating the bodies of its citizens through hygiene, education, and public health, which likewise implied the exclusion of certain kinds of people.263

For the analysis of visual sources, Rose also bases her approach on Foucault’s notion of discourse and the concepts around the gaze.264 In doing so, she distinguishes two different kinds
of discourse analysis: One that focuses on the images in terms of the production and rhetoric of the discourse and another that focuses on the practices of the institutions and the technologies used to create the discourses. The first one is based on less rigorous procedures, but, according to different authors cited by Rose, its effectiveness could rely on craft, skills, scholarship, interpretive sensitivities, and words. The structure for the analysis can be organized in two ways: by analyzing the structure of the discursive statements, and by analyzing the social context of those statements.265

In this investigation, the visual material is part of the set of discourses that circulated in early 20th century Colombian society to think about and structure the modern world. I seek to understand the construction of visual codes through those statements to provide new insights on the political and social climate of that period. In doing so, I use the two notions of discourse analysis identified by Rose that are based on Foucault’s overarching notions of panopticon, the power/knowledge duality, and biopower, all of them related to the centrality of gaze in the constitutions of modern-day states. I pay attention to the rhetoric of the imagery but also to the means of their production and the discursive practices of the institutions that controlled them.266

For my analysis I also characterize the people and institutions that participate in the creation of a historical narrative. I seek to identify those occupying structural positions—people and institutions behind the production of narratives, such as journalists, politicians, and individuals with institutional affiliations. I also seek to identify the people and institutions that participated in the creation, manipulation or modification of visual codes, and the different subjectivities from which any of the case study narratives could have been created.267

In exploring the construction of visual codes, I focus on four scenarios. First, I look at the political discourse and ideas behind the production of these cultural magazines and newspapers (institutions). In terms of political history, the period of my research coincides with the so-called
Liberal Republic, which is also related to the discursive practice of the liberal hegemony in contrast to other discursive practices. Also, this period coincides with the implementation of hemispherical policies such as Pan Americanism and the Good Neighbor Program. This point in particular needs further development, but I pay attention to the discourses circulating around transnational identity or Pan American identity in connection to cultural interventionism and surveillance. Second, I look into the artistic production of images and the visual language employed to create them (institutional technologies). This period represents a heyday of cultural magazines, and the intellectual production of the different political ideologies can be seen constituted in one way or the other in those magazines. In particular, I focus on the visual representation of ideas around modernity, such as progress, perfection, and civility (power/knowledge). Third, I look into the relationship between representations of the city and the distribution of urban space. In this sense, aspects of class, race, and gender are taken into consideration in connection with notions of aesthetics, taste, and architectural style among others. Fourth, I study the narrative of specific institutions in charge of the city ornamentation and beautification. I look into the institutional apparatus and the forms in which power/knowledge were implemented through programs of education, law, urban and architectural regulation, and morality among others. In many cases I present the analysis of imagery contrasted with the discussions consigned in the meeting minutes and official documents. In the revision of the documentation and images related to the different scenarios, I keep a transversal look at the concepts of aesthetics, ideology, identity, taste, and style in relationship with the cityscapes.
**Intertextuality**

The term *intertextuality* acts in connection to discourse analysis. To analyze the connection between the different methods to convey meaning in all these different scenarios, I borrow this notion from post-structuralist theory. Intertextuality makes reference to the contextual meaning of images and texts in relation to other images and texts presented as part of any given discourse. Intertextuality is used in this research based on the assumption that the interpretation of an image depends on the existence of previous images, words and concepts that are associated with it. The analysis includes all the possible “connotations, codes, conventions, unconscious practices, and texts.” Images and texts create a discourse that is plural in its essence because the meanings expressed are not only uttered but also inferred from their context.

The notions of visuality, discourse analysis, and intertextuality represent the core of the theoretical framework that defines the approach to the material of study. Methodologically, the intertwined use of discourse analysis, intertextuality, and visuality, seeks to understand the social construction of the visual codes, the written narratives, and the production, reception, and interpretation of imagery.

**Space and place**

De Certeau, Foucault, Williams, and Cosgrove frame the understanding of the city as a place where cultural negotiations are mediated by unconscious structures of knowledge and power, and where considerations of class, race, and gender intervene. I present study cases of images representing specific places of the city and analyze them looking at the relationship between visual representation and territorial control. The apprehension of urban space is also
influenced by the changes in the scopic regime, another element that post-structuralism seeks to analyze.

Postcolonial theory provides the notions of persistence, disjunctive, mestizo, hybrid, peripheral modernity, class, race, gender, identity construction, and nationalism. All of these notions are related to the unresolved things from the past that remain active forces in present-day Colombia. In using postcolonial theory, I look for subtle strategies of domination and segregation that can be active in images that are supposedly meant to represent national unity.

**A Necessary Autobiographical Approach to Methodology**

When I started studying urban history years ago as a designer, art historian, and educator, I was concerned with making an original contribution. A feeling of connectedness drove me to study Bogota since I was more aware of my connection to its space and to its past. I felt that I could make an original contribution to the urban history of Bogotá. I was fascinated by the historical images of Bogota, but I soon realized that my background in art history and design was insufficient to understand them.

At this time, I came across the term *material culture*, a term I had barely heard of either in college or graduate school. I began to discover a way to understand objects not as mere products but as cultural containers of the values, attitudes, and beliefs of any given society, at any point in history.²⁷⁰ I then started thinking about the application of this notion in the Colombian context. I could explore how the visual representations were cultural containers for national values, whatever they were.

Once again, my first approach was more intuitive than academic, but I have recently begun thinking about the extent to which I have been influenced by the images from my childhood. There were not many images at my parents’ house, but the few ones that I clearly
remember are those of saints suffering torture or images of a bleeding Christ. It took me some
time to start thinking about the possible connections between those images with the images I was
using to illustrate the history of the modern Bogotá. Indeed, the connection between religious
imagery and the images of modern cities did not seem obvious at first.

The first scholarly insight I had about the underlying discourses of images was after
reading an interview-based book on the “narratives of images” by Gombrich and Eribon. My
art history classes in college primarily included examples of European art, with bits of North
American and South American art. Most images used for the art history classes were selected
following the modernist approach from the perspective of the high-art cannon. As part of the
College of Fine and Applied Arts at the National University of Colombia, all students were
required to take 18 credits in art history, independent of their background. These courses still
separated high and low art and favored high art, so I was left with the impression that design-
related things, such as everyday life images and products, did not deserve much attention from
art historians. This was especially shocking given the fact that I was majoring in product design.

Art history professors at that time were still following the classic traditions of either
formalism and connoisseurship, or semiotics, although the more interesting approaches were a
combination of them. Modern design objects were part of the narrative of art history, but for the
most part the only designs that received attention by these scholars were upgraded versions of
commercial products that could be classified as high art because of their authorship or style.
Such was the case of Le Corbusier’s and Mies Van der Rohe’s Chairs, or works of graphic
design by Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Toulouse Lautrec. I started having doubts about the
importance of the discipline I had chosen and also started questioning the relevance of the study
of these images high art/design and their relationship with my own personal history. The images
presented by my professors, after passing through the high or low art filter, were indeed
beautiful, but at some point I also realized how disconnected these images were from my personal experience and from my cultural background and experience in Bogotá, a city full of contrasts and contradictory visual identities. Soon I realized that the visual narratives of my professors were disconnected not only from my personal experience but from the entire national experience of Colombia as well as from the experience of most people living in the city of Bogotá.

Towards a Methodology

My nonconformity with the way things were being taught in the School of Arts led me to look for different approaches. The direct experience with the city as well as post-structuralists approaches to the study of history started, slowly, to provide a complementary perspective that allowed me to start to rethink the built environment as the result of social construction.

Authors such as Elias and Martínez were crucial in informing and fostering my interest in the social and political implications of aesthetics. Elias introduced me to the concept of cultural productions as materializations of social phenomena. Elias’s theories on the correlation between spatial organization and social hierarchies are based on Weber’s theoretical elaborations that were detailed in his book *Economy and Society*. Weber used the term *patrimonial state* to describe patriarchal structures of domination in both traditional and modern societies. For Elias, the patriarchal power exerted by the monarch over their country in pre-revolutionary France “was nothing other than an extension of and addition to the prince’s rule over his household.” For instance, Elias believed that the Palace of Versailles as the dwelling space of the king and his court cannot be understood in isolation, but should rather be seen as a spatial representation of how the whole of the society should be organized. The first realm of dominion for the monarch was his household, and Elias proposed that the monarch’s power over the whole
country was an extension of this dominion. The representation of the king’s power was materialized and put into display in the form of buildings, gardens, objects, and clothes, but also through language and gestures.

On the other hand, Martínez’s work showed me how Weber and Elias’s theories could be applied to nineteenth-century Colombian society. Martínez emphasized the way Colombian elites during this period based their political discourse and the construction of a national identity on European notions of modernity and progress. In particular, Martinez’s discussion of Colombian participation in the nineteenth-century World Fairs helped me think about how they might contribute to the formation of a local consciousness. For example, he reflected on how the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exhibition prompted the “discursive” local elite to start thinking about the physical representations of progress and the construction of a national visual identity.

Persistence and Resistance in Postcolonial Times

The persistence of the colonial ethos underlies the everyday life of societies with a colonial past, which is something that can be seen at several different levels of Colombian society. For example, the photograph I referenced in my introduction represents the persistence of a plantation-based social structure and many other discourses of power attached to the colonial past and its persistence. From an institutional point of view, the continued conflation of the Catholic Church and state power can also be seen as perpetuation of this structure. The state’s inability to monopolize the use of force and taxation, in addition to its inability to take control of the whole territory, gives the impression of a feudal society in which different factions are still struggling for the territory. This is something that has been reinforced through the concentration of land in the hands of a few landowners and the lack of agrarian reform.
Carpentier described the ruling inequality and extremely uneven development in Latin American societies. In his novel, *Lost Steps* (1953), considered a representation of the beginning of the so-called style of *magic realism*, Carpentier presents a portrait of modernization at the mid-way point of the twentieth century. The importance of Carpentier’s *Lost Steps* comes not only from pointing out the poor implementation of modernity in Latin America, but also the extreme inequalities between the different social classes. While a few people lived according to the standards of developed countries, most of the population lived in almost pre-modern conditions.\(^{278}\) The turning point in the history of Latin America was the “independence period” that mostly took place during the nineteenth century. Colombia was no exception, gaining its independence by the end of the 1810s. Every country had its own process, and the Colombian author Ospina remarked on how Colombian independence, compared with that of countries like Mexico, completely lacked an actual liberal revolution. For Ospina, this is evident through Colombia’s failure in emancipating indigenous people, setting the slaves free, or overthrowing the colonial structure, all of which were cornerstones of Mexican modernity.\(^{279}\)

In terms of periodization, the 1930s and 1940s in Colombia represented a period of transition, from a mostly rural-based society to a more urban-based society. It is also the moment when big scale industrialization efforts began to take place, and when the U.S. influence on Latin American countries started to be more evident through the implementation of discourses of Pan-Americanism or, later on, in the form of institutions such as the Organization of American States. This is the time when “modernization theory”\(^{280}\) was also put into effect through the ECLAC and through the substitution of imports through industrialization program (ISI). Different commissions and experts from around the world arrived with the purpose of implementing modern institutions. To this end, the Kemmerer Mission headed financial commissions to the country in 1923 and 1930.\(^{281}\) This also contributed to establishing stronger governments whose
main bases were the capital cities. In Colombia, urban development became a priority with the arrival of urban planners such as Brunner and Le Corbusier in the 1930s and 1940s. However, McClintock argues, urban development continued to be shaped by post-colonial interests.

Following McClintock’s categorization, Colombia is considered for the purposes of this dissertation as *deeper settler colonization* in the sense that it was a former colony that did not require the use of force to be maintained. Instead, the country was kept under control through the use of ideological discourses promoted by hegemonic potencies. A combination of interventionism from powerful countries like the United States, Great Britain, and France, and a persistent obsolete colonial structure shaped Colombian, and more generally Latin American, modernity. The term “persistence” points out the existence of an old, powerful organizing structure that can help to understand Latin America’s historical complexities. In this study, the term “persistence” is used to describe the permanent and complex struggle between powerful bequests from the past and the active new forces of the present.

*Cityscapes and History*

Following up my personal narrative, the understanding of the built environment and cityscapes as a result of a social construction, made me aware of the use I had given to images in my previous works. The images of this research are understood as “acts of eye witnessing,” and constitute evidence of how visuality was negotiated during the period of study. The negotiation of visuality is fundamental in understanding how images can act as historical documents and impact urban history in Latin America. As historical documents they are susceptible to interpretation, ambiguity and manipulation.
Different authors have amply demonstrated the validity of images to understand historical processes. Burke presents a wide array of authors that have utilized images in their historical inquiries, ranging from Braudel and his studies on French and Spanish fashion through more contemporary authors that used images to illustrate the history of technology.\(^{287}\)

The use of images for the study of cities has a long tradition with different perspectives depending on the focus of the analysis. Reps in his history of urban America, uses images as historical sources to study urban settlements.\(^{288}\) The number, variety, and availability of images of North American cities displayed in Reps’ book contrasted with the scarcity of images of Colombian cities before the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century. The lack or abundance of historical sources can thus be seen as a measure of how power has been balanced in a given society.

The cityscapes that are part of this research were commissioned to fulfill specific requirements and were generally produced following European or North American visual standards. If they had been displayed in European or American contexts, they would have probably fit the category of the “popular” but in Colombia they did not reach the broad population. In the 1930s-1950s, these images were primarily accessed in magazines and newspapers, available to the elites.

Class struggle and conflicts over territory have been constantly present in Colombian history. Considering the magnitude of the class and territory conflicts, it is very likely that hyper-aestheticized images of the city and the inhabitants represented another arena wherein this conflict was taking place. As mentioned in chapter 2, Cosgrove posited landscape representations as being as effective as land surveying and mapping in exerting territorial control.\(^{289}\) The use of cityscape representations, commercial photographs, caricatures, and advertising have been traditionally either overlooked or taken for granted. Consequently, my approach to the study of
Bogotá’s visual imagery considers cityscapes as representation of discourses from which power relations involving “sight, space, and social order” can be unraveled.290

Summary

Building upon on the authors and theories discussed here and in the literature review, I define 6 lines of inquiry that guide the study of images through discourse analysis. This inquiry explores how images as historical narratives influenced the organization of urban space along lines of race, class, and gender.

1) The understanding of the representations of the built environment as materialization of social phenomena and of power relations.

2) The notion of national identity as a site of ideological confrontation. The problem with past notions of national identity is that they exclude a large percentage of the population and fail to represent the whole society by the exclusion of a large percentage of the population. In the study of the sources, I explore ways to represent identity at different levels.

3) The conflictive use of the visual codes of modernity. I pay attention to the use and adoption of the visual codes circulating in Bogotá’s cultural magazines and in the newspapers. It is commonly assumed that these visual codes conveyed the idea of modernity, but they represented status and segregation at the same time.

4) The persistence of tradition. The pervasiveness of colonial and pre-Columbian cultural practices represented a challenge for the implementation of modernity. In exploring the images of this period, I seek to identify the interactions between modernity and tradition.
5) Peripheral modernity. The non-mainstream character of Colombia’s modernity is a leading element in the analysis of sources. In particular, the focus is on discursive modernity and the possible contradictions with the actual condition of Colombia at that moment.

6) The self-reflective image. The visual material analyzed in this research was mainly produced by the elites for the elites. Thus, it cannot be seen as an attempt to disseminate propaganda or to indoctrinate the masses. The notion of self-reflective image is used to analyze the sources as mirrors that reflect the elite’s reveries about the modern city. This notion is particularly relevant for the analysis of the different architectural and artistic styles adopted during this period.

**Methods, Sources, and Repositories**

My familiarity with the historical sources comes from my research for the Historical Atlas of Bogotá. Since then I have remained in contact with those sources, whether as part of my work or through their increasing presence in media and online social networks. However, one of the sources that generated several questions for me during the research for the Atlas had to do with the publication of commemorative books with images of the city. Different narratives were published during the period between 1930-1950, deserving special attention the ones released on the 400th anniversary of the city foundation in 1938. Several publications and printed commemorative products, like postcards and announcements in the newspapers, were release on this occasion. Although, it was not the only time during the period of study when cityscapes were used in a celebratory manner. One of the case studies presented here, is a visual narrative created by *El Gráfico*, a cultural magazine, to celebrate their 20th anniversary. The narrative was published in 1938 by the SMOB. This institution’s function was to survey the city aesthetics and
evaluate the interventions in the public space either by statues, monuments, architecture, or design. The SMOB was officially inaugurated in 1917, and it has been active until the present-day. The collections of the SMOB and of other institutions of interest in my inquiry are located in Bogotá. Given the importance of the SMOB, I dedicated a good amount of time to the proceedings of their board of trustees.

In addition to exploring the SMOB archives, I found images in magazines and in museums and other archives. At the National Library of Colombia, I found images from 3 different weekly magazines, *Cromos, El Gráfico* and *Estampa* (1930-1950), and the newspaper *El Espectador*. In order to be able to deal with two entire decades I used what I consider to be a representative sample of cityscapes from magazines and newspapers just prior or around the city’s 400th anniversary. At the National Museum of Colombia I looked at the paintings of Núñez-Borda, a Bogotan painter that were also used to illustrate commemorative books. Finally, I also looked at the photographic collection of the Museum of Bogotá. I focused on photographers Daniel Rodríguez and Saul Orduz whose images depict Bogotá in the 1940s and 1950s.

The criteria for the selection of images is based on their suitability in illustrating the six lines of inquiry defined in my methodology. Accordingly, I selected images that concerned one or more of the following subjects: visual and written narratives about a particular place or area of the city; narratives about class or national identity; images of architecture; images of urban planning; advertising of commercial goods and propaganda containing any reference to the city or to progress; and images promoting or sanctioning behaviors or customs from a modern stance. All the images that are part of this research, excepting the Hola magazine image, were reproduced by me using a digital camera and with permission to reproduce them from the respective archives (Museum of Bogotá, Archive of Bogotá, Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato de
Chapter 4: The Visual Construction of Space in Bogotá

The first assumption I take into account before I start studying the images that circulated during the period between 1930-1950 in papers and magazines is that they represent at least part of the scopic regime of this period. Through print media, the Colombian elite circulated written and visual narratives that allowed them to define others’ and their own class identity. This assumption follows Abercrombie’s theory about early capitalist societies that did not use cultural productions to dominate the subordinated classes but to preserve land and estate privileges. Rather than creating a sense of national identity or social cohesion, the images reflected the ideals of the elite, allowing them to spread different narratives among them and to create a sense of class identity.

The narratives of the elites, however, were often contradictory in the meaning they were trying to convey. The image of the city was used to convey the idea of modernity but also frequently conveyed messages about tradition and stasis rather than progress. These images were instrumental in reinforcing the hierarchical notion of space inherited from the colonial period, but they also visually celebrated modernity. Both the explicit and the implicit messages of those narratives often displayed stereotypical notions of race, class, and gender, even in a period when more inclusive policies were allegedly being implemented. Foucault’s notion of biopower is represented in these images through the establishment of visual categorizations that reflected disciplinary and behavioral codes. These disciplinary and behavioral codes (efforts to turn the Colombian population into “docile bodies”) existed in part because of difficulties related to Colombia’s racial and cultural hybridity. The coexistence of the whiter elites with mixed racial groups contributed to the creation of discontinuities that are reflected in the cityscape. Similarly to the minority groups in Europe and the U.S., studied by Bhabha, the local mestizo population
participated in or influenced the construction of the cityscape from their peripheral and dislocated condition. Within the framework of modernity, the mestizo population that was mostly part of the lower classes experienced what Bhabha called “a time of historical retroversion” that made it difficult for them to assimilate into the modern city. About the production of space under these conditions, Cosgrove thinks of landscape and the built environment as the materialization of power relations that took place over time, embedded with a great deal of symbolic values and ideological struggles.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the ways in which the space and the human geography of the city was determined by the particularities of Bogotá’s scopic regime. I explore the way in which space, coupled with the gaze, reinforced hierarchies, stereotypes, and relations of power. In order to do so, I first provide context about the governmental policies that influenced the understanding of culture and aesthetics. Since the period of this research overlaps with the period of the so-called Liberal Republic (1930-1946), I focus on the cultural policies implemented by these governments. Second, I focus on some of the historical characteristics of the distribution of urban space and also on the promotional strategies that invited people to embrace the idea of modernity and to buy real estate. I explore the forces that pushed the upper classes out of the downtown area and attracted them to new spaces, which changed the human geography of Bogotá during the 1930s and 1950s. Third, I present an analysis of some of the representational techniques of the artworks presented in the magazines to evoke the promises and pleasures of modernity. Following Bourdieu, in this section I aim to show how the architectural representations were also used to convey ideas of good taste and class distinction. This hypothesis is also based on Bourdieu’s understanding of modernist aesthetics as divided between high and low where the tenets of a high aesthetic were based upon Kantian notions of taste, sublimity, and disinterestedness. Indeed, the division between high and low culture/aesthetics
is paramount for the understanding of the social struggles at this point in the history of Colombian society. In these social struggles, the elites used the terms taste and disgust to define distinctions between social classes. Fourth, I present two case studies about the way the images accompanying magazine articles reinforced narratives of class identity in connection with a specific area of the city and contrast the ways in which both narratives of class are constructed in connection to a particular area in the city.

*Culture and aesthetics during the Liberal Republic*

The two decades covered by this study overlap with the historical period known as the Liberal Republic (1930-1946) in Colombian historiography. The history of the Liberal Republic is not the core of this study, but it undoubtedly influenced the production of imagery. Many other topics influenced the production of imagery, such as culture, identity, nationality, and citizenship, topics that have started to draw more attention from researchers. However, the vast majority of works published thus far about this period concentrated on the political history of the Liberal Republic, the beginning of political violence, and the beginning of modernization and industrialization in Colombia.

Indeed, most of the changes that occurred during the 1930s and 40s have been attributed to the influx of the liberal governments. The first and most obvious change attributed to the influx of the Liberal Republic was the end of a long conservative hegemony. The period of this conservative hegemony known as Regeneration or *Regeneración* (1886-1930) was characterized by a political and cultural return to the traditional values inherited from Spain and Catholicism. During this period, changes in the cityscape included the erection of monuments to Spain and giving estates back to the church that had been confiscated earlier during the liberal hegemony
(1863-1886). The *Regeneración* has been understood by many as a step back from the modernization of the nation.

In contrast, during the 1930’s, the liberal governments started implementing international policies like the program for the substitution of imports (ISI) that mostly represented the beginnings of modernization of Latin American countries, Colombia included. This program encouraged substituting foreign imports with local production for local consumption. Because workers were needed to help with local production, policies were created that encouraged migration from the country to the city. Indeed, Bogota’s population doubled in the 1930s and 40s, partly from immigration of labor from the countryside but also because of the political violence that displaced rural populations from their homes.

Likewise, this period saw the implementation of cultural policies that favored the “new” liberal notion of citizenship based on the acknowledgment and empowerment of working class people, mostly rural immigrants. After the popularization of this new notion, culture played a fundamental role by involving the masses in the modernizing project. The notion of popular culture became part of governmental policies. These policies pretended to be more inclusive than the policies implemented by the conservative party during their hegemony.

According to Silva, the conception of popular culture during the Liberal Republic can be roughly divided into two periods: 1) 1930-1940, based on the education of the masses after some notions of intellectual culture and the promulgation of norms regarding hygiene and civility and, 2) 1940-1950, based on the acknowledgment and recognition of popular forms of culture related to the cultural activities of the rural population. Silva’s characterization provides an understanding of the notion of culture during this period, according to the traditional division between high and low culture. The ruling class controls the production and circulation of cultural capital while the working class receives some instruction on high culture but can also contribute
to culture with folklore. Everything outside of that framework was considered ordinary, vulgar, or it was simply overlooked. The notion of folklore allowed the intellectual liberal elite not only to legitimize popular cultural expressions, but also to create a sense of belonging and connection between the different classes. This situation created a tension that was reflected in the acceptance or rejection of cultural productions. The lower classes saw upper class cultural expressions as snobbish. In contrast, the upper classes perceived popular cultural expressions outside of folklore as vulgar misbehavior or pre-modern practices that needed to be abolished. Folklore acted as a buffer zone in the class warfare where the national sentiment was the common denominator around the idea of a common set of cultural practices.

The notions of tradition, patrimony, history, and cultural heritage came in handy to give a sense of legitimacy to both folklore and high cultural manifestations, whether invented or somehow authentic. Hobsbawm studied this phenomenon and used the term “invented tradition” to define sets of symbolic practices intended to educate, indoctrinate, and instill values and customs that are usually intended to be reproduced in repetitive patterns. Traditions according to Hobsbawm can be divided into two categories: invented (that are then constructed and formally) and emerging traditions. In the Colombian case, the Colombian elites insisted in inventing traditions that linked them with both tradition and progress. The invention of Folklore would render them as liberal thinkers, whereas the tradition invented around the traditional values of Colombian society was intended to legitimate them in power, in society, and secure their wealth. Folklore was the element of the invented tradition that was supposed to give a sense of cohesion and national identity. Some elements of tradition that could have been accepted under the notion of folklore were problematic and even banned. Such is the case of traditional indigenous liquors, food, and customs.
When folklore failed as an element of cohesion, the tensions between high and popular culture emerged. On one hand, the elites established notions of high culture and a ruling intellect that controlled or determined the overall culture, leaving the lower out of that framework. On the other hand, folklore in many cases was an invention and did not represent or replace authentic popular expressions. Instead, it was a washed-down version of popular culture. Although folklore required the elites to acknowledge the lower classes, the latter were still subjugated to the rules of the elite. The elites set the criteria for establishing something as “tradition.”

The challenge for the elites was to acknowledge the existence of the masses without losing their own privileged position. To deal with that challenge, Alfonso López Pumarejo, one of the most visible leaders of the Liberal Republic, advocated for the reestablishment of communication between the leading elites and the people. To him, popular culture was guided by what he called the “people’s intelligence” or intuitive wisdom and constituted the basis of the national sentiment. Lópe’s concepts were put into effect in the 1940s when the elites turned their attention towards expressions of popular culture as folklore.

In contrast to Pumarejo, who had faith in the “people’s intelligence,” others held more patronizing attitudes towards the masses and mass culture. Darío Achury Valenzuela, along with Germán Arciniégas, was one of the most influential intellectuals in the group of ideologists of the liberal party. He was founder of the Caro y Cuervo Institute and was appointed director of the Community Outreach Program at the Ministry of Education. According to Silva, Valenzuela’s conception of popular culture was formulated according to the traditional and hierarchical pattern of advisers and advisees, producers and consumers, while also conceding some agency to the subordinate groups. This patronizing approach towards popular culture, in which the people were seen as childish and in need of nurturing and guidance, represented an attempt on the part of the elites to consider the masses as fundamental to the successful construction of a national
The resulting culture was expected to come from the mixing of two different substrates: the intellectual productions of high culture that were the main point of reference for any other production, and the popular expressions that were supposed to submit to high culture and helped to decant the “fundamental truths” of culture relating to Colombia’s national identity.

*From Rural to Urban, from Urban to Suburban*

The problem of implementing modernity in Colombia was essentially a cultural conflict that was reflected in the cityscape. The visual representation of modernity had nothing to do with the visual reality of the early capitalist society that Bogotá was by the 1930s. Bogotá, as well as many Latin American capitals, went through many changes as it became more modern. Modernity was not only a discourse but also a material reality that needed to be displayed. Because the elites desired a modern look for their city, the many changes in Bogotá’s demographics during the first half of the 20th century were inconvenient. Most of the people coming to the city were from rural parts of the country with little or no literacy at all. In order to accommodate them or at least to keep them from being part of the modern cityscape, a series of policies were implemented, including changes in the distribution of lower class housing, which provoked population displacement.

The changes in the distribution of space and in the forms of dwelling in the city were triggered by different factors depending on individual’s or a given community’s social station. In the case of the lower classes, poverty, violence, and lack of opportunities were the main reasons for them to migrate. The city attracted them with promises of social mobility, better-paid jobs, and access to education. With the arrival of the newcomers, the upper classes, which had lived in
the historical downtown since colonial times, were pushed out and into new neighborhoods that offered them promises of comfort and modern living.

As noted by Williams, during the late nineteenth century the inner city in many European cities was abandoned by the upper classes, mostly due to the industrialization. Likewise in Bogotá, the movement of upper class populations towards peripheral areas of the city started during the late 19th century and was fueled by changes in the conditions of the downtown area and in the population demographics. The downtown area became an area of commerce and services. The changes in density of population made the hygienic conditions deteriorate, especially because of a housing-related phenomenon known as tiendas—a sort of tenement with no amenities. The inner city was left to the poor and a floating population like those of the incipient middle-class empleados or employees, while the peripheral spaces were being appropriated by the upper classes. The separation between the different classes inhabiting the different areas of the city was not only geographic but also highly visible.

**The Distribution of Urban Space in Bogotá**

In the 1930s Bogotá was transitioning from a noblemen city to a bourgeois city, according to Romero’s categorizations of the different developmental stages in the history of Latin American cities. Bogotá was starting to develop stronger industry and commerce infrastructures. It was indeed a big city with an *inner city* that was beginning to be neglected. The rapid increase in the population in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries happened almost a hundred years later in Bogotá, yet at a smaller scale. For the standards of Bogotá, however, it was remarkable to see the population increase from 100,000 in 1905 to 305,000 in 1938 and, by 1951, reaching 715,250. This represented a 700% increase in less than fifty years. The state of anonymity and the lack of acquaintances mentioned by both
Weber and Sennet were also phenomena observed in Bogotá, yet this was counterbalanced by the struggle of people with a recent rural past who desired to maintain traditional ways of social interaction and bonding. This is a fundamental element to keep in mind when considering the way urbanization created new aesthetic experiences. The new scopic regime combined the older colonial structure with modernism to implement modern European social and economic values.

Despite the lack of synchrony in comparison to Europe and the United States, many similarities arose, including an increase of sensory stimuli, a separation between private and public spheres, and an emphasis on the theatrical configuration of the city as a social space where human dramas and conflicts flourished. Though the new elite firmly believed in progress, it would be inaccurate to assume that there was a complete rupture with the past. These elites were certainly conscious of their inherited colonial privileges, and they were not totally convinced that these needed to be resigned. These characteristics, while broad, provide me with a framework for a general understanding of the cityscape.
The Problems of the Old City

The neglect of downtown Bogota began in the late 19th century. During the colonial period and before the elites began moving to the periphery, Bogotá was hierarchically organized, with the elites in the center around the main plaza. The distribution of space during the colonial period in Latin American cities has been largely attributed to the Spanish model of hierarchical organization around the Plaza Mayor based on the gridiron planning. During the heyday of the inner city in colonial times, the buildings surrounding the Plaza were seen as important and of symbolic value because of their large scale, the flashy look of the buildings, and the abundance of images representing them. In contrast, lower classes’ buildings were seen as less important, reinforced by their location relative to the plaza and also by the scarcity of images representing them.
Researchers Jacques Aprile and Gilma Mosquera were among the first to study the relationship between distribution of space and income level in Colombian cities during the colonial rule. They show a correlation between location and social status, race, and income: the importance of a person could be determined by the proximity or distance of their property to the Plaza. According to them, there was a correlation between space distribution and ethnicity. The people with European descent lived closer to the Plaza, while mestizos, indigenous, and black people were assigned to peripheral spaces farther from it. Also, they established a connection between architectural styles and income level. The architectural styles of the buildings closer to the Plaza were close in style to European 19th century architecture while lower classes housing was indigenous or vernacular. The importance of the Plaza changed and the elites started to be pushed out of downtown towards the northernmost part of the city’s outskirts (see Figure 2 for location of the Main Plaza).

The deteriorating hygienic condition of downtown was one of the main reasons the elites moved to the periphery. This deterioration can be seen in “tiendas,” a housing phenomenon that started in late 19th century Bogotá. Since colonial times, people would subdivide street level rooms of a house for retail and housing purposes. The tienda was basically a small multipurpose room that worked either as a small shop, a kitchen, a living room, a dining room, or a bedroom. It usually had no windows, no bathrooms or fresh water available. People who owned buildings in downtown would rent these tiendas for lodging or commercial purposes. The tiendas represented a hygienic problem because the infrastructure of the city was not prepared to handle them.

Unfortunately, the inadequate infrastructure in the city led to poor sanitary conditions in these tiendas. Neither the owners of the tiendas nor the municipal authorities provided proper sanitary equipment for the tenants. This situation combined with the poor capacity of the open-
air sewage system made the situation unbearable, especially for the elites who had historically and symbolically owned the downtown, pushing them to look for alternative housing in the city outskirts. The tiendas were a frequent topic of discussion at the meetings of the municipal institutions in the 1930s. In 1935, the SMOB asked the municipal head of hygiene to regulate the rented spaces in downtown:

Ask the municipal head of hygiene to dispose and to enforce the prohibition of using street level property for rent if not provided with the proper sanitary equipment…. The main concerns about this situation have to do with considerations of public hygiene and healthcare and also to avoid the disgusting and anti-hygienic spectacle of feces and organic waste being thrown in the street.\textsuperscript{307}

The \textit{tiendas} constituted one of the main factors that pushed the elites out of the downtown while other factors pulled them to new neighborhoods. This problem of the \textit{tiendas}, also known as \textit{piezas ciegas} or blind chambers, along with the sanitary and living conditions at \textit{Paseo Bolívar} (Figure 2), and the urgency of modernizing the marketplace, recurrently appeared on the SMOB meeting minutes. Later that year, the SMOB reiterated their petition, demanding that the municipal authorities take action, but the problem persisted.\textsuperscript{308} Along with the problems of the tiendas, the circulation of images in papers and magazines reinforced the need to move and look for a better area in town.

\textit{The Necessary Transition to the Modern}

The tiendas phenomenon was just one of many problems in the historic downtown; truancy, homelessness, and hygiene related issues were among many others. These problems led the upper classes to look for an alternative option in the city outskirts. Because of these problems, the elites started to think about alternate options for housing outside of the downtown
area. By the mid 1930s, magazines used images and articles to promote certain neighborhoods as the ideal places to find the solace and peace that was no longer found in the historic downtown. The language and pictures used to encourage people to invest in those projects often mixed elements of tradition and modernity. In order to convince people about the convenience of the new developments, the companies and investors released advertisements promoting the pleasures people could have access to. Modernity was frequently represented by architectural styles and by the recurrent appearance of automobiles and highways.

Until the late 1930s the circulation in papers and magazines of general views of the city was rather infrequent. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the image of the city acted as a background and a symbol for the ruling forces, especially in the context of governmental or ecclesiastical celebrations. (Figure 3a/b) The images in which the city appear previous to 1938 are related to events such as presidential inaugurations, funerals of notable people, religious celebrations, the anniversary of the city foundation, and on very few occasions, social protests.

By the late 1930s it is possible to find more frequent images accompanying articles and chronicles about the different places in the city. Around 1938 there is a renewed interest in the city because of the 450th anniversary of the foundation of the city. The circulation of images that promoted the ideal of modernity increased along with the appearance of new graphic cultural magazines that reflected both how the city actually looked (from specific points of view), and how it should look like in a desirable near future. The city became a recurrent topic for graphic journalists and reporters. The adoption in Colombia of new printing technologies like photogravure, popular in the late nineteenth century, and the first color printed
magazines at the beginning of the twentieth century, helped to increase the circulation of urban visual imagery that expressed the city’s new modernity.

The visual references to modernity can be seen in the images depicting U.S. modernity that regularly appeared during the 1930s and 1940s. The high-angle shots were commonly used to present panoramas of the city or to illustrate a particular building like the case of a picture of the Waldorf Astoria (Figure 4a) and another one of the New York 1939 Exhibition published by Cromos (Figure 4c). On the other hand, the Tropical Oil Company ad (Figure 4b) shows iconic architectural elements of big capitals with Bogotá’s Cathedral in the center to reinforce the connection between the foreign modernity and the desire to transport it over to Bogotá.

Cosgrove’s idea about the incidence of the technologies of vision in the way we perceive the world and the way they provide the viewer with a sense of control also apply to the use of images by the Bogotan elites. The intensive use of photography connects with the necessity of the elites to both survey the land and reassure control over the population. The attempts made to create an image of a landscape were also attempts to control it, and the Bogotan elites were the ones who had access to technologies such as photography that gave them this control.
Figure 4. Visual references to U.S. Modernity appeared in El Gráfico and Cromos.

The Cathedral in the central image (Figure 4b) is the element that represents continuity or the link with the past. This strategy is frequently used in publicity images in the early 1930s, a transitional period in terms of visuality. It can also be seen in vehicle advertisements. In a Lincoln car advertisement, the car, the element that represents the modern, is surrounded by traditional elements of a pre-modern society: traditional Spanish architecture and a man riding a horse wearing a traditional Spanish outfit (Figure 5).
In the advertisement, the woman in the vehicle sits behind a chauffeur, following the old-fashioned way of horse carriages. In the background, there is a couple that seems to be waiting for the traveler. The characters in the picture wear a traditional nineteenth century goyesco style outfit, and they are located on an elevated porch, strongly built with stone carved columns, large arcades, and adorned with vineyards. In a very subtle manner this vignette introduces a new modern product—a car—by surrounding it with elements that represent traditional values. The car and the horse, the butler riding the horse and the chauffeur driving the car, are put on the same level, representing an embrace of the future along with the persistence of the past.309

The advertisements promoting housing displayed a similar transitional visual language to the one employed in the Lincoln car announcement. This is especially noticeable by the 1930s when the promotion of the new upper class suburbs began. These advertisements promoted the new neighborhoods by focusing on sewage and clean water supply. At the time, the city saw unprecedented advancement in terms of construction techniques, material quality, and professionalization of engineering, architecture, urban planning, and design, and the magazines emphasized these advances in their advertisements.
La Magdalena (see Figure 2 for location) was one of the neighborhoods advertised in these magazines. By 1933, La Magdalena was being promoted as one of the most promising upper-class neighborhoods in Bogotá by *Cromos* magazine. The advertisements of this neighborhood (Figure 6-Figure 7) depict the frontal view of two two-story Spanish colonial revival style houses. The surroundings are described in the caption as picturesque. Besides the pleasures offered by the architectural style and the naturalistic environment, the advertisement also offered modern facilities such as “good sewage services and proximity to downtown.” Its location was very privileged not only because of the convenient distance from Bogotá, but also because of its proximity to the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús School or Sacred Heart School, a prep school for girls.

A second advertisement was published a week later displaying similar architectural styles to the first one (Figure 7). The image, apparently a watercolor, did not include any reference to the owner or the architect. The house was also built in colonial Spanish revival style with their balconies and arched fenestration in the upper level that is also crowned by a gabled terracotta.
roof, a tower, and a chimney. The surroundings seem to make the same promises to the viewer as the latter one: large open green areas, fresh air, plenty of light, and the guarantee of an exclusively residential neighborhood, in response to the impoverished environmental conditions of the downtown area. The pleasures and advantages offered by these announcements countered the impoverished conditions of the inner city and the lack of hygiene and sanitation. In order to successfully convey these ideas and to guarantee the transition to modernity, it was necessary to get familiar with the visual language of modernity. Independent of the political and socio-economic circumstances of the period, the elites knew that it was necessary to make some adjustments to the scopic regime and start promoting this new kind of visual literacy.

Figure 7. La Magdalena. Cromos, May 27th 1933. n.a.
The Persistence of the Old in a Period of Change

The centrality of vision was as important to early modern capitalist Colombian society as it was to 19th century European industrial society. In a similar fashion to the correlation observed between commercial activities and visual skills during the fifteenth century in Europe (as noted in chapter 2 after Cosgrove and Baxandall’s studies), an analogous correlation can be observed in Colombia’s transition to modernity. In the Colombian/Bogotan case the visual skills were related to the familiarity with visual language of modernity as part of the cultural capital of the bourgeoisie. In order to comply with European ideas of modernity, it was necessary to challenge the assumptions of the scopic regime established during the colonization period but also to master the modern codes. The transition to modernity was a long journey for Colombian society and took more than a century from the early nineteenth until the mid twentieth century.

The nineteenth century brought many changes and political conflicts to Colombia, but also made society more receptive to new influences. In spite of the many attempts of liberal thinkers during the nineteenth century to separate Church and State, and to establish the ideal of progress, both Catholic and Courtesan values were deeply rooted in the ethos of Colombian society. These values can still be seen embedded in the images produced later on during the early twentieth century.

Thus, instead of a change from colonial imagery to modern imagery, modern imagery overlapped or replaced colonial imagery. For instance, portraiture of independence heroes replaced those of noblemen and high clergy, and streets with names of saints were replaced with names commemorating battles. Older colonial buildings shared space with or were replaced by modern looking buildings and institutions. Religious architecture as part of the cityscape remained mostly untouched, with the exception of some expropriations under the liberal rule between 1863 and 1884. Most efforts in the 1860s to consolidate a secular state completely
separated from the Church were thwarted after the establishment of a conservative hegemony in 1884 that would last until around 1930. The measures that were taken to guarantee the consolidation of a stronger state by hampering the power of the Catholic Church were all reversed in less than thirty years after their implementation, rendering the prevalence of the Catholic tradition almost intact.  

Adelman used the term *persistence* to describe the endurance of colonial institutions in subsequent historical periods. This term also applies to matters of style and urban aesthetic. Adelman’s term *persistence* has three aspects: First, “deep seated perceptions of race [and] ethnicity” persisted, created by three centuries of colonial rule and dependency on slave labor. Persistence makes direct reference to the perpetuation of this system of values. Second, colonial bequests were not supposed to have gone uncontested and there was a great deal of cultural syncretism. In other words, mestizo and indigenous population were not passive and Adelman recognized the agency of indigenous and mestizo populations facing the impositions of new cultural codes. In that sense, persistence can be also seen in the survival strategies of indigenous and mestizo cultures. Third, Adelman argues that persistence of colonial values took many different forms and was both diverse and unavoidable in Latin American history. Many of those forms of persistence have to do with the realm of the gaze that in this case, was struggling to evolve into a new iteration of Colombia’s scopic regime.

According to Crary, the scopic regime in industrial society in Europe was dictated by institutional and economic requirements, but it also allowed new techniques in the field of visual representation to emerge. Thus, on one hand, the scopic regime constrained society to its requirements; on the other hand, it also made possible inventions like photography and new visual explorations, such as Impressionist painting. According to Crary, during the first half of the nineteenth century, a change in the way of seeing took place because of the invention of the
camera obscura. This change removed the restraints of tradition, liberating the observer’s sensorial stimuli from the reference to a spatial location.\textsuperscript{315}

The increasing amount of visual stimuli by the turn of the nineteenth century was difficult for observers to digest. The observer witnessed a dislocation between an actual living space and a represented one. For Crary, the observer struggled because of the imperatives of modernity—attentiveness, rationalizing sensation, and managing perception—and, on the other hand, an overwhelming number of nervous stimuli characteristic of modern cities.\textsuperscript{316}

Crary’s problematization of the role of vision in modernity is key in identifying the nuances in Latin American visuality, especially because of the different ways in which technologies of vision were appropriated. Certainly in this context, Crary’s general idea of granting a more active role to the observer allows us to identify the processes of cultural resistance, unspoken narratives, and anxieties derived from the modernization of Latin American cities. Based on the theory of persistence, Crary’s idea of a rupture seems to not fully apply to Colombia’s belated process of modernity that, additionally, was still permeated by the colonial ethos. Likewise, Simmel’s ideas on the increase of sensuous stimuli and its applicability to early capitalist Bogotan society is yet to be proved. Also, the assumptions of Benjamin and Kracauer about the connection between capitalist scopic regime and cultural productions need further revision when applied to this context by taking into consideration overlooked topics regarding race, class, and gender during this period.\textsuperscript{317}

Although the discourse of modernity was already established in the imaginary of the elites by the 1930s, the visual language used to promote the new housing projects was mostly illustration, not photographs, using already established visual codes. The production of publicity and journalistic images required familiarity with the use of perspective, technical drawing, and architecture, skills still not taught in the Colombian education system. The successful promotion
of modernity relied on artists and architects familiar with the modern techniques of representation, but these specialists were in short supply. This problem started to be addressed by the government, but in many cases the demand for this kind of professionalism was supplied by foreigners and also by adopting foreign manuals of architecture.

Architecture and Class

It is commonly agreed that one of the most visible characteristics of colonial Latin America is its hierarchical organization, derived from its colonization by the Spanish and Portuguese. Spanish American society was organized around hierarchies established by the ruling powers of the Crown and the Church. As a result of European colonization, miscegenation proliferated all over the continent. This miscegenation process, or *mestizaje*, was usually the result of sometimes free, but mostly forced, sexual relationships between the invaders and the indigenous population, which resulted in the creation of new ethnic and cultural identities.318 Indeed, the process brought a great deal of conflict and crisis. The visibility of social station became paramount in a society whose levels of miscegenation increasingly grew in just a few years after the first settlements were founded. With the purpose of making visible the differences among the social groups, various procedures were developed to establish lineage or blood purity. For instance, the *Limpieza de sangre (purity of blood)* was based on the ability of a person or a family to display an “untainted” family tree with no Jewish or Muslim blood.319

The notion of blood purity was applied to Jews and Muslims in Spain, but in the Americas, the natives were the ones who represented otherness. In opposition to that other, whether Jew, Muslim or Native American, was the figure of a Christian, white male, whose values represented the “chivalric Christian culture.”320 The preservation of racial status for Spanish and, later on, creole elites was paramount for the retention of their privileges. Since
hierarchies were based on visual assessments of the other, soon after the end of the Conquest, mechanisms were developed to reaffirm and maintain the distinctions. These distinctions among classes were materialized in different forms in the cityscape, in the planning of the city, and in the way the population was distributed in space.

In this sense, the built environment reflected and was connected to social distinctions and hierarchies. Research done by Aprile and Mosquera in the late 1970s pioneered ways of connecting race, class, and gender to the distribution of space in Colombia. According to them, the Spanish settlements in America were hierarchically organized from the Plaza Mayor towards the outskirts. The price of the estate was established by its distance to the Plaza, and according to the social status of the owner. The architecture and the visual design of the city was part of a system that, according to Aprile and Mosquera, was intended to maintain the conditions of spatial segregation inherited from the Spanish colonial period. This situation seems to persist in the twentieth century in the cityscape, reflecting the struggle between modernity and tradition, class, location, and visibility. A similar situation was seen in chapter 2: Harris described the 18th-century Lombard nobles’ houses and how the elites used architectural forms and representations to acquire cultural and symbolic capital.

Based on Harris’s approaches as well as Mukerji’s, and Upton’s (also mentioned in chapter 2), the city can be understood as a scenario where cultural struggle takes place and differences among classes materialize into physical forms. In the particular case of Bogotá, it is important to consider the tensions generated by the lack of synchronicity between the European ideals of progress and the desire of the elites to display them in Bogotá. Therefore, the question is about how these tensions shaped the national and local identities, the urban space, and the ethos of contemporary Colombian/Bogotan population.
Another element that influenced the elites’ perception of international modernity compared to the local environment was the World Fairs, which relate to Elias’ notion of the mirror (in chapter 6 I further elaborate on this notion). The elites were influenced by the way “uncivilized” societies were depicted at these venues. The international exhibitions also unintentionally fostered anxiety for elites trying to figure out how to implement the ideas of modernity and progress in Colombia. These struggles can be seen reflected in some of the images circulating during this period.

However, in the second half of the 1930s the visual language changed, and references to traditional cultural elements were apparently less frequent. The use of straight lines, technical drawings, and streamlining replaced references to traditional cultural values. The images in the magazines started not only to show the exterior of the houses but also the interior to display the modern way of living (Figure 10). The section “Residencias Bogotanas” or Bogotan Residencies was periodically published in different magazines and papers with similar titles. Estampa’s column on interior design was published under the pseudonym of Lucy, and El Gráfico had the equivalent in a column called “Hogares Bogotanos.” These articles were intended to promote a modern style of living, but they were also used to show off class and wealth.

**Rendering Modern Architecture**

The authorship of most drawings discussed here is unknown, but there was a wide number of artists, mostly painters, making illustrations for the magazines and probably working for architectural companies. Many of the artists were from Colombia, and these artists were beginning to be taught modern techniques of representation. The advertisements and architectural drawings of the late 1930s were usually made following mathematical principles of shading and shadowing, something that was still not part of the local curricula in architectural
Formal education in architecture started in Colombia in 1936, after the establishment of the school of architecture at the National University of Colombia. However, scattered courses in architectural education like drawing, perspective, descriptive geometry, and general architectural concepts were offered starting in 1847. Several foreign architects who taught and worked in Bogotá during the first decades of the 20th century supplied the demand for skilled draughtsmen and architects. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were also a number of nationals who studied architecture abroad, usually in France and the U.S.

According to architectural historian González, because of their prominent role in modernity, architects and engineers started to compete with the politicians in their role of “patriotic heroes” and so their visual language appeared more frequently during the 1930s and 1940s. The increasing number of plans and architectural project images circulating in cultural magazines started slowly in the 1840s but increased in frequency after 1910 with the emergence of general interest magazines. The language of architecture, whether modernist or neoclassic, the two ruling styles during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, was brought into Bogotá through different venues starting in the 1840s. González’s claims that the liberal professions such as architecture and engineering were important because they were the ones who could speak the visual language of modernism and progress, the two prevailing narratives of the western world.

It was not until the late 1930s that the architectural language of modernity and the professional skills of architecture were taught and learned in different ways: through the establishment of private or public institutions for the teaching of architectural principles, through the adoption of architectural manuals such as Durand’s French architectural manual, and through the continuation of the practice based on the medieval tradition of master-apprentice. In 1936, architectural education was institutionalized at the National University of Colombia, and later,
architecture was taught at the International Correspondence Schools such as the one at Scranton, Pennsylvania. Although Europe remained the chief reference for matters of architectural education, style, and taste, the prolificacy of U.S. architectural journals and of institutions such as the National Plan Service counter balanced European influence.331

Rendering Class and Taste

To Bourdieu, the Kantian notions of disinterestedness and taste were the result of class struggle more than anything else.332 He remarked on the superficiality of the codes used to identify the cultivated intellect and the alleged extraordinariness of the modernist aesthetic experience. To him, the notion of taste associated with class was nothing other than an underlying manifestation of class warfare. During the first half of the twentieth century in Bogotan society, aesthetics became part of the struggle to define class identities. The upper classes had the monopoly on the cultural and political capital; the lower classes took refuge in their traditions and culture, or tried to adapt the ruling cultural codes and eventually became middle class. By the 1930s Bogotá was the scenario for this symbolic battle where the upper classes eagerly adapted European and American architectural styles to put on display and to figure out their class identity. The results, especially during the 1930s, were either pastiche from adapting different international styles or exact copies of them. This twofold process of displaying power and figuring out an identity can be compared to what Elias called the age and style of kitsch in Europe, namely, a period in which “greater formal uncertainty” characterized the artistic production of societies in transition to a capitalist/industrial model.333

In Bogotá this phenomenon can be seen belatedly appearing in the late 1930s and early 1940s when several references to international standards of architecture were disseminated through the pages of cultural magazines. As seen in Europe towards the late nineteenth century,
the notion of taste started slowly replacing the centrality of aesthetics. The term aesthetics was abstract and vague, whereas the term taste explicitly made reference to the physical attributes of the other, whether to identify with them or to segregate them. The social changes of the city and the new moral standards put the notion of taste at the center of the discussion about urban aesthetics. This can be seen clearly displayed in the magazines and newspapers through the increasing number of sections, articles, and advertisements addressing concerns about taste and architecture.

Standardized house design plans started circulating in *Cromos, El Gráfico* and other magazines and papers. In 1938, coinciding with the upcoming 9th Pan-American Conference in Bogotá, *Cromos* published a series of house plans and designs to be used as models for people considering building a new house (Figure 8). These blueprints were published, apparently, in response to the abundance of examples of bad taste that according to the magazine –and the SMOB–were flooding the city. The section, “Are you considering building a house?” published in *Cromos*, April 1938, explained: “From now on, we are going to be publishing a section for those interested in building a new house. The projects we will present here will be affordable and adequate to the needs of modern life and in several different styles.” It continued, “Everyday there are so many new construction projects in the city. Many of them are finished, but many of them are not precisely models of beauty.”\textsuperscript{334}
Through the minutes of the SMOB it is possible to see how imperative it was for them to try and achieve a consensus in terms of how the city should look. Discussions about taste and aesthetics in relation to the city were common throughout the two decades of study. In 1935 for instance, the SMOB was asking the city council for the enforcement of a set of standards regarding the new architecture of the city. These standards established guidelines for the number of stories a building should have, the distances between the façade and the street, and the overall disposition of the architectural elements of the buildings. In 1936 the SMOB condemned the oversized elements in the facades because they blocked pedestrians, and because these ornate...
elements were unaesthetic and in poor taste. Some years later in 1943 Hernández de Alba, historian, author, and also SMOB fellow, proposed to the City Council that people should not use several colors in the facade on the same building “even though they belong to different landlords… if impossible to maintain a certain analogy [sic] or harmony [architecturally] at least we can observe it in their color.”

Architecture, architectural education, and matters of sensibility and taste related to the appearance of the city buildings were recurrent topics of discussion at the SMOB. During one of its sessions in 1944, the members of the SMOB manifested their concern about the poor architectural taste shown by several buildings in town. In what they called “an architecture without art” they called for better education and wondered if it was possible to consider making studies on the improvement of taste because of the awful buildings that were being built by then. In their exposition about taste and architecture, the members of the SMOB acknowledged the validity of modernist aesthetics while assuming a superior moral standing. According to Bourdieu, this assumption is based on Kant’s aesthetic principles in which the familiarity with culture and aesthetics provides a sense of morality. Cifuentes and Esguerra, both SMOB associates, discussed form versus function, condemning the excessive or senseless use of ornaments on the facades. This discussion, as it is well known, was at its peak by the late nineteenth-century in Europe, especially after Paris’ 1899 World Fair, but the discussion remained active in Colombia until the mid-twentieth century.

Rendering Taste, Displaying Class

The scopic regime of the colonial period in Latin America established visual codes that reinforced structures of power and hierarchies. With the arrival of modernity those codes were supposed to be no longer valid or at least to be highly contested. However, the analysis of images
produced during the first half of the 20th century reveals the persistence of traditional values along with the struggle to adapt to the new ones.

During the colonial period, many elements were used to display lineage and power. However, the symbolic use of architectural spaces in paintings and graphic representations was rare until the late 19th century. It was after the implementation of modern printing systems by the early 20th century that the images of architecture and the city started to gain notoriety. By the early 20th century, most of those images focused on the representation of institutional buildings. However, by the 1930s and 40s and due to the demographic changes, the city attracted more attention from the media. Housing projects along with technical advances occupied a good percent of the space in papers and magazines.

The housing projects promoted during this period belonged to three broad categories: upper class residential projects, middle-class or employee housing projects, and working class neighborhoods. Upper class residential projects were the ones that initially received more attention. Upper class neighborhoods’ promotion increased during the mid 1930s, especially with the upcoming celebration of the 450th anniversary of the city foundation in 1938. The built environment of the city gained increased visibility in the media, but the problem of uniformity in style and the ignorance about construction standards was noted as a problem of bad taste. Taste was the term that became dominant in the discussions about aesthetics, and it was used as a sign of distinction. A way to tackle the problem of bad taste through the media was by promoting the lifestyle of wealthy and distinguished people. One of the first examples of this practice can be seen in Cromos 1933. The picture shows the Spanish colonial revival style house that belonged to Aníbal Velásquez located in the sector of La Magdalena (Figure 6a). The intention with this advertisement was to promote the qualities of the neighborhood and generate confidence in the
investors by identifying the owner and the architect of the house. Most of the landowners were notable people that could be easily identified by everyone in the city.

That is the case of two houses advertised in 1938 by Rocha Santander & Co., an architectural/engineering company. The houses belonged to José Vicente Huertas and Nicolás Gómez Dávila (Figure 9). Huertas and Dávila were prominent members of the Bogotan elite. Huertas was a physician who had also been appointed Minister of Instruction and Public Healthcare from 1926 through 1930. Gómez, on the other hand, was an upper-class self-taught philosopher and member of a traditional wealthy family.

Their houses were located in suburban spaces farther north of Bogotá at La Merced and El Nogal (see Figure 2 for location in the map). The advertisements depicted two Tudor revival style houses seen from a low-angle viewpoint, one of them accompanied with detailed images of the interior design by someone identified as Yves Yagu. In contrast to the announcements from 1933 (Figure 6-Figure 7) these houses presented a design more contemporary that was based on the
English style, not the Spanish style. The contrast between the exterior and the interior design is remarkable. For the exterior, the English-style facade looks more contemporary than the Spanish revival style, but it is still a reinterpretation of a historical style that represented ideas of wealth and tradition. In contrast, the interior design fully uses a modern language: everything in the interior looks bright with plenty of light coming from everywhere. There is no heavy furniture or heavy volumes on the floor, and the space does not look cluttered, but looks almost minimalist. The Tudor revival style, as well as some other architectural styles, replaced the earliest references to traditional Spanish architecture in the late 30s.

Depending on the period, the adoption of different architectural styles can be interpreted from different perspectives. According to Prown and his studies on material culture, the notion of style reflects the societal values of a given period. For instance, the houses built by the late 1920s and early 30s were still built under the ideological influence of the conservative governments. The announcements from the early 1930s showing references to neocolonial Spanish architecture as well as the houses built in Teusaquillo after this style support this assertion. Architectural styles in the transition between the conservative and liberal hegemonies (during the first decades of the 20th century) can be seen as a declaration of the renewed interest in vindicating Colombia’s Spanish-Catholic descent.

Likewise, the adoption of English and American architectural styles by the late 30s can be seen as an intention of the liberal governments to put distance between them and their predecessors and also to represent their values. The Tudor style houses, and the American skyscrapers were appropriated by the liberal elites to represent cultural values allegedly opposed to those of the previous governments. The adoption of foreign styles can also reflect the anxiety in the quest for identity. The formal insecurity of the new Bogotan bourgeoisie created a cityscape in which the aesthetic of each building conveyed complex meanings and implications.
related to class identity that reflected not only their own desires but also confronted the rest of the inhabitants of the city. However, the adoption of foreign styles can also reflect a legitimate quest for the materialization of the utopia of modernity championed by the liberal elites to improve the living conditions of a broader segment of the population.

The adoption of foreign architectural styles can be seen as statement of status, distinction, and cosmopolitism. The exhibition of different styles can also illustrate the permanent cultural exchange between foreign cultures and the creole elites. The adoption of styles during this period not only happened in Colombia but in the U.S., and many other places. By identifying with stylish works of architecture, the owners would legitimate their status as well. Additionally, the portrayal of owners’ properties by the magazines granted them great visibility among Colombian society. The narratives and accompanying pictures in the magazines acted like monologues whereby the upper classes created an image of their imagined selves, reinforcing their sense of class identity. By establishing a connection between the houses’ architectural style and prominent people, the narratives established aesthetic parameters for the rest of the population.

Figure 10. Interior design by Yves Jagu for Nicolás Gómez Dávila’s house. Estampa, 1938. (Detail)
This is similar to Mukerji’s findings on the connection between social station and the built environment in which the values of the French society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were hierarchically organized around the symbolic values displayed by gardens and palaces of the aristocracy.345

In Colombia, Jacques Aprile and Gilma Mosquera were among the first urban historians to formally acknowledge the connection between architectural style/distribution of urban space and race and class.346 The correspondence between style and race and class is something that is continually reinforced in printed media. In spite of all the large-scale, well-intentioned governmental programs of the Liberal Republic, at a smaller scale the visual narratives went in a different direction. The images of the city and its architectural styles reinforced narratives of class identification that led to the establishment of cultural codes and contributed to the configuration of a segregated city. Through case studies of two different neighborhoods, La Perseverancia and Teusaquillo, I further illustrate the connection between architectural styles, the scopic regime (of that period), and the distribution and characterization of urban spaces.

**Rendering Class Identity: La Perseverancia vs. Teusaquillo**

The conflictive relationship between the traditional elite and the lower classes can be seen in the narratives created about each of them. *Estampa*, a magazine that began circulation in 1938, published a series of chronicles depicting the contrast between the lower classes and the elites. They emphasized the urban dwellings and the way of living of each social group, which is vividly illustrated through the chronicles of La Perseverancia and Teusaquillo. In these two narratives about two different neighborhoods, one can unmistakably see how the notion of citizenship in relationship to urban space was being constructed based on ideas of classification, hygiene, discipline, and strategies of control of the population by soft power and biopower.
La Perseverancia

On Saturday, July 20th, 1940, Estampa magazine published an article written by Luis Eduardo Abello and illustrated with photographs by an unknown photographer on the working class barrio La Perseverancia in Bogotá. The article was part of a series entitled “The Barrios of Bogotá.” The main image that accompanied the article was a photograph that was taken westbound, showing in the background Monserrate—a mountain that is also Bogotá’s most important landmark (Figure 11). In the foreground to the right, one can observe a woman in peasant’s clothes who is staring at the photographer. Other women wearing similar clothes can be seen to the left of the picture on their way up to the hill, followed by some children. Slightly to the right of this group of children, other children seem to be playing in the street or following the woman’s lead. Further behind the first woman, a group of people walks down the street behind a donkey loaded with goods. It is also possible to distinguish some lampposts that are located along the street in front of one-story houses made of white masonry and clay roof tiles. There are some two-story houses that have a more contemporary look because of the use of curved walls in their facades. The street seems pedestrian and for animal-pulled vehicles rather than for automobiles that were rare in lower-class areas at the time. The caption says, “This is the main street (and the best), of the barrio,” probably making reference not only to the houses but also to the fact that this was the only paved street. Overall, the streets of this barrio look rough and uneven, and the houses do not have front yards, gardens, or ornamental plants.
Abello describes La Perseverancia as a working-class neighborhood inhabited mostly by blue-collar workers. In assessing the neighborhood’s architectural characteristics, the author notes the presence of some “comfortable and elegant two story houses in the modern part of the barrio” that, according to the author, belonged to some wealthy tradesmen, giving “a sympathetic outlook to the block.” Throughout the account, the author makes references to moral and aesthetic qualities of the people and the architecture of this neighborhood.

The account continues with the upper part of the barrio where, according to the chronicler, smugglers, thieves, burglars, and all sorts of undesirable people live. The first subheading after this short paragraph describing the barrio reads “Thugs,” making reference to...
the people who inhabit the upper part of the barrio, the ones who are closer to the cerros orientales—the Andes, which, since Bogota’s foundation, have historically represented the easternmost limit of the city. These people were mostly displaced after the “authorities decided that they had to purify” the Paseo Bolívar, the area of the city where they lived before.348

Next, Abello describes the children of La Perseverancia who, according to his description, spend most of their days in the streets, loitering or playing street games. His conclusion after witnessing the children’s street life is that better public education should be implemented. He concludes that the only options in life for these children are lives of corruption and crime. The author’s concerns on this matter are reflected one more time in his last section, “Neighborhood way of life;” where he reiterates the lack of morality, temperance, and elegance of the people in this quarter.349

There are three more images accompanying the article representing different aspects of everyday life. One is a picture of children playing in the street with a caption that reads, “For their chinos [slang for kids]350 life is the same as it is at the aristocratic neighboring barrio of La Merced.”351 The caption accompanying the photograph of the marketplace reveals the concerns about the sanitary conditions that were being repeatedly discussed by the members of the local government. It states ironically, “the hygienic conditions of the market place are not precisely remarkable.” A final picture depicts a scene on a narrow street of the barrio that reads, “On the streets the donkey patiently pulls the carriage carrying the national liquor,” in reference to the Chicha, a fermented corn-based beverage of indigenous origin.

Abello’s description of La Perseverancia follows the cultural policies of the Liberal Republic in which ethnography was used to explore the lower classes and acknowledge their importance. The Linguistic and Ethnographic Atlas of Colombia and the creation of the Ethnologic Institute at the National University were some of the applications of those policies.
The tone used to describe La Perseverancia is condescending. The lower classes were seen as childish and in need of guidance, and this attitude can be noted when he recommends improvements in the infrastructure and makes judgments about La Perserverancia dwellers’ behavior.

Abello’s descriptions can also be seen in connection with the nineteenth-century narrative tradition of costumbrismo. Abello’s narrative follows a similar structure to the writings of authors such as José M. Marroquín, José M. Groot, and José M. Vergara y Vergara. Likewise, the pictures illustrating the article can be seen in connection with the costumbrista paintings.
made by Ramón Tórres Méndez in the second half of the 19th century. Although art critic Serrano claimed the existence of a social conscience in Torres’ paintings, it is also true that his paintings helped reinforce stereotypical notions of class and race. The depictions of lower classes previous to the costumbrista paintings were made through the genre known as casta paintings. In both cases, the costumbrista and the casta paintings, the lower classes were seen as troublemakers and were associated with unbecoming behaviors (Figure 12). 

The continued tradition since 18th century of depicting the lower classes’ behavior under the label of *costumbrismo* suggests the persistence of colonial visual conventions. Stereotypical representations of class, race, and gender existed in colonial and nineteenth-century Colombia, and even twentieth-century authors displayed these stereotypes, in spite of their liberal ideals. In this way, the outdated scopic regime prevailed, though mixed up with notions of control, discipline, and power that characterize modern institutions.
In contrast to how La Perseverancia was presented, the account of Teusaquillo shows how upper class sectors of the city were represented.

A week after the publication of the article about La Perseverancia, the same author, Abello, published an article about Teusaquillo, a newly developed sector of the city where most of the elites wanted to move or had already moved by that time.

The same process of suburbanization observed in England during the nineteenth century started belatedly in Bogotá by the 1920s and 30s. Upper class people started to move out of the inner city, running away from the hassle and dirtiness of a downtown that was left to commerce, office spaces, and boarding houses for poor people. The outcome was the development of the first upper-class suburbs, a development that had a dramatic impact on Bogotá. The upper classes were looking for the calm they felt they had lost in the downtown area, while lower classes found an opportunity to find their own space in the city.
The article entitled “Teusaquillo, Residential Quarter,” described Teusaquillo “essentially as an aristocratic neighborhood, residence for the elites, with plenty of Swiss style chalets, *quintas*, and mansions with nothing to envy from the residential neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, Rio de Janeiro, and Lima.” Teusaquillo was among those new urban developments whose houses were constantly promoted in papers and magazines. The presence of this neighborhood and other similar ones like La Merced, La Soledad, and El Nogal (see Figure 2 for location in the map) was ubiquitous in the printed media. One of the main attractions of these neighborhoods was the proximity to the soon-to-be inaugurated Parque Nacional or National Park.

The absence of people is a common trait of upper class neighborhoods. The opening image shows a Spanish colonial revival-style corner house with no people around or in front of it, compared to the overcrowded image of La Perseverancia (Figure 13). The two complementary images placed in the next page depict the neighborhood’s parks showing just a few children and a couple in the distance in a painterly manner. What seems to be a pervasive element in depictions of La Perseverancia—the people and children—is absent from the depictions of Teusaquillo, although there are occasional abstract references to people.

Instead, Teusaquillo’s description focuses on the architectural and urbanistic qualities of the neighborhood: the whiteness of the houses, the variety and internationalism of the styles, the wide and clean streets of the barrio, and the vegetation that is completely missing in La Perseverancia. There are no cars in the images, but the author mentions them as part of the beauty and elegance of what he calls “the most aristocratic neighborhood in town.” The cars that circulate in the wide avenues, “like smooth mirrors,” are also “the aristocracy of the automobile industry: Lincoln, Buicks, Mercedes.” The adjectives used to characterize the aesthetic qualities of *Teusaquillo’s* streets contrast with the ones used to describe the images of *La
Perseverancia in which most of the streets, if not all of them, are unpaved. The architectural beauty or the lack of it is presented hand in hand with the moral qualities of those who inhabited these sectors. The captions in the Teusaquillo article make reference to the architectural style and remark on how clean the neighborhood is as well as on the beauty and importance of green areas for children to safely play, accompanied by their nannies.

The way of living for the rich people who live in Teusaquillo is standard. It seems like wealthy people would have determined a fixed schedule of social activities. But it is not exactly because they like to imitate each other. Rather, I would say, the lifestyles of elegant people have identical rhythms. It is like a pendulum oscillating between partying, sport practicing, and being fashionable.

Both the images and the text harmoniously describe a pleasant aesthetic experience in which “beautiful” seems to be the most frequent and most suitable adjective for the author to describe not only the houses, the streets, and the gardens, but also the children and women of Teusaquillo. The overall narrative implies the approval and admiration, which contrasts with his narrative about the working-class neighborhood.

Both narratives show the author’s interest in making aesthetic assessments of everything in sight. The term beauty is used to create cohesion among equals but also to establish distance with the Other. For each of the urban landscapes and their inhabitants there is a proper set of adjectives: “Thugs,” “drunkards,” “greasy,” “rough,” and “smelly” are used to describe lower-class neighborhoods and their inhabitants, while “beauty,” “elegant,” “classy,” and “aristocratic” describe wealthy neighborhoods and inhabitants. The use of each set of adjectives along with the images illustrating the article, reinforce preexistent assumptions about class. Those assumptions also impacted the spatial distribution of the population in town and helped determine the visible and invisible boundaries between the different zones. The assessment of the lower classes’
spaces in the city was based on modernists’ principles of aesthetics, using the adjectives described above. Underlying these epithets was the necessity to create distance and distinctions by evoking feelings of disgust at something that is vulgar. By using this language to describe the lower classes, the author was implicitly expressing his own and the upper class’s superiority. According to Bourdieu, the expression of pure taste for the bourgeoisie and the language of its aesthetics are based on the rejection of the facile, which likewise is frequently associated with most characteristics of the popular. Aesthetics, morality, and ethics, work together to provide the seer with the power to assess, hierarchize, and classify everything in sight.

Although it is impossible to determine whether the readers of these magazines already held these judgments about these sites, the publication of these newly created elite magazines could have played a decisive role in reinforcing stereotypical notions about class. The way the magazine’s narratives were crafted helped reinforce narratives of class-consciousness while at the same time creating social codes of identification. On the eve of Latin American modernity, aesthetics and representations of the city were being used to demarcate the location of people in the city according to their social status.

The analysis of the images and narratives used to promote modern housing reveals the persistence of traditional values and a great resistance to change. The images analyzed reveal the problematic nature of the rhetoric behind the narratives around the cityscapes in Colombia: 1) The imagery of the city helped preserve the hierarchical structure of the colonial period in terms of the distribution of urban space. The colonial scopic regime did not disappear with modernity. 2) The imagery also reinforced the sense of dislocation of rural immigrants by establishing visual distinctions that made their differences more visible. 3) The images perpetuated stereotypical assumptions about race, class and gender by contrasting Colombian reality with foreign idealized models combined with local examples of ideal. 4) The images showed that modern forms of
representation and architectural knowledge were used by the elites to mark distinctions between classes rather than to provide opportunities for the whole society. Drawing and architectural schools were created, and plans and renderings from abroad were circulated, but this new, modern knowledge did not necessarily improve construction techniques or popularize international styles for the public good. 5) As the images show, the control of the discourse around architectural style and good taste was monopolized by the elites, and it was used as a mechanism of differentiation. The experience of the architecture of the city differed depending on social status; what was familiar and splendid for the upper class was segregating and probably snobbish for the rest. 7) The then contemporary notions of cultural heritage and patrimony were to a large extent still based on the hierarchical structures. Though the Colombian past was celebrated through common folklore, this folklore needed to be sanctioned and approved by the elites. In addition, foreign models were adopted to reinforce class identity and distinction, and high and low culture was largely divided. 8) Through the construction of visual narratives, the elites displayed their ambitions and their narrow conception of modernity in a sort of class-monologue that was not really intended to reach a broader audience.

The creation of a system of values, in which the gaze and the aesthetic of the elites mediated the social relations, provides an insight into a time period when Colombian society was starting to figure out both a national identity and how to be modern. This was also a period in which social tensions increased, and the imagery and the concepts of aesthetics and taste were used to define the self and the Other. The most intriguing aspect about these findings has to do with the relationship between the socially constructed visual values during this period and the beginning of La Violencia or The Violence by the end of the 1940s. With visually constructed values, I make reference to aesthetics and the way that it was used to negotiate class identity and how they were part of the symbolic violence that proceeded the actual violence of April 1948. In
the next chapter I discuss the different interpretations and uses of the notion of aesthetics and its role in determining the role of the newly created middle-class in the class warfare.
Chapter 5: The Uses of Aesthetics

During the 1930s and 1940s, it was not unusual to read articles written by politicians addressing the topics of aesthetics, art, and architecture and, overall, taste-related matters. These articles often demonstrated the ideological confrontations taking place during that time. Indeed, these articles about aesthetics provide insight into the polarization between conservatives and liberals during the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, through the analysis of these texts about aesthetics, it is possible to observe the sometimes-hidden and sometimes-exposed social tensions and how they were reflected in the human geography of Bogotá. In this chapter I look at the different uses of the notion of aesthetics and the terms that are usually associated with it. The first section presents an overview of the different uses and associations of aesthetics presented in the printed media, and its connection with art, ideology, and national identity. The second part presents a closer look at the use of the term by the Society of Improvements and Adornment of Bogotá (SMOB) in connection with feelings of shame and embarrassment as well as the effect of other cultures’ gaze on Colombian society. Lastly, I explore the use of the term to describe, evaluate, or make reference to the Other and its effect on the way people and spaces are distributed, appropriated or segregated in the city.

Aesthetics is not just decorative knowledge

During the Liberal Republic, aesthetics was part of the broader notion of culture. According to Colombian historian Renán Silva, during this period aesthetic experiences and cultural productions were paramount for the educational agenda of the government. The liberal intellectual culture was not only about the acquisition of some “decorative knowledge but also a repertoire of convictions that trustworthily would rule the people’s existence.” Culture was
also a way to connect and instill in the people a feeling of national unity. The use of images to convey this kind of philosophy, following the platonic model, was mostly thought of and implemented through film rather than through print media. According to Silva, the use of colored images on print media was first introduced through the Araluce Collection. The collection consisted of easy-to-digest books and summarized versions of classic literature that had the advantage, according to the advocates of this project, of making high-culture more accessible to the masses. Luis López de Mesa, another liberal intellectual at the time, described the Araluce Collection as “suitable for childish intelligences, or children of 10-14 years old, which also correspond to the intellectual stage of our rural population.” Because of the color images and the better printing quality, Samper Ortega, another liberal intellectual, classified this kind of work as entertainment pieces.

The Liberal government’s notion of culture, as already noted in chapter 4, was based on the conception of a split between high and low culture. High culture represented the dominant discourse whereas popular culture was considered part of the national identity. The former was the ruling force, controlled and produced by the elites, whereas the latter started to be considered part of Colombia’s national identity and, subsequently, was rescued and sometimes invented under the notion of folklore.

The term aesthetic was included in the realm of culture. Its use varied depending on the context, and it was a term mostly used by the elites. It was invariably and vaguely used to describe something beautiful, to evaluate the artistic value of an artwork, to approve or disapprove of an architectural project, or to describe behaviors and situations that were taking place in the city. Aesthetic was also used to make reference to stylistic concerns and to matters of taste and fashion, and it was undoubtedly used to create a sense of identity that usually involved matters of class, race, and ideology. The ideas about education that included the
conceptualization of culture and aesthetics during the Liberal Republic were undoubtedly based on Plato’s views on art. He believed art was not a reliable source of knowledge because art, in its different forms, was nothing but an untruthful copy of reality. For instance, paintings according to Plato were just appearances, like reflections in the mirror. Therefore, paintings were untrue because they rely on the senses. The way liberal thinkers thought about communicating with the population was based on the platonic assumption that senses are unduly influential essence so, they might be used for childish intelligences. This does not mean that this definition encompassed all the discussions or that everyone adopted it. At different levels and in different contexts the term was utilized with distinct nuances. Conceptions about art based on this platonic model will be referred to in the documents of the SMOB later in this chapter.

**Art and aesthetics in the local discourse on culture**

A rather common connection existed between art and aesthetic: artistic concepts were often used to make aesthetic assessments. Art criticism occupied a permanent space in the magazines and papers. The Bogotan intellectual elites always tried hard to keep up to date with the local production, the latest exhibitions, and the artistic trends from abroad. According to Colombian art historian Álvaro Medina, 1921, the year the magazine *Universidad* was released, represented a moment in which the reflection on art and aesthetics had some visibility during the first half of the twentieth century. Its circulation was suspended in 1922, and then it was reissued in 1927 to be put out of circulation in 1929. In spite of its short life, this magazine represented a significant advance by giving young artists a voice and a chance to be recognized as representatives of the avant-garde movement. Artists and intellectuals, such as Baldomero Sanín and Germán Arciniégas, both recognized for their anti-academicism, were founders and
collaborators of *Universidad*. The scope of this magazine and others such as *Voces*, and *Los Nuevos*, also referred by Medina, was limited due to their specificity.

In magazines such as *El Gráfico*, *Cromos*, and *Estampa*, literary and art criticism reached out to a more varied, although still very elitist audience. Germán Arciniégas, Darío Samper, Rafael Duque, Gustavo Santos, Jorge Zalamea, and Darío Achury published frequently in *El Tiempo* reviews and art criticism mostly on painting and sculpture that usually comprised notions on aesthetics. They commonly critiqued the artists’ mastery or lack of mastery of techniques, and they appraised the formal values of their artworks. Comparisons and references to world-renowned artists and exhibitions of that time were also made, sometimes to contrast their work with the work of local artists. Matters of nationalism were also frequently discussed, especially given the emergence of artists and movements that hoisted the flag of the construction of a national visual identity during that period.

However, a matter that seems to remains central to the discussion about aesthetics and culture during this period is the role they play in the class warfare. Ideas about the superiority of the people who were able to understand and engage with high-culture were recurrent. The liberal governments had the intention of reducing the divide between elite and popular culture, but the ideas circulating in the media frequently say otherwise. In 1933, *El Gráfico* published an article by Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset entitled “Unpopularity of New Art.” In his short essay, Ortega questioned the reasons new art forms are unpopular and concluded that all young artistic expressions needed to go through a phase of unpopularity. “Every young art is unpopular and not by chance but on the basis of an essential destiny.” Contrary to Romanticism that quickly conquered the masses because of its popular essence, the new art was not supposed to be for everyone. According to Ortega, the main characteristic of new art was that it divided its “audience in two different kinds of categories: the ones who understand it and the ones who do
not.” The “new art, unlike Romanticism, is not for everyone but for a specific golden minority.” He also remarked on how the ability to understand and make an aesthetic judgment about new art was a way to create a sense of identity among “the best of the best, allowing them to know each other and differentiate from the greyish horde of the mob.” Ortega’s critique can be seen from two perspectives: on the one hand, it fits the above-mentioned description of Plato’s views on aesthetics as subordinated to reason. This can be seen in Ortega’s critique against the art and aesthetics of Romanticism and its facile pleasures, which were easily felt and experienced by the general public because of their representational nature. However, Ortega acknowledges that reason is necessary to understand modern art. This modern art was part of a philosophical system that could not to be reached by ordinary people. Ortega asserts that aesthetics were used for ideological purposes do establish distance between ordinary people and the ruling elites.

Also, Ortega’s observations about art were mediated by his criticism of the populist dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain. His contempt for the masses and their inability to understand modernist art was linked to his contempt for the dictatorship and the complaisant bourgeoisie that supported it. Although little is known about how elites responded to Ortega’s ideas, it is not difficult to imagine that Ortega’s ideas should have been well received by the Colombian elite, independent of the similarities or differences in the political situation in Spain. The twofold use of aesthetics as part of a strategy of segregation and for the creation of a class identity was not part of the discourse of the Colombian elites but it was deeply embedded in their ethos.
Narratives on aesthetics, ideology, and identity

Indeed, the realm of aesthetics and the discussions around it started to be part of the arguments used in ideological confrontations.\(^{372}\) This phenomenon can be observed in the elaborate political discourses published in newspapers and in casual conversations among colleagues. Also, artworks were objects of ideological, institutional, and personal confrontations. Because of their symbolic importance, they could be used to support one belief or another. In fact, discourses about evaluating artworks in Colombia were similar to those in Nazi Germany at the time. According to Medina, some elements of racism, classism, and anti-communism influenced members of the Colombian conservative party. In the late 1940s Laureano Gómez, a conservative leader published a diatribe against the Hebraic influence in the new art forms.

One of the modern world’s and modern intelligence’s big mistake has been to pretend to guarantee the triumph of reason over nature…with cynicism, those who have… imported to the country Hebraic elements, after being repulsed and expelled from overseas, those who have been in charge of the sacrilegious task of destroying… the national soul and replacing it with slushy universalists ideas used by Judaism to disguise their thirst for domination as well as their hate for Christianity.\(^{373}\)

According to Medina, the hostility towards young modernist artists during that period was not only at the level of discourse, but there was physical persecution of them. Some art pieces were destroyed; others were banned from exhibition. In Medellín, the School of Fine Arts was closed down just to thwart director Pedro N. Gómez’s efforts to renovate the School under the government of Mariano Ospina.\(^{374}\) Medina also presented the case in which the works of the painter and sculptor Rómulo Rozo were criticized because of the proximity of their contents to ideas that mixed Americanism and indigenismo\(^{375}\) with Marxist ideology.\(^{376}\) Associations
between Marxist ideology and bad taste were also made, especially when making reference to
the use or distribution of urban space.

*Indigenismo*, an ideology that aimed to create a national identity independent of foreign
influences, was part of another aesthetics-related topic during this period that was related to the
construction of a national sentiment. According to Martínez, just after three decades of
independent life from Spain, Colombia discovered the problem of the visual representation of a
nation through the World Fairs.\(^{377}\) For the Colombian elites, it was a matter of how to represent
themselves and their nation to the civilized world in order to be part of it or at least to think that
they were part of it. Martínez illustrated how shocking it was for the Colombian voyagers to see
themselves as the exotic representatives of an unknown and visually and materially
underrepresented nation. This sentiment continually grew for the rest of the nineteenth century
and was paramount in the formation of a national identity, at least among the elites.

By the late nineteenth century, during the so-called *Regeneración* or Regeneration, the
conservative governments that had held power for 40 years since 1886 reaffirmed their identity
based on their Spanish descent and Catholic faith. On the other hand, in the 1930s and 40s, the
liberal governments constructed their notion of Colombian identity around the idea of *mestizaje*.
This sentiment materialized through the formation of different artistic nationalist movements that
raised questions about national identity. The Bachué group was the most visible of these
movements. In 1930 *El Gráfico* published a short manifesto written by Darío Achury that stated
that the Bachué’s main goal was “to Colombianize Colombian.”\(^{378}\) Starting in 1930 and
continuing into the 1940s, Achury managed to keep positions of power and remained one of the
most influential cultural agents during the Liberal Republic and one of the main advocates of
national identity. More than a decade later in 1941, he continued working on the notion of
“Colombianness,” the “ideal of an untouched and unique native-born culture.”\(^{379}\)
Aesthetics was a terrain of permanent negotiation on matters of class, race, and gender, independent of political affiliation. Likewise, aesthetics was commonly attached to the idea of betterment in discussions on three different topics: class struggle, aestheticization of ideological discourses, and national identity. The scope of these discussions and their capacity to reach the general public is difficult to determine, especially given the scarcity of information about the cultural magazines of that period. However, there are different institutional spaces where discussions about the city aesthetic and urban beauty were being held. Such is the case of the SMOB.

**Aesthetics at the SMOB**

On the occasion of the inauguration of Enrique Olaya, the first president of the political period known as the Liberal Republic, the associates of the SMOB addressed a letter to him in support of his election. Among many other things, the SMOB reiterated their patriotism and support to the newly elected president, especially regarding everything related to the progress of the nation and the betterment of its capital. Bogotá was referred by the SMOB associates as the “household and brain of the fatherland.” In particular, the Society was advocating for the promotion of Bogotá as an international tourist destination, for the construction of green areas within the city limits, the improvement of sanitation, the construction of streets that would ease the connection amongst the different parts of the city, and the construction of housing projects for the working class.

The Society was first created under the name of Society of Embellishment in 1916 and was later on renamed Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato de Bogotá. Because members of SMOB were interested in city betterment, it was important for them to remain in contact with the people in power and even hold positions of power themselves. The SMOB members liked to define their
institution as an apolitical entity whose aim was the embellishment of the city, although it proved impossible for them to remain neutral in all situations. In its name the Society implied the notion of aesthetics. In the SMOB historical archive, the term estético/aesthetic or antiestético/unaesthetic is frequently used in connection with a wide spectrum of topics, from sanitation to matters of class, ideology, and national identity.

The use of the term aesthetic during the early 1930s was associated with matters of hygiene, sanitation, and the appearance of things, especially gardens and billboards. Since 1935, due to the imminence of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the city, the term was still used in the same vein but also in a broader sense to make reference to the external look of buildings and places in the city.

For instance, constructions in the city, according to the SMOB, were supposed to follow a certain canon, both legal and aesthetic. This aesthetic was used to support law amendments or to create and enforce regulations for demolishing old and constructing new buildings. In order to show that a building was in need of “more aesthetic” or deserved to be demolished, technical descriptions of the buildings were presented along with qualities being assessed. Often, the SMOB wanted to get rid of old buildings because their location thwarted city growth and modernization. In 1935, when discussing turning the city center into a Capital District, the associates remarked on how money from taxes and funding could help to get rid of run-down buildings and to develop some areas of the city.

This society, through the Ministry of Interior, kindly asks the executive power to formulate the constitutional reforms to allow the creation of the Capital District, which is an urgent measure that cannot be postponed, for the administrative reorganization of Bogotá’s municipality and to foster its prosperity, as well as the reformation of the
Constitutional Charter, in order to create an incremental city tax to ruinous buildings, unaesthetic, as well as for the vacant plots within the built-up area of Bogotá.  

In this case, the term unaesthetic is used to describe a building or a part of the city that is aesthetically unpleasant, and it can be seen as an honest effort to better the built environment, but it can also be understood from the perspective of the underlying economic interests at stake. The aesthetic judgment represented the socially constructed value of taste and aesthetic, but normativity was still necessary to guarantee the desired outcome. The concern around normativity was presented under the heading “Unlawful Constructions.”

Taking into account that over the last years, several buildings and houses have been constructed and reconstructed, displaying ornamental motifs, windows, balconies, pillars, etc., that stand out from the paramento [construction line formed by the façade of a group of buildings in a given street] and reach out to the street for more than five centimeters from the vertical face of the abovementioned boundary, up to three meters tall, standing out even more on the upper part… The SMOB, as warrantor of the urban interests and progress of this city, kindly asks the Mayor to make the necessary arrangements for these construction licenses to be suspended… in order to avoid breaking the laws around this matter and to prevent future harm against the beauty and the embellishment of the city.

In this case, the notion of aesthetics paralleled the notions of beauty and embellishment, but the overall argument was based on the promulgation of new laws and the enforcement of the existent ones. The call for law enforcement about these matters represents a call for order and uniformity among the perceived chaotic situation in the changing built environment of the city, especially in the downtown area. Since the SMOB counted among its members lawyers, engineers, physicians, architects, painters, authors and poets, the speeches presented in the meetings usually covered a wide spectrum of perspectives. This diversity is noted in the
language of the speeches, which was a mix of very technical descriptions and formal as well as often elaborate prose. Though each profession had particularities of expression, the notion of aesthetics is permanently present or implied and usually appears as the concluding point of an argument.

In some other cases the arguments were based on modern design principles such as symmetry, harmony, and composition. In some cases the SMOB addressed both functional problems and aesthetic issues.

Unaesthetic Gutters: The SMOB make remarks to the municipal authorities on the unaesthetic appearance of the gutters in the balconies of a recently finished building, built at the northeastern intersection of Carrera 4th and Calle 13th, with its outbound pipes without any kind of symmetry. The SMOB expects the municipality to forbid this kind of practice in the future.383

Combining aesthetics with modernist concepts can also be seen in the notions of functionality and pragmatism. These remarks were based on the assumption that the architecture of the city, especially institutional architecture, should contribute to the public wellbeing through the design of their facades.

Public Buildings and Aesthetic: Mr. Cifuentes complains about the lack of aesthetics but most of all about the lack of weather-wise considerations in the buildings that are now being constructed. For instance, the building of the Municipal Prendario Bank at the calle 9a and Carrera 9a that is currently in construction. The façade of this building does not provide cover for pedestrians in rainy days that are most days in this city.384

The notion of aesthetics was also frequently used in discussions about the appearance of city landmarks, especially before special occasions. Discussions on the appearance of the Plaza de Bolívar were held in preparation for the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the city’s
foundation in 1938, and for the 9th Pan-American conference in 1948. The discussion on these two occasions focused on the convenience of keeping or demolishing ornamental elements at the Plaza. In the years preceding the anniversary celebration, the members of the SMOB differed in their views about the convenience of the fountains (Figure 14) installed in the Plaza in 1929 after the designs of the renowned engineer Alberto Manrique,\(^\text{385}\) who was also member of the SMOB. Concerns about the aesthetics, hygiene, and moral of the fountains were raised.

4th Centenary of Bogotá: …Observations to be presented to the board of the 400th anniversary of the city… about the following aspects: to the necessity of retirement of the luminous fountains from the Plaza de Bolívar and also all the things concerning the sanitation of the Paseo Bolívar. Concerning this, the doctors Arias Argáez and Garzón Nieto observed… that it was indispensable for the betterment of the city’s hygiene, aesthetics, and morals.\(^\text{386}\)

Again, the association between aesthetics and morals pretends to seal the argument about the assessment of a public monument. These fountains, created a few years before, represented an innovation because of their lighting system. However, the Society consistently opposed their construction based on considerations of pragmatism and functionality.

Against the Luminous Fountains: …The SMOB, considering that it is necessary to fix the unaesthetic work made at the Plaza de Bolívar, something the SMOB opposed since the beginning of its construction, that the luminous fountains installed over there, barely get to function for just a few evenings a year, resolves: to make a call for local architects to participate in a design contest intended to improve the outlook of the Plaza.\(^\text{387}\)
Throughout its history, the Plaza de Bolivar had hosted the major political events and was the center of the most meaningful elements of Colombia’s symbolic universe, which explains why the discussions around its look were so frequent and passionate.
In 1948, prior to the inauguration of the 9th Pan-American conference, the discussion on aesthetics focused once again on the plaza. The fountains were no longer an issue, having been demolished, but the discussion now was around the unaesthetic presence of four large-scale spheres in each corner of the plaza. The main problem concerning these balls, from the perspective of the SMOB, was the obstruction of the sight of the Capitol and “more specifically, the sight of the statue of the ‘Liberator’ [Simón Bolívar], [Pietro] Tenerani’s masterwork.”

The realization of the Pan-American conference in 1948 and the simultaneous assassination of the populist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán had an impact on the discussions at the SMOB and also led to a slightly different approach to the use of the term aesthetics. Until 1945,
discussions dealing with the notion of aesthetics were around topics that can be classified into three general categories: 1) Discussions about normativity in relation to the observance of construction codes, 2) Discussions about the modern or anti modern look of things, 3) Discussions held before special occasions such as the city anniversary in the late 30s or the Pan-American conference in the late 40s. These categories do not contain all of the aspects discussed at the SMOB about aesthetics, but they represent the most recurrent topics during the 1930s and the mid 1940s. By the late forties the political and social changes of the country started to be reflected both in the cityscape and in the discussions around aesthetics.

**City, National Identity, and Embarrassment**

Members of the Colombian elite were perpetually concerned with the way they were perceived and acknowledged by people in Europe during the nineteenth century and later on, by the turn of the twentieth century, also by people in the U.S. According to Martínez, Colombian elites who traveled to Europe experienced culture shock, and the scorn of Europeans who were ignorant of and prejudiced towards South American countries was the driving force in the construction of a nationalist sentiment. Still, whenever the Europeans or people from the U.S. visited Colombia, the elites looked for approval even as they were seeking to display their national identity. There are several topics that were frequently mentioned in the debates surrounding the matter of national identity. Overall, the debates were about the symbolic and historical value of some of the buildings and monuments of the city. These monuments were expected to legitimately represent some aspect of the national culture. In some cases, they were meant to pay tribute to Colombia’s Spanish cultural legacy and also to the values and traditions of the Catholic Church. In other cases, the proposed or debated object of tribute was about the “indigenous race,” and in some other cases it was about honoring famous characters and heroes.
from world history, and also to praise modernity. The topics remained constant over the two
decades, but depending on the social and political climate, more emphasis was put on one topic
or the other. Again, the proximity of celebratory dates intensified the debate around the topic and
revealed different nuances.

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the complaints or comments around monuments were
mostly to have them cleaned up. In some cases the notion of aesthetics was linked to that of
patriotism; this can be seen in the discussion held around issues with the statue and gazebo of the
Libertador at Centennial Park (Parque del Centenario) that the SMOB interpreted as an affront to
the aesthetic and the patriotic sentiment. On many occasions, the discussions revolved around
the relocation of statues, such as the Mariscal Sucre statue in 1930, the Christopher Columbus
statue, or the Isabella of Castile statue. In these cases, the arguments to support the relocation
of the monuments were based on the necessity to look for a better place to display their
“outstanding artistic merit.” Other matters were also taken into consideration during this
debate, such as the symbolism of the monument in relation to its location in the city. During the
discussion and in an effort to convince the other members of the SMOB, José Miguel Rosales
read out loud an article he wrote about the aesthetic issues of these statues. He supported his
argument by making reference to foreign cityscapes.

Relocation of the statues of Colón, Isabella, and Nariño: … I believe Mr. Director that it
would be convenient to move these statues to a more appropriate place. Those figures of
heroic scale, looking to each other from landmark to landmark [sic], barely separated by
the avenue [the Colón Avenue] …that in spite of being wide enough, here it renders
narrow due to the scale and height of the monuments… In my opinion they need more
space to show their magnificent proportions and their artistic merit… I suggest the
relocation of the statue of Colón to an open place like the Plaza de San Victorino, the
place in which the avenue named after him starts; and that of Isabella the Catholic, to be relocated at the Plaza de España, because it would be fair for the statue of the great queen to be placed in a spot that honors the motherland. And here we ask our readers: what about Nariño, precursor of our liberties, and the most heroic character of the independence wars? Nariño, the legislator, the warrior, the martyr, he will be placed at the Plazuela de Bavaria that, in spite of being a Plazuela [small plaza] nowadays, soon we are going to be able to turn it into a Square [not a Plaza] true to the English style.394

A similar case in which the discussion about national identity mixed elements of aesthetic and foreign reference took place in 1935 when Alfonso Cifuentes proposed to replace the statue of Policarpa Salavarrieta, or La Pola, and build a new one because the statue lacked artistic merit and “the minimum required aesthetic qualities.”395 Eduardo Restrepo disagreed, saying that the statue of La Pola, which was created by a Colombian sculptor, was very good, whereas the Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada statue was not and deserved censure. An unknown individual replied to Restrepo by stating, “a statue such as La Pola should not be censored,” and that even in Europe, imperfect statues were preserved for “superior considerations rather than merely matters of taste.”396

*Looking for Identity: the Motherland*

Reflection around the national identity usually included references to foreign cultures; references to Europe were the most frequent. They concerned both classic European culture and also modern Europe. These references usually compared some aspect of Bogotá with aspects of European cities. There was always a special reference to the Spanish culture, usually referred to as the culture from the motherland. For instance, in a session of 1935 Max Grillo expressed his concern on the lack of attention paid to “motherland Spain,” especially regarding the upcoming
400th anniversary celebration. Grillo’s concerns had to do with the mediocrity of the monument in the Plaza de España that did not pay tribute to the grandeur of the “language and tradition of our Spanish ancestors.” By the end of the session, the SMOB agreed to present a proposition to the city government to get it replaced.

The next year, in 1936, there was another debate surrounding the topic of Colombia’s national identity in connection to motherland Spain. Luis Cuervo and Daniel Ortega proposed to pay a tribute to “Don Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, son of the motherland Spain, to whom we owe the legacy, that now we can mirror, of courage, perseverance, and civility.” Later in 1943, after the anniversary celebration, there were still voices that wanted more of a Spanish cultural presence in the streets of Bogotá. The call was made by Jorge Bayona to commemorate “one of the most likeable colonial rulers, the Viceroy Solís, by constructing a building and naming it after him.” In the same year, in conjunction with the Colombian Academy of History, there was a proposition to create a monument honoring the conquistadors, settlers, and the evangelizers. An equestrian statue of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada should crown all the imagery representing the former historical characters. Reference to or requests about the erection of a monument honoring the indigenous ancestry were also made but lacked the same enthusiasm and emphasis put into the other notions of identity. All of the monuments planned and discussed for the city at the SMOB were representational artwork like Jiménez’s equestrian statue. Likewise, SMOB members discussed modern aesthetics as perverted forms of art.

Looking for Identity: the Indigenous

Alongside the construction of a monument for the founders, the SMOB also considered a monument to commemorate the “indigenous race.” This initiative was mentioned during the preparatory meetings for the centenary in 1935 but no further references were found during the
course of this research about such a monument. Nor does it, or any other reference to the
indigenous legacy, appear in the *Album of Bogotá*, a visual inventory of the city released by the
SMOB. The lack of propositions and resistance towards native cultural manifestations was
possibly due to the rejection of the *indigenismo* movement years before, as pointed out by
Medina, or due to the well-established tendency in most of the *mestizo* Colombian population
to reject any associations with the indigenous. According to Medina, the rejection of the so-called indigenization of art “was complemented by the rejection of any social connotation of art,
especially if it made reference to agrarian issues or the proletariat.” The members of the
SMOB were surely aware of the debate that was being held around this issue, not only in
Colombia, but also in the main capitals of Latin America. In Latin American societies, the lack
of agrarian reform and the subsequent unequal distribution of land and wealth were two of the
biggest unresolved issues from the past.

This rejection of indigenous art and preference for the classical tradition in art suited
people with conservative views, many liberals included, and people directly affiliated with the
conservative party. The polarized political climate and the association of *indigenismo* and
Americanism with Marxism and communism was something that definitely had an impact on
this cultural current. Likewise, the idea of a national identity was permanently mediated by the
consciousness of other cultures’ critical views of Colombian national culture and a desire to be
acknowledged as part of the civilized world.

*The Consciousness of Other Cultures’ Gaze*

One of the most sensitive areas of the city to cultural assessments from outsiders was the
Western Avenue or the *Carretera de Occidente* (see Figure 2k for location in the map). Since the
early 1500s this avenue had been the main point of access for people coming from abroad. In the
1930s the concerns about this point of access to the city were related to its maintenance and also to how it should look to strangers. In one of their sessions in 1936, the members of the SMOB made an “insinuation” to the Ministry of Public Works about the fixing and paving of the Carretera de Occidente “at least from the point of access in Techo (the local airport), that represents the first and last impression for travelers.”

As already pointed out after Martínez’s studies on the nineteenth-century Colombian elite, the consciousness about the visual identity of the country was something that also triggered feelings of shame in connection to the aesthetic of the city. In 1935, the SMOB debated a project for a sculpture in memory of the liberal leader Rafael Uribe, who had been assassinated in 1914. Daniel Arias Argáez presented a report on the activities around the construction of the monument that was being coordinated by the Ministry of Public Works with the assistance of the SMOB. The deliberations concerned the placement of the Uribe statue on one of the walls of the Capitol. Julio Garzón Nieto, engineer and member of the SMOB, expressed his dislike of the project, stating, “It would be embarrassing to have to keep informing both foreigners and future generations about the killing of Rafael Uribe in that place.” Arturo Jaramillo, an architect who was involved in the design and construction of other monuments, wrapped the discussion up using design-based arguments, expressing the inconvenience of having a three dimensional sculpture placed against the wall, and then proposing alternative locations.

The reference to European culture was frequent and sometimes conflictive, but it was always necessary, especially when trying to find a reference of the ideal modern city and its corresponding culture. According to Martínez, the motor of the “national” sentiment was the scorn, the prejudices, and overall, the ignorance of Europeans towards Latin America. Undoubtedly, the idea of an imaginary ideal city was usually based on the imagery collected by the elites in their different travels to European and American cities.
Elites, with their attachment to traditional values, were sometimes confronted with problems in the application of European and American style modernity. This was noticeable in the discussions involving the demolition of some colonial buildings or the proliferation of vehicles, a phenomenon that was relatively new for the city. In their discussions it is possible to observe the use of new terms and foreign words as well as references to Europe or the United States.

Since the automobiles and the rest of the vehicles are a private good, their owners should provide the things that are necessary for them to work properly, namely: to pay for the gas, and cover the ‘garage’ expenses, chauffeur and parking spot fees, in the style of the main capitals of Europe and America.

In different sessions during the same year other topics were addressed in which the reference to Europe also contained references to discussions on landscaping and on the philosophy of beauty. In the following case, values are identified and attributed to different countries of origin. On this occasion, the debate was around a pine tree located in the southeast corner of the Plaza de Santander that some people wanted to cut down. Max Grillo opposed the idea of cutting down the tree by referring to the beauty of the pine and pointing out how somebody had already cut one of its branches out. “The idea of destroying this tree and the others is an idea of Spanish origin; it does not have the same consideration, respect, and care that the Englishmen have for their trees.” Based on this comment it can be inferred that Grillo was familiarized with the discussions on the theory of beauty and with the nineteenth-century discussions on the philosophy of the aesthetic and taste.
The Feeling of Shame

The reference to Europe had a twofold effect on the elites: it helped feed their craving for modern thinking, and it served as an ideal for modern styles of living and aesthetics. More importantly, it helped them be more aware of the precariousness of their own built environment. The sentiments of shame and embarrassment were triggered by their self-consciousness about their own image, but the reference to Europe also provided them with a sort of mirror in which they wanted to be reflected. The dissonance between the two images, the one projected by European and U.S. cities and that of Colombian cities, also helped to reinforce the feeling of shame as well as the consciousness of the dissonant aesthetic of the majority of the country’s population. Members of the Colombian elite developed feelings of shame when they compared their reality to the reality of European cities, as discussed in Martínez’s studies on the nineteenth century Colombian elites.414 Some archetypical views of the cityscape were certainly derived from the elites’ contact with European and American modernity. According to Martínez cosmopolitism was a way for elites to legitimate their power and, as Bourdieu would put it, to acquire cultural capital and to nurture their political projects.415

Towards the late 1940s there are some references that do not include a sense of embarrassment for the city, but instead include a sense of embarrassment for the people who inhabited the city and their dwelling spaces. One concern that was frequently expressed during the years prior to the 9th Pan American Conference in Bogotá was related to the Department of Immigration of the Bogotá Police Department. This concern was that visitors from abroad frequently encountered local people of the lowest condition, and the SMOB called for the creation of a segregated space in order to keep the “country’s decorum.”416

The Central Cemetery was one of the places in which the word decorum had several implications, especially because of its symbolic value. Most of the national heroes were buried
there but also the lower classes. This space followed the same logic of the city in which a central space determined the importance of the people buried there. That was determined by the proximity of the grave to the symbolic and geometric center of the cemetery. However, and almost mirroring some of the problems pointed out about the city, the sight of the lower classes in and around the cemetery did not fit the ideal image that the elites wanted to project to the visitors:

Grubby Boys at the Cemetery: The associate Cifuentes talks about the grubby aspect of the boys that work around the Central Cemetery. There is a reigning sense of abandon surrounding that place that will give the wrong idea to the visitors. [The president of the SMOB suggests sending a note to the municipality]. Mrs. Currea de Aya [complements saying] that these boys still do not reach the minimum working-age… Consequently, they should not be working, especially the girls…

There were also references to the bad reputation of nationals, not only within the country, but also abroad, which is something that became part of the stereotypical narratives about Colombians. The sense of shame and embarrassment in connection to national visual identity was deepened by the events of April 9th, 1948 when the popular liberal leader Jorge E. Gaitan was assassinated. Class warfare intensified and violence erupted. The SMOB avoided discussing those events, especially given their violent and popular nature. In the SMOB sessions after April 9th, references are made to the damages, especially those suffered by the Archbishop’s Palace and other churches. In the session of October 27th, one of the associates proposed to congratulate Margarita Herrera, a “distinguished Bogotan lady,” for her “civility and Catholicism” in donating her valuable property to reconstruct the Archbishop’s Palace. She was contributing to the “attenuation of the shameful attacks suffered by the Catholic Church during the tragic April incidents.” The narratives around the aesthetic of the city changed the nature of the
discussions at the SMOB during the course of those two decades. The political climate of polarization that led to the assassination of Jorge E. Gaitán was also reflected in a different use and interpretation of the term aesthetic. The use of the term during the second half of the 1940s, especially after April 9th 1948, put more emphasis on matters of class and ideology. More than ever before, the elites were aware of and discussed uses of aesthetics and culture in the Foucaultian sense of disciplinary power to control, shape, punish and produce the docile bodies that were needed for the modern local project.420

**The Unaesthetic Sight of the Lower classes**

The use of aesthetics on behalf of the elites was paramount in defining boundaries of class and shaping the built environment. One of the variables the SMOB had permanently to deal with was related to the population. Buildings could be simply torn down but people, their views and their manners, could not be so easily dealt with or removed. The terms aesthetic and unaesthetic were frequently used to describe an agglomeration of poor people, peasants, and beggars.421 The presence of these people had a negative effect on the beauty of the city, particularly in *chicherías*, market places, and the cemetery, among others. The discursive practices of the incipient institutions of modernity that started to take shape in this period could not afford to share space with practices and discourses that did not fit their idea of modernity. The elites, for instance, looked down upon places such as *chicherías*, market places, and cemeteries—places that dealt with bodily functions (eating, drinking, talking out loud, decomposing bodies, suffering, crying, and mourning losses) and where the lower classes’ cultural practices could be observed. When in contact with these places, elites responded with feelings of distance and disgust as well as desires to bring discipline to these places. This relate to Simmel’s understanding of the life of the individuals in modern cities and confirm and it also
help reaffirming Bogotá’s transition to modernity. In a similar vein to Europe, the Bogotan elites developed aversion and mechanisms to evade and to be able to cope with the overwhelming amount of unpleasant stimuli.423

Traditional practices related to charity were described by the SMOB as unaesthetic spectacles in the city. The complaints related to the beneficiaries of charity and the lower classes were mostly associated with bodily functions. Because of the complaints of the SMOB, the provost of the Seminary Conciliar decided to suppress what they considered a “deplorable spectacle”—the distribution of leftovers to the beggars in the seminar. Additionally, they blocked the street for pedestrians and vehicles.424 One option to solve the problem of undesirable people in the city was to group and relocate them to a new place. In 1936, beggars and the undesirables of the Paseo Bolívar (see Figure 2h for location in the map) were associated with problems of sanitation, healthcare and educational coverage for children, violence, and security.425 The proposed solution was to relocate this marginalized population of Paseo Bolívar to a “special barrio where the most undesirable people of the city can live. A place [4km away from the city] where they can have access to plots and farms, and provide them with an option to work and find redemption from their miserable lives.”426

Another site where lower classes frequently created an undesirable spectacle in downtown was around the Palace of Justice. Once again, the SMOB informed the chief of police about the inconvenience of having these people there, between fifth and sixth (carreras) on 11th street. The visual discomfort provided by overcrowded places with poor people was pointed out under modern notions of hygiene and comfort.

The overcrowding of not too clean people around the Palace of Justice and its neighborhood is creating an uncomfortable and unaesthetic scene. The SMOB trusts that
the chief of police will arrange the alignment \textit{sic} of all these details that conspire against the aesthetic and hygiene of Bogotá.\textsuperscript{427}

During the 1930s and 1940s, several places in the city were pinpointed by the SMOB as the source of these problems, and these places covered almost the entire downtown area. The Central Market Place, the \textit{chicherías}, the Central Cemetery, the prison, the churches, and some institutional buildings were among the most frequent ones to be named. All of these spaces in the city represented places where poor people had to go on a daily basis to deal with their affairs. However, and because of their dislocated character, it was not unusual that they ended up either in prison or in the cemetery. The Central Penitentiary presented the “additional problem” of neighboring La Perseverancia, a working class neighborhood that was frequently mentioned as the source of several problems.

In 1946, there was a discussion about the moving of the Central Penitentiary to a new place called La Picota or The Pillory. The SMOB discussed the decision of Germán Arciniégas, minister of education, to assign the former space occupied by the penitentiary to the Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca or Main University of Cundinamarca. Beautiful gardens would surround the building that according to the SMOB was situated in one of the most beautiful sites of the modern city.\textsuperscript{428} Guillermo H. de Alba remarked on the benefits of moving the penitentiary to a different place. The aesthetic of the city would be greatly improved if the prison and the people associated with the prison were removed. According to H. de Alba, refurbishing and assigning a different function to this place would allow the city to get rid of the “ugly walls, the display of poor people in the entrance,” but also to save the museums that are the guardians of the fatherland, and advocate for a better education, while cooperating with the problems of modern Bogotá.\textsuperscript{429}
Roberto Arias replied to these arguments by reminding the other members of the SMOB that the society was not only about embellishment, and the social function of “having a prisoner cannot be compared to that of having a painting” [in reference to the proposition of using part of the building to host a new seat of the National Museum]. In support of Arias, Jorge Esguerra also condemned the ingrained habit of pushing apart the buildings from the destiny they were created for. Besides, Esguerra continued, “Bogotá is, and par excellence, the despicable-thieves’-capital and if it became deprived of its prisons what would it be of it?”430 Lastly, Aparicio Perea in support of the idea of turning the prison into a College, reminded the society that the prison was in close proximity to La Perseverancia, a marketplace where people sold and ate food and where animals were loaded with bundles of reed and food. That proximity contributed to the aesthetic decline of the surrounding areas of the prison.

In addition, the funerary rites of the lower classes were at odds with the civilizing project of the elites. In 1946, the presbyter Rudesindo López presented a report of observations on the behavior of poor people in the cemetery, as part of their funerary rituals, which “was a real shame, inappropriate of a civilized society.”431 To solve this problem he proposed to keep the lower classes from being buried in the Central Cemetery and send them off to the South Side Cemetery or Cementerio del Sur. Although López alerted the audience about its likely negative reception, especially from “some irresponsible minds,” to López, the problem of implementing that idea was that it could have been seen as another attempt of the oligarchy to fuel the class warfare.432

A slight change in the narrative about class and aesthetics can be noticed in the meetings of the SMOB around 1948. Suddenly, lower classes seem to have increased their notoriety, gaining more attention from the SMOB. These changes seemed to happen for two different reasons: 1) the proximity of the Pan American Conference increased the consciousness about a
national identity that was going to be put on full display in the city. 2) The already existent social
tensions among classes intensified because of the realization of the international event, especially
after the assassination of Jorge E. Gaitán.

**Reinforcing Narratives of Class**

The narratives about class identity gained importance and the complaints about the lower
classes’ outlook and behavior intensified. In terms of class identification of the upper classes at
the SMOB, the notion of tradition and all of its subsidiary terms such as patrimony, cultural
heritage, and lineage were recurrent topics. In spite of the liberal predominance over the two
decades of study, the notion of tradition belonged to the deep-rooted Spanish-Catholic cultural
milieu derived from almost 400 years of colonialism. Consequently, the forces of progress and
modernity faced confrontation and were counter balanced by the forces of tradition and
persistence.

The topic of tradition was constantly debated at the SMOB and usually appeared in the
forms of discussions of the notions of patrimony, cultural heritage, and lineage. The term
patrimony was used to make reference to material culture, mostly to the built environment,
whereas the term cultural heritage was frequently connected to matters of language, Spanish
legacy, and Catholicism. The discourse of lineage inherited from the colonial period was
revamped during this period in the form of genealogies, and it seemed to have been well received
by everybody, independent of political stance. The work of genealogists Raimundo Rivas and
José M. Restrepo was praised and became paramount in the construction of the identity of the
SMOB. From a historical perspective, Rivas’ works paid tribute to Spain, exalting the attributes
of the motherland. To emphasize the connection between his genealogies of Colombian elites
and his tribute to Spain, he used elevated vocabulary and references to chivalrous imagery. From
a genealogical perspective, Rivas emphasized the connection with Spain to reinforce the sense of class superiority. His ideological bias and his sense of tradition in connection with Spain can be read in his prose and in the title of some of his books: *Fundadores de Bogotá or Founders of Bogotá, El Andante Caballero Don Antonio Nariño or The Wandering-Knight Don Antonio Nariño, the Genealogies of Santafé y Bogotá*. His love for motherland Spain was even transmitted to children in the textbooks he wrote: “Reina Isabel primera / Noble Dama sin mancilla / en los campos de Castilla / y al par en España entera.”

Rivas became a founder of the Sociedad de Embellecimiento (later SMOB), and after his death the members of the SMOB paid tribute to his memory. Max Grillo praised Rivas as a man with remarkable control of his passions and as a very balanced human being that was never prone to polarizations. According to Grillo, Rivas’ political stance was always unclear. Instead, Rivas preferred historical investigation and the study of genealogy, especially of those heroes whose names were “cheer to his heart.”

Class-consciousness for the SMOB was attached to the idea of lineage, in particular genealogy, which was seen as a patriotic endeavor. The SMOB was also attached to its supposedly apolitical role as a superior institution that patronized people to save them from chicanery as stated in one of their sessions in 1944. This sense of superiority can be clearly seen in the minutes of the SMOB in the following example as well as in many others: they describe the common people as child-like, in need of nurture and guidance from the elites. This attitude is exemplified by Silva’s remarks on the consciousness that the elites had about the masses and about their own superiority.

In spite of the apolitical stance of the SMOB, there are reasons to believe that the political stability of the country was under threat and that SMOB members were concerned. In 1944, American expert in Latin America Lynn Smith, inspired by the Jeffersonian model of land
distribution in America, advised president Carlos Lleras to implement agrarian reform. The landowner elite resisted these kinds of programs. The rise in popularity of liberal leaders such as Jorge E. Gaitán also worried the elites. In spite of his affiliation with the liberal party, his populist ideas were associated with communism and he started to be considered by many as a potential threat to the nation’s stability. The institutions of modernity recently created by the Colombian elites were derived to a large extent from rural elites and the emerging bourgeoisie who still had closer connections to the landowners and the local and regional political chieftains. Subsequently, agrarian reform was part of the discourse of the liberal elites but never really amounted to a change in the rural or urban landscape.

The construction of narratives of class identity involved the acknowledgment of the Other. In the case of the intellectuals of the liberal republic, it was important for them to reaffirm their project by being able to identify, classify, and patronize the underclasses without breaking ties with the institutions established by the latifundista elites. Additionally, by defining the other, the elites were able to figure out their own identity while reaffirming their sense of material and spiritual superiority by putting distance, both physical and symbolic, between themselves and the Others.

The Symbolic Difference between Middle and Lower Classes

Thus far, it has been assumed that class warfare in Colombia took place between upper and lower classes. However, it is generally agreed that the middle-class had a defining role in the successful implementation of modernizing agendas in Latin America and other parts of the world. Colombia is no exception and, as presented by López, the so-called middle-class or the empleado class (white-collar), in counter position to the obrero class (blue-collar), started to grow after the works of the Kemmerer Commission in 1923. The information presented by
López about the formation of the middle-class in Colombia is revealing, especially for a period that has been usually overlooked and examined from the perspective of the polarization between two opposite classes.

It is also revealing how the elites saw only minor differences between the lower and middle-class. The minutes of the SMOB make reference to one class or the other, but the topics addressed in these references still regard the same issues: hygiene, behavior, education, and civility. The incipient middle-class still represented a challenge to the SMOB in terms of civility. According to López, definitions of empleado (employee) and obrero (blue-collar worker or laborer) were based primarily on behavior. In spite of having the same salary sometimes, the empleado was the one who was supposed to “exercise mental and intelligent work,” whereas the definition of obrero was still attached to the notion of oficios viles (manual labor) from colonial times.

From the perspective of the elites, members from both the lower and middle-classes needed to learn and assimilate the codes of conduct that made it possible to live in the city. They represented a challenge for the elites in terms of indoctrination and acculturation. However, the middle-classes seemed more willing than the lower classes to fit into the elite’s notions of modern society because of implied promises of social mobility. Elites made concessions to the middle-class by employing them, but they also insisted that the middle-class meet certain conditions in order to be employed. These conditions included age, marital status, gender, race, work ethic, cultural background, and ethnicity. Men and women were assigned jobs according to their pre-established gender roles and they needed to be preferably whiter than the mestizo or indigenous people.

In several instances, members of the elite argued for a sort of racial determinism when describing the attributes of the Colombian mestizo. In 1938 for the 400th anniversary of the city,
the former mayor of Bogotá, Luis A. Cuervo, explained to the readers of *Cromos* how some of the evils of Colombians were inherited from the age of the Viceroy that made them “prone to gossip and envy.” From the indigenous “we kept the malice, the laziness, the proclivity to alcoholism, and the *guayuco* or loincloth.”

Similarly, Luis L. de Mesa, minister of education, asserted that contrary to the situation observed in the United States where there was an authentic middle-class, in Colombia the existence of a middle-class was simply not possible because these people lacked several virtues that could be found in northern societies. According to him, Colombian mestizos and indigenous people were unable to improve their social condition because they lacked “virtues, moral values, and spirit.”

Based on the mentions of the middle-class found in the SMOB archive, it could be argued that there was no clear division between the lower and middle-class. In 1948 the Commission of Honor ordered the construction of public restrooms for the middle-class in different areas of the city. A later reference to the middle-class was found in connection with the debate about whether Rafael Barberi should win the Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada Award, a prize granted for his civic commitment, and his humanitarian and scientific work at the Hospital of La Misericordia. This honor was usually granted to philanthropists who had contributed to the welfare of the disenfranchised. On this occasion, SMOB members argued that Barberi should receive the prize because of his efforts to provide healthcare for children who are “solemnly declared poor, as well as for those of the middle-classes, because healthcare for children is very expensive.”

The difference between lower and middle-class was more symbolic and based on cultural values than on economic standing. López’s research documents the incidence of these assumptions about class in the promotion of cultural practices and legislation as recorded in the
Cartilla del Empleado or Manual of the Employee issued by the National Comptroller’s Office. In spite of the little difference in terms of income between classes, the manual was thought as a device for employees to assimilate cultural codes to help them differentiate from the working class but in a broader picture of Colombia’s attempt to modernize, the implementation of these sort of manuals can be seen as the biopower of modern institutions attempting to classify, regulate, control and discipline. Behavioral modeling and the uses of aesthetics represented an attempt to both control and tame the masses and also to tone down people’s distress. Due to the increasing social tensions in the years prior to April 9, 1948 the elites’ efforts to acculturate and discipline the people were focused on two things: 1) Reaching the emerging middle-class that was economically comparable to the lower-class but with social ambitions, and 2) Using the notion of taste as a social mechanism of differentiation.

The SMOB tried to educate people in matters of taste by exposing them to different art forms, especially those coming from the classic period. In 1944, the Society renewed their request to the Minister of Education for the “reestablishment of a classical museum of permanent exhibition.” A journalist at El Tiempo remarked that the museum was important, especially “given the challenges that the Fine Arts are currently facing in Colombia, they are more than ever in need of models that do not allow the taste to go bad.”

The year 1948 marked some interesting changes in the SMOB that influenced how they discussed the notion of aesthetics. The discussions around aesthetics at the SMOB focused on the notion of taste, which, as seen in the late nineteenth-century Europe, was also part of the class warfare. In the meetings after April 9th, the number of cases discussed that involved matters of taste increased in comparison to the previous years. Another remarkable difference is the increasing number of women taking part in the discussions and being held up as exemplars in terms of taste and style. Also, it is remarkable that SMOB members did not directly refer to the
events of April 9th (the assassination of J.E. Gaitán) in their meetings; rather, they used
euphemisms to refer to it. Discussions were held at the SMOB about the importance of providing
culture and education for the lower classes in order to avoid the repetition of “such shameful
events.” According to the records of the SMOB, the problem was that people from the provinces
were coming to the capital where certain individuals corrupt and pervert them. Thus, in order to
prevent the events of April 9th, 1948 from happening again, the people needed to be educated. “It
is important to keep in mind that people at any given moment can become beasts, and those who
are in control should act as their actual tamers.”

In the meeting minutes of August 25th, 1948, the SMOB complained once again about the
market stalls around the Quinta de Bolívar, where vendors sold fried pork rinds and fritanga or
deep-fried street food. All of these lower-class cultural manifestations were seen by the SMOB
as part of a wave of bad taste that threatened to take over the city. One of the recommendations
to solve this problem was to take into consideration the “foreigners of good taste” who inhabited
the city such as the Father Struve. The SMOB praised the works done by Struve, parish priest of
the Church of La Peña, who represented for them an example of good taste. The priest
represented someone who had a better sense of patrimony and could serve as an example for
some locals.

Besides complaining about the lower classes’ poor taste, SMOB members praised
examples of good taste and encouraged imitation of these examples, not by the lower classes, but
by the elites themselves, as part of the process of class identity construction. The celebration of
everyday traditional rituals such as the chocolate Santafereño were praised and established as
examples of good taste to imitate. In one session, the SMOB called for the rescue of traditional
practices, such as that of the chocolate Santafereño, and established a link between the
celebration of that traditional and widespread ritual and the notion of good taste.
The SMOB applauds and praises the efforts and attitudes intended to revive the spirituality, which is the traditional patrimony of the Bogotans. For that reason it has established as a dear memory for our beloved city, the party, plenty of good taste offered last August 31st by the enlightened lady, Sophy Pizano de Ortiz….

These kind of invented traditions had manifold roles in the early modern Colombian society. Following Hobsbawm, they are used to create a sense of cohesion within a community or provide a sense of belonging; they are also used to create or ratify status and authority and to promote certain behaviors, or to instill a system of beliefs. Also after April 9th, the SMOB seemed to increase their concerns about the cultural sites that held important symbolic value to them. The Quinta de Bolívar is a place of permanent ideological conflict and a site for reflection on the symbolic, the aesthetic, the ideological, and the good and bad taste. After the events of April 9th, the SMOB intensified the debates about the appropriate uses of the Quinta as a place that generates social cohesion but also displays good taste. The SMOB discussed the possibility of delegating its administration to the Ministry of Education instead of the Junta de la Quinta (a branch of the SMOB) and posited some worries about class struggle. Since the ministry was controlled by the government, the SMOB feared losing control over the Quinta’s administration and, subsequently, over its symbolic power. SMOB members manifested their fear in discussions of hypothetical dangers. They feared that the Quinta, if managed by the ministry, would no longer be a place of patriotism and good taste but would turn into a popular place where the empleados of the ministry and mid-level employees would end up doing piquetes [cookouts] with champagne.

The latter provides an insight on the symbolic universe created by the elites in order to deal with issues on class warfare. The violence that erupted by the end of the 1940s in Colombia was preceded by the use of a cultural ethos whose codes were used to identify, assimilate or
differentiate among classes. These codes, along with physical violence, ended up determining the human geography of the city, and creating a map of segregation in the city. The study of that symbolic universe created through an aesthetic language is paramount to understand the complexities of the negotiations that took place in mid-twentieth century Colombia.

Throughout the two decades of study there is a significant change in the use of the notion of aesthetics at the SMOB. The change in its use is always dependent on the terms that are associated with it. By the early 1930s its use was related to a sense of betterment and progress, but it was also understood as a vehicle for dividing high from low culture. Through the idea of progress, the elites tried to acculturate and discipline the lower classes and they tried to give credit to popular cultural productions under the label of folklore. Also through the idea of folklore, the upper classes sought to create social cohesion and national identity.

However, the change that took place during the 1940s in the use of cultural codes resulted in division among classes, which fueled the class warfare. The discourses around aesthetics changed from the idea of progress and perfection by the early 1930s to the notion of taste. This notion could be seen as part of the class warfare but it can also be seen as evidence of the anxiety of the elites to secure their legacy and social station. Also, by instilling the idea of taste in the incipient emerging middle-class, the elites were able to establish a monopoly over the cultural codes that mediated social relationships. The notion of taste, along with those of shame and embarrassment, played a fundamental role in the development of a national consciousness at the international level but also in the development of symbolic values that mediated class relationships at the local level. Similar to the civilizing process in Europe, as noted by Elias, the notion of shame in Colombia played a role in modeling behaviors, postures, and overall, in shaping the so-called civilized attitude. However, the elite’s craving for class differentiation and ratification of their status led to the use of taste as an element of distinction and segregation.
rather than of cohesion, as Bourdieu notes. The different attempts of the upper classes to use aesthetics to create cohesion failed; instead, they created a symbolic universe that would feed the violence of the late 1940s.
Chapter 6: Progress and Perfection

To the Colombian liberal intellectuals, aesthetics, as a vehicle of culture, was at the core of the construction of the national identity at a time when modernism was the dominant discourse. These liberal intellectuals used aesthetics to educate the masses because aesthetics could speak to and through the senses and emotions. Through the use of music, dance, theatre, and cinema, the liberal intellectuals had the purpose of “conveying and strengthening the collective soul as a permanent call for progress and perfection.”

The notion of progress existed before the industrial revolution and denoted, in English, “advancement to further or higher stage,” development, betterment. They also denote a sequence of events. In the Spanish language the word progress was associated since 1780 with advancement, and in 1788 was also associated with advancement in science and its applications. In 1853 and 1855 the Spanish dictionary expanded the definition of progress as anything heading towards perfection and as the “Progressive movement of the civilization and its social and political institutions.”

The ideology of progressivism in Europe has its roots in the Enlightenment based on the idea that progress in the form of social betterment and economic development could be achieved through scientific development and industry. Modernity and capitalist industrial societies largely rely on the notions of progress and perfection to both control and transform nature through science and industry but also to transform individuals and communities.

The applicability of these notions to the Latin American context in the early twentieth century was problematic at best. None of the characteristics embedded in the ideas around modernity, progress, and industry were observed in this context. García-Canclini posed questions about the meaning and value of modernity in Latin America, especially given the social and
economic conditions issuing from colonial times. His problematization of modernity has to do with the fact that in present day Latin America, it is possible to observe the coexistence of pre-modern, modern and post-modern conditions at the same time and within the same geographical space. As a Latin American himself, García-Canclini’s definition of modernity acknowledges Latin America’s peculiar geographical context and divides modernity into two different types: modernity that took place in the so-called developed countries, and modernity that took place in peripheral societies that was both real and discursive. This type of modernity is discursive because developments followed modern directions but never really transcended the bounds of a plantation society-based Latin American elite.

Authors such as Latour and Bhabha have challenged the notion of modernity connected with the humanistic ideals of the French Revolution, namely, “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” and Latour questioned the validity of the terms pre-modern and modern. He asserted that revolutions that have promised modernity, whether the French Revolution in 1789 or the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the subsequent revolution of the globalized world, have failed. To him, the ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality of the French revolution were no more than a motto for the emerging revolutionary French elite when ousting monarchy from power.

Likewise, Bhabha’s mention of James’s work about the late eighteenth century Haitian slave revolution remarks on how “the modern disposition of mankind,” based on and empowered by the values of the revolution, “only fuel[ed] the archaic racial factor in the society of slavery.” While late eighteenth-century revolutionary France was considered the birthplace of modern thought, French colonies in contrast were kept in slavery for the sake of their imperial interests. Most revolutions in the new world, including the independence wars in Colombia, were inspired by French Revolution ideals, but most of them were characterized by the opposite values: high
levels of inequality, and symbolic and physical violence. Neither the moral values of modernity, nor the material values of progress and perfection characterized the Colombian society.

In spite of that, the local elites insisted on modernization based on the appropriation and adaptation of the European ideal of modernity. This European idea was based on the belief in the superiority of the modern. Paramount to that narrative were the notions of progress and perfection that recurrently appeared in the written and visual narratives in papers and magazines during the 1930s and 1940s in Bogotá. The narratives about progress were accompanied by images of buildings that were supposed to host modern institutions and governmental officials, depicting models of material progress, civic behavior, or by portraying the undesirable. On the other hand, the notion of perfection or personal/social improvement was based on recurrent pleas for the betterment of education and civic behavior by the liberal elites. Apart from successfully representing progress and perfection, the images also revealed the tensions between classes. Through the use of images, the city became the ideal scenario to put on display the desired changes based on the ideologies of progressivism and modernity.

The images representing the built environment and civilized behaviors did not freely circulate but were controlled, produced, and consumed by a small elite. Contrary to the national campaigns of literacy and the vulgarization (popularization) of culture, the representations of the urban landscape were restricted in terms of circulation and coverage. In spite of the apparently overarching role of the liberal ideology, the reality of the city and its aesthetic was controlled by institutions with a very conservative stance and with a great deal of attachment to traditional values, regardless of their political affiliation. The control of the elites over the narratives about the built environment went beyond the boundaries of architecture and high culture. It also permeated the aesthetic of everyday life, creating a set of codes and symbols that encompassed urbanism, architecture, gardening, behavior, dress, body posture, and gestures. In
this chapter I look at images that represent the ideals of progress, portrayed in cityscapes and buildings, and the idea of perfection, represented by visual and written narratives about people and the way they were looked upon. The analysis on the narratives of progress are based on the study of graphic material published in the magazines *El Gráfico*, *Cromos*, and *Estampa* and the newspapers *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. Through the analysis of the images, I reflect on notions of cosmopolitism, the symbolic use of architectural language, the construction of visual narratives to commemorate special events, and the discourses that opposed modernity. The reflections around the concept of perfection in connection to modernity are centered on the manuals of civility and their connection with visual strategies that established parameters of behavior. In the last section, I explore the role played by the ideal of perfection in the construction of a visual national identity.

**Rendering Progress**

During the 1930s and 1940s, the printed media portrayed the idea of progress using different visual narrative strategies. These decades represent the heyday of printed media in Colombia when many new publications appeared along with new technologies that offered new expressive possibilities. Cityscapes and even fragmented representations of urban everyday life gained unusual attention. Different aspects of urban life never depicted before were presented through photographs, drawings, watercolors, advertisements, aerial views, and caricatures. These changes represented not only a different way to depict the city but also the introduction of different discourses about it. I particularly focus on progress expressed through architecture and urbanism and the graphic and written language used to promote this progress. In the first decades of the 20th century, the elites used these cultural and variety magazines to start consolidating visual and written narratives around the idea of material progress.
Promoting Progress on Paper

*El Gráfico* was the name of a printing press and a magazine established in 1910. By 1918 *El Gráfico* was referred in the Blue Book of Colombia as a “large stationary store” that rapidly became the “best publicity medium in Colombia” of the time. According to the same publication, *El Gráfico* also had “great popularity throughout the country,” a high quality of contributors, and graphic neatness. Due to its graphic quality, the magazine was awarded with a medal of honor at the Centenary National Industrial Exposition of 1910, in recognition of its artistic and commercial work. The Cortés brothers, Abraham and Abadías, entrepreneurs who were among the most enthusiastic advocates of modernity, owned the typography that published *El Gráfico* as well as a hardware store and an office supplies store. Through the pages of *El Gráfico*, the Cortés brothers promoted verbally and visually the language of modernity as well as their imported and locally manufactured products. The products made or imported by their companies were described using the language of modernity: clarity, comfortable, elegant, practical, sturdy, and functional among many others (Figure 16). The Cortés brothers and their companies represented what it meant to be modern in Bogotá, and they helped promote modernism through their commercial activities as well as through the pages of *El Gráfico*.

The images shown in *El Gráfico* in the early 1930s

![Figure 16. Advertisement “A. Cortés M. & Co.,” El Gráfico, 1930, No. 978, p. 118, n.a.](image-url)
represented Europe’s and America’s modernity. For instance, *El Gráfico* presented images of the Chrysler building (yet in construction) seen from above and a bird’s-eye view of the Waldorf Astoria to illustrate an article about life in New York (Figure 4a).\(^{471}\) *El Gráfico*, as well as some other publications of this decade, kept an eye on what was happening abroad, but *El Gráfico* put a particular emphasis on modern architecture. The article about New York published in March 1930 focused on the human scale of New York, a huge and overwhelming city when one is looking up at ground level. However, the view from the skyscrapers and the aerial views of the city were supposed to give the viewer a “whimsical sense of power and enjoyment.”\(^{472}\) The gaze was presented as a way for humans to reclaim a sense of control over the built environment and in that sense *El Gráfico* was among the first magazines that introduced this new set of visual codes to the Colombian audience.

*Cosmopolitanism as Progress*

Reference to foreign European and U.S. modernity were constantly used to emphasize the need for change and improvement, but also served as a reminder that the elite had a monopoly on contact with foreign cultures. As Martínez argues in his book on the cosmopolitanism of nineteenth-century Colombian elites, starting in the nineteenth century the local elites frequently appropriated European discourse\(^{473}\) and the discourse on modernity increasingly gained followers during the first decades of the twentieth century. Martínez’s thesis about foreign progress can be seen in articles published by magazines such as *El Gráfico, Cromos*, and *Estampa*. The constant reference to European modernity during the nineteenth century was alternated with references to U.S. modernity, which slowly replaced Europe in the imaginary about modernity.
The language used to display modernity was based on visual codes and concepts adopted by the local media from foreign publications. In some cases the images circulating in local media were adaptations of images crafted abroad, and in other cases they were locally produced. Magazines such as *El Gráfico, Estampa* and *Cromos*, showed their readers a wide selection of visual and written narratives about foreign cultures, which in many cases were mixed with local narratives.

A good example of the importance of displaying modern cosmopolitism is the recurrent review of World Exhibitions. References to the world exhibitions did not present modern technological advances as much as general views of the exhibitions or the most iconic buildings or monuments. In the 1930s and 40s there are still references to past Fairs and the icons derived from them. Also, through the realization of local Exhibitions, Colombians expressed their desire to belong to the civilized world. Thus, chronicles and images of the local national and regional exhibitions were presented in connection with foreign exhibitions to represent the spirit of progress and civilization.

The cosmopolitism shown in these references to world fair exhibitions, however, was not only used to celebrate modernity. It was also a way for elites to exert control over their cultural capital; only they had access to information on foreign cultures. They had access to modern countries as well as to exotic cultures such as the Middle and Far East, cultures that greatly influenced the Art Deco style. The yearning for cosmopolitism is equally reflected in the names of buildings and businesses and in the ways they were advertised. The use of names such as New York Pharmacy, Colombo-German Drugstore and Pharmacy, German Optical Shop also show the importance of foreign references. Images of skyscrapers were frequently used to advertise these buildings, products, and shops (Figure 17).
In 1938, the 400th anniversary of the city foundation represented a perfect time to display cosmopolitism through diplomacy and to celebrate relationships with foreign cultures. On the occasion of the anniversary many monuments and statues were inaugurated commemorating foreign leaders and cultures. The images provided access to knowledge about foreign cultures but also symbolically appropriated other cultures, unifying them around the discourse of modernity. By the late 1930s *Estampa* started publishing chronicles about the different cities in Colombia, emphasizing modern buildings and infrastructure. The cosmopolitan images displayed acted as a visual apparatus that allowed their viewers to have a sense of controlling the world from a dominant and privileged position. The cultural capital that was usually acquired through voyages was made accessible to the people who had access to these magazines.
The Architecture of Progress

The built environment was another way to display modernity, and it has been generally agreed that during the 1930s the first modern buildings were built. As seen in the pictures of private residences in Teusaquillo and La Merced in chapter 5, the architectural references seemed to initially come from Europe: the Spanish colonial revival style and the Tudor houses from the early 1930s. By the late 1930s, references to U.S. modernity slowly became the dominant narrative. In this sense, the architecture adopted from abroad also reinforced the idea of cosmopolitanism shown in the familiarity with alien styles.

The standard techniques of representation used to convey modernity of the built environment are consolidated throughout the two decades of study. In the early 1930s representations of the urban built environment were scarce, while in the late 1940s production and circulation of cityscapes increased. Through the circulation of cityscapes, readers could expand their visual literacy as well as their familiarity with modern techniques of representation: city plans, buildings’ blueprints, technical drawings, two-point perspectives, and photographs.

Photography played a crucial role in introducing to the public the visual codes of modern architecture: low/high-angle shots, wide-angle shots, aerial views, and bird’s-eye views. The use of photography also established standards to correctly portray the built environment: buildings and city areas should preferably be photographed with no people around. This was particularly noticeable when depicting wealthy neighborhoods. Low-angle shots stressed sturdiness and building height; wide-angle shots from certain perspectives accentuated the building’s virtues as well as hid some of the site’s non-photogenic characteristics. Night shots showed the modern character of the buildings through their lightning system, which likewise provided a sublime and sophisticated view. Similar to the phenomenon observed by Gordon in the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exhibition, the local elites created a catalog of visual codes to instruct and learn
The images circulating in the newspapers, magazines, commemorative albums, and postcards, became the ideal representation of the modern city. Likewise, the images accompanying the chronicles about the lower classes’ neighborhoods became the antithetic and stereotypical representation of the antimodernist.

The drawings were also used to show attributes of modern architecture. In advertising, a visual synecdoche in connection to modern buildings was created using different compositional strategies. The product, whether it was shoes, cough syrup, or a revitalizer, was usually in front of backgrounds exhibiting modernity: sturdy columns, vertical lines towards the sky, skyscrapers, a clock, or a vehicle (Figure 17). In some cases, the synecdoche can be observed in the same products, which is something clearly observed in the radios produced in that period (Figure 18a/b). Drawings became more frequent by the late 1940s and early 1950s, especially in El Tiempo, perhaps because of the limitations of photography and the scarcity of modern buildings in Bogota. However, it is very likely that after the riots of 1948, the city was still not in good shape, which is something that can also explain the abundance of drawings.
More specialized and detailed drawings were published occasionally in *El Gráfico*, *Cromos*, and *Estampa* or in specific sections of some newspapers like “Constructions and Urbanism” in *El Tiempo*. This kind of drawing was addressed to a more specific audience, but they also conveyed for the non-experts the modern concepts of precision and scientific graphic language. Pretending to understand them can also be seen as an empowering device for the untrained eye. In the case of house plans such as those seen in chapter 4 (Figure 8), these house plans provided familiarity with European and American house styles and also gave readers the illusion that they could possibly construct them. These illustrations, magazines covers, advertisings, and caricatures in the early 1930s came from a mix of local artists and drawings brought from foreign media. By the late 1930s and the 1940s, the number of local draughtsman
specializing in advertising increased, and artists even created their own commercial art companies.476

Images, Desire and Style

Images can trigger desire. Prown discusses the way objects can reveal unspoken discourses in the same way dreams can address our most hidden desires. To support this rationale, Prown develops his notion of style, which “refers to a distinctive manner or mode which, whether consciously intended or not, bears a relationship with other objects marked in their form by similar qualities.”477 Style is the unconscious voice of any given social group that reveals “unspoken beliefs.” Prown proposes to understand the human mind as a complex “matrix of feelings, sensations, intuitions, understandings that are non-verbal and preverbal,”478 which are common characteristics of any given culture.

In this sense, images can reveal unconscious desires and motifs that otherwise would not be acknowledged. According to Mitchell the power of images resides not in what they show but in what they do not or cannot show. Power in images lies in the desire they can stir in the spectator. The absence of the object of desire in a picture is what in many cases gives sense to its existence.479 The desire absent from the picture can be understood as an “orthopaedic” device in the sense that desire fills our lack of some emotional need.480 At this point I started wondering about the applicability of this concept to the relationship between images and the desires of a whole social group. The analysis of urban visual imagery from the perspective of desire might help explain unrevealed aspects of the Colombian ethos, particularly in a period of great social distress.

In terms of style, there are clear differences that can be noticed in the city’s architecture portrayed. Institutional architecture adopted two different kinds of language: neoclassic or
variations of modern styles. These modern styles were usually a mix between art deco, a late art nouveau, neoclassic, and a few so-called international style\textsuperscript{481} buildings. Architecture became the perfect way to represent and convey the idea of progress through the introduction of new styles, techniques, and materials.

In addition to displaying images of architecture, magazines and newspapers also emphasized modern building materials. The promise of a better living provided by modern architecture was assured if modern materials and processes were used. Materials and supplies advertisements appeared more frequently in newspapers than in magazines. In the mid-1930s, \textit{El Tiempo} frequently advertised roof tiles, metallic roll-up doors, blinds, water and sewer pipes, and cement, using architectural drawings as a background. The backgrounds displayed both private housing and institutional buildings. Private housing backgrounds by the 1930s depicted foreign styles of houses, but in the 1940s, the backgrounds also depicted modern apartment buildings. In these two decades, the use of modern institutional buildings as background for ads of locally manufactured goods was an opportunity to convey nationalism and prove the successful implementation of ISI policies in Colombia.

Architectural projects were linked to urban planning, and many new city areas were established. Upper class neighborhoods were promoted starting in the early 1930s, while lower class neighborhoods (when noted) were stigmatized or patronized. However, in 1938 as part of the celebrations of the 400\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the city, new urban developments for middle and lower-class population were inaugurated. The articles covering the inaugurations noted how these developments were modern because they were hygienic, central, and accessible. The imagery and the visual codes that promoted these developments were closer to the values of the American middle class rather than the average Colombian middle or lower class person.
The proximity to overseas’ modernity and the idea of seeing the world was acquired through travels and a permanent influx of information about them. World fairs constituted an exceptional occasion to taste foreign travel first hand. Since the mid-19th century Colombian members of the political elite were very enthusiastic about participating in these events. Soon, they started organizing local fairs to put on display the national version of progress. In the first half of the 20th century, two fairs among many took advantage of the city as the venue for these events: the National Exhibition of 1910 to celebrate the anniversary of the independence; and the National Exhibition of the Fourth Centennial of Bogotá in 1938. Mimicking the World Fairs, the local ruling class was able to convey ideas of cosmopolitism by invoking a sense of connectedness with industrialized countries while using modern aesthetic codes to promote progress. The 1938 exhibition was a way to foster enthusiasm for modern ways of living, and it was also an opportunity to familiarize the public with the aesthetic experience of living in a modern city. Rydell’s account of the World Fairs held in the United States from 1876 to 1916 includes perspectives that examine the relationship between architecture and social change as well as criticism of the values of imperialism displayed positively in these venues. He approached the study of World Fairs hosted by the United States as fabricated statements that legitimized a developed nation’s leadership in terms of progress. According to Rydell, World Fairs became schools to instruct the public about modernity. They played significant roles in the formation of racial, national, and regional identities, and also helped to re-define identities based on religious beliefs and gender.

The few examples found during the 1930s of transitional and modern architecture represented an incipient but meaningful change in Bogotá’s cityscape. Their presence in the city contrasted with colonial and republican architecture that were the traditional representations of power in the city. The high visibility and symbolic power of the new buildings, gave architecture
and architectural representations a great deal of power mostly because of its ability to communicate directly to the senses whether they were directly experienced or through their representations. In addition to its symbolic importance in materializing the zeitgeist and at least part of the society’s desires, modern architecture also promoted functionality, comfort, and the illusion of a better living. Large houses, fully equipped with water supply and sewage systems, located in English-style neighborhoods with wide avenues and plenty of vegetation, were part of the modern cityscape. Progress was the language to be adopted by anyone who wanted to fit into this new social structure. Fairs such as the 1938 exhibition in Bogotá, as well as other commemorative events, played a pedagogical role in introducing that knowledge to a broader audience.

Commemorating Progress

During the first half of the 20th century it was a frequent practice of magazines and newspapers to celebrate special occasions by issuing special editions with visual accounts of the city. The dominant discourse behind those narratives was a parallelism between tradition and progress. In this section I take a look at two different narratives of progress of the city, the first one created in 1930 by El Gráfico to celebrate its 20th anniversary, and the second one in 1938 published by the SMOB to celebrate the city’s 400th anniversary. I examine details of the images, but my main interest remains in understanding the overall narrative of progress created about the city.

The narrative in El Gráfico was commissioned to Melitón Escobar, an engineer and former Chief of the Office of Longitudes to present an account of the modern Bogotá in 1930. Since Escobar was a scientist, he first questioned El Gráfico’s suitability, as a cultural magazine, to tackle urban development topics. Those topics he believed needed to be rendered through the
language of science.\textsuperscript{486} However, he clarifies, \textit{El Gráfico} “was nothing less but also a lot more than that: a magazine about emotion and art.”\textsuperscript{487} For that reason the people in charge of the magazine decided to use some photographs and let the images “comment and persuade… because in those images lies a great deal of emotional power which is the trademark of this century.”\textsuperscript{488}

Thirty-one photographs accompanied the account of the city’s urban development (see Figure 23 for distribution in the map). The pictures were laid out over an art deco-style flower-pattern background and framed into different stylized geometric shapes. The train stations, the Sabana and the South Station, were the first images in this visual account, both shot from a low angle emphasizing the use of the two-point perspective and the buildings’ volumetric qualities. The point of view also reinforced the sense of sturdiness and verticality of the columns pointing up toward the sky. The next group of photographs depicted a \textit{quinta} owned by the Jesuits, an “elegant residence” in Chapinero, and two hospitals. The technique is the same: black and white, low-angle shots made from a distance that allowed the viewer to see and be part of the context. The next group of photographs represented two more \textit{quintas} in Chapinero, the interior courtyard of the Presidential Palace, and the central courtyard of the Santo Domingo cloister. The next set of photographs showed the National Pedagogical Institute; the Gimnasio Moderno, a prep school for boys; three quintas also in Chapinero; and a hotel outside of Bogotá.
The rest of the photographs depicted a selection of buildings that were representative of Bogotá’s built environment, most of them located downtown. Sixteen buildings are organized into categories that are part of the functional or administrative part of the city, covering the topics of institutional, religious, educational, sports/leisure, commerce, industry, transportation,
public charity, marketplace, slaughterhouse, hygiene/healthcare, theatre, and housing buildings. *El Gráfico*’s narrative is divided into two parts: the first one is accompanied by a group of photographs that depict the upper class neighborhood of Chapinero and the second one depicts the traditional inner city (Figure 19-Figure 20).

The second narrative is eminently visual with few captions and corresponds to the commemorative album published by the SMOB to celebrate Bogotá’s 400th anniversary in 1938. The album starts with the statue of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, the founder of the city. Next, there is an image of Simón Bolívar’s statue located in the Plaza of the same name followed by an overview of the city taken from the neighboring mountains (Figure 21). The first building presented on its own is the Capitol, followed by a sequence of administrative and ecclesiastical buildings. The shots are similar to the ones in the earlier *El Gráfico* article: low-angle and high-angle shots combined with panoramic views.

The first group of photographs gravitates around the foundational city center (see Figure 23 for distribution in the map). The institutional buildings portrayed mainly governmental, ecclesiastic, and educational institutions. Among the first 30 pictures are pictures of the two train stations and the Colón Theatre. A few details of some churches’ interiors are also depicted in this group. The next group of images depicts buildings located further away from the Plaza de Bolívar but still present some views from central areas and buildings, especially churches. The presence of elements and buildings representatives of the city’s progress is noticeable: Western Avenue, a wide road crowned by the statues of Isabel and Fernando of Aragon; the School of Medicine, a large neoclassical style building located seven blocks south of the Plaza; a night view of Centennial Park with a statue of Simón Bolívar; a view of Independence Park portraying the equestrian statue of Simón Bolívar and a replica of the Petit Trianon’s “Belvedere at the Palace of Versailles.” The first buildings showing a clear modern influence are the San Juan de Dios and the San José hospitals. The next modern buildings presented are the Geographic Institute, the National Institute of Radium, a public school, and the Pedagogical Institute. The modernity of these buildings is not only displayed in their architecture but also in their function.
Many of them are related to modern concepts of hygiene, healthcare, public schooling, and land survey.

The final group of images focused on modern developments and private residences. A gas station, an international-style movie theater, a horse racing ring, and a couple of high angle
shots of the Independence and the National Park with the Belvedere in the middle, are part of the modern developments depicted. Next, there are two pictures that are similar in the way they were shot, but represent different places and topics of the city (Figure 22). The first represents the Plaza Spain with the bust of Miguel de Cervantes and the San José Hospital in the background. The second shows a panoramic view of Teusaquillo’s houses in the background and the neighborhood’s main park. The houses’ styles combine different foreign styles (with the Tudor dominating), and the park in the foreground seems to be based on a mix between pleasure grounds and English Reform parks (Figure 22).
There are many similarities and some differences between the two narratives. First, both narratives heavily rely on the power of images to convey emotions around the idea of progress and the city anniversary. *El Gráfico’s* article makes explicit reference to the connection between emotion and images and the author presents it as a trademark of modernity. Almost a decade later and following the same premise, the SMOB album minimizes the written narrative and releases what can be seen as a postcard album of the city. Faithful to their commitment to
ornament and to improve the city, the SMOB creates a purely emotional photographic journey throughout the city. The two narratives create a visual excursion throughout the city in which the elements representing progress and tradition are presented alternatively creating harmonious narratives of coexistence between them.

Also, both articles start with an image that acts as a statement of principles. *El Gráfico’s* narrative start with the elements that represent the par excellence of modernity: the train stations. The SMOB album starts with portrayals of statues of Jiménez de Quesada, the founder, and of Simón Bolívar, the founding father of the Republic. These images represent a visual allegiance to both the Motherland and the Fatherland. The first discourse is coherent with the author’s scientific background and with *El Gráfico’s* allegiance to modernity. The trains represent speed, time control, mobility, and efficiency, while the SMOB’s narrative prefers to subordinate modernity to tradition.

At first glance, no political or ideological inclinations can be clearly noticed, except that *El Gráfico*, Escobar as an engineer, and the SMOB were committed to promoting modernity. Nevertheless, the images act even without the author’s permission, as part of a more complex rhetoric. They reinforce the institutions and fatherland symbols and acknowledge the Spanish descent and Catholicism as Colombia’s true and only religion. The commitment of the SMOB to these conservative ideas was documented in chapter 5. The members of this institution were committed to reconstructing a Colombian identity based on these conservative ideas, in spite of their self-awareness as apolitical and secular. On the other hand, Escobar’s narrative can be understood purely as a technical description of Bogotá’s urban development if merely based on his professional background as an engineer. However, if one takes into account his role as the Colombian official delegate to the Pan American Union, it is possible to assume that he was consciously or unconsciously following an international agenda led by the U.S. The Pan
American Union has been considered an instrument of imperial interventionism that was headed in the same direction as the Monroe Doctrine to secure the control of the western hemisphere and stop Nazi and Communist advance in the region while creating a Pan American identity.491

According to McClintock there are three different categories of post-colonial societies: The first two categories are grouped under the general term of deeper settler colonization, to make reference to the type of colonization some countries held to before and after the end of World War II in 1945. For instance, countries like Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Algeria and Kenya, are among the countries that went through a process of deeper settler colonization after WWII when “colonial powers clung on with particular brutality.”492 On the other hand, most Latin American countries lived a process of non-violent deeper settler colonization before and after WWII but they were kept in control through the use of different forms of interventionism. The third category, breakaway settler colonies, is used to designate societies that achieved formal independence “from the founding metropolitan country to the colony itself” such as New Zealand, the United States, South Africa and Australia.493

Deeper settler colonies like Latin American countries494 saw the implementation of interventionist measures such as The Good Neighbor Policy in the 1930s, and the Alliance for Progress in the 1960s.495 Interventionism is not a twentieth century phenomenon. U.S presence in Latin America has its deep roots in the beginning of the nineteenth century under different guises: the Monroe Doctrine in the 1820s,496 Filibusterism in the 1850s in Central America,497 and through the usage of treatises and constitutional amendments in the early twentieth century, as well as the creation of integrationist institutions like the Pan America Union, later known as the O.A.S.498

In terms of American interventionism, Lübken characterized this period as one in which the “cultural game” played by the U.S. was intended to win over Hispanic America through
culture rather than using politics or military interventions which could have thwarted the main purpose of the Good Neighbor Policy championed by the Roosevelt administration.

Architecture and urbanism were indeed cultural instruments that were successfully used to promote modern capitalist ideology. However, the dialogue between the U.S. government and Latin America was through local elites, who seem to have likewise utilized this discourse for their own political advantage. The cityscapes that are part of the two narratives studied in this section create a narrative to promote progress but at the same time display a symbolic language that puts them in a position of privilege. The institutions and houses depicted in both publications represent the cultural productions of the elite. The cityscapes constitute a self-image in which lower and middle-class urban developments that were inaugurated around the same celebratory occasions are not included. The written narrative of El Gráfico’s article wants to provide an inclusive stance when defining Colombia’s population as a melting pot. That melting pot however, seems to be represented by just one architectural face in these commemorative publications.

The visual inventory of the buildings was organized around two points in 1930s Bogotá: the main Plaza and Chapinero. Here, in these centers of symbolic power, the elites combined elements of modernity and tradition. The coexistence of these two elements was not entirely harmonious. In spite of their enthusiasm for modernity, the elites still struggled with the discourse of modernity because it was seen as a threat against tradition.
Figure 23. a) Plan of Bogotá 1938. Secretaría de Obras Públicas Municipales. Bogotá, Colombia. 1938. The blue dots (in the map above) represent the buildings referenced on Escobar’s article. b) The purple dots represent the locations of the buildings shown on the SMOB commemorative album, 1938. The two maps show concentration of the photo shoots around the same spots: The historic downtown, and Chapinero.
Counter-narratives of modernity

Modernity often conflicted with the values and interests of the elites who were promoting it. The elites frequently used terms associated with modernity to denote dislike. In some cases modernity was used as a synonym of bad taste or to denote a wrong attitude; it was also used in discussions around the topic of cultural heritage in which it was seen as a threat, especially in relation to the colonial legacy. It was used to remark upon unpleasant cultural traits from different cultures. By the end of the 1940s its use reflected a fear that revolutionary ideas could spread through modern cultural expressions.

Posters and signs on walls and billboards were acknowledged both as modern and distasteful. There were recurrent complaints and discussion during the 1930s around the lack of regulation for posters, signs, and billboards. In 1936, the SMOB reprimanded the communists for creating posters that contained bad taste, poor writing, and misspellings. In another case, a signboard of a modern textile company, located in Monserrate, a site that could be seen from any part of the city, was seen as harmful to the city’s image and its “seigniorial air.”

The fear felt towards modern forms and how they represented a threat against the dignity of the city’s tradition can be seen in different scenarios. Religious buildings in particular required special protection from modern forms. At the first meeting after the revolts of April 1948, Jorge Esguerra, the president of the SMOB, advocated for the conservation and maintenance of the religious patrimony of the city that he thought representative of the nation’s identity, which was predominantly Catholic. During the events of April 9 1948, emblematic and traditional buildings and monuments of the city were destroyed or vandalized. The atmosphere of distrust towards modernity started to build in the years previous to these events. The SMOB held discussions against the use of modern arrequives or ornaments in religious buildings such the chapel of the Central Cemetery. The Central Cemetery of Bogotá hosted the tombs and
mausoleums of many leaders since the late 1700s and displayed many of the architectural values that represented a strong link with the past. In other words, these buildings represented lineage. The project of the new chapel and the new entry façade to the Cemetery were closely supervised by the SMOB. In 1948 Esguerra visited the Urban Planning Division where “very likeable young men but modernists” received him courteously. The modernist style of the entry façade was described as an eyesore at odds with the Spanish style chapel they had finally agreed to build.505

Cultural and classical education were proposed to counter the influx of modernist ideas that were responsible for ruining the “aesthetic feeling” of the new generations. To provide art education for the public, it was necessary to popularize (vulgarizar or vulgarize in the original) the classic masterpieces. They proposed to the minister of education to reopen the “classic museum” created by Roberto Pizano.506 In that manner, art education for the masses would help counter the ultra modernist influences that were undermining fine art.507 The concern to keep classic artistic forms untainted from the modernist influence was also seen on the radio. Modernist things still not properly validated should not be mixed with the classics at the Radiodifusora Nacional or National Broadcast Radio.508

Also, porcelains,509 magazines with “monitos” or picture books/magazines,510 and vocational education were seen as opportunities to educate and control the laborers, so avoiding another uprising of those “who do not have that much privileges in life.”511 In the same sense, the events of April 9 fostered censorship. In order to not provide bad examples or stir up negative feelings of the population, the SMOB recommended refraining from screening the movie, “Rome, Open City” because they did not want the public to understand it as a sharpshooting lesson.

The fear of another popular uprising strengthened the attachment of the elite to tradition, especially the one represented by Catholicism. Religious buildings and monuments of national
heroes were targeted by the mob during the disturbances of April 9. The cityscape was slowly built around elements that symbolically represented ideological confrontation. On one hand, the elites tried to relocate the lower classes and organize them in specific areas of the city. At the same time they worked to reinforce their own values of upper class-consciousness through tradition. On the other hand, the lower classes did not see their own cultural codes included as part of the national narrative. Everything representing tradition was seen as a sign of exclusion by the lower classes. As a result, the lower classes targeted the symbols of tradition. The elites were convinced that the problem was to acculturate the masses. Also as result of these events, the division between high and popular culture increased, an idea that is still dominant in contemporary Colombian society.

**Rendering Perfection**

Visual skills were not only employed to make visual calculations and to assess art during the Renaissance, as pointed out in chapter 2. Baxandall also argued that images had the power to educate people. They were used to educate the masses, and religious images in particular, due to their seeming omnipresence, were also suitable for instilling feelings of devotion and to intensify religious experience. Baxandall notes that images and sophisticated visual codes taught people correct ways of behaving. For instance, people learned to behave appropriately in a given situation by mimicking the gestures they saw in paintings. He draws this idea from Leon Batista Alberti’s treatises on architecture and painting, from treatises on dancing by Guglielmo Ebreo, from an anonymous sixteenth-century text entitled *Mirror of the World*, and from the interpretation of biblical texts. Underlying his exposition on gestures and painting is the idea that images were also part of people’s behavioral education.
The *Mirror of the World* type of books started to gain popularity when urban centers were growing and people were learning to live in close proximity with others. According to Elias, the codification of conduct made coexistence easier to handle, especially in the wake of a new kind of society that no longer tolerated the use of direct violence to deal with problems. *Mirrors of the World* belonged to a category called *mirrors for princes*, a genre of political writing for rulers that was widely used from the early Middle Ages through to the Renaissance. As implied in the etymology of the word “mirror,” these writings were created to provide kings with images to imitate or avoid. The most well known are from Europe, but they were popular in many different places around the world, and they all have generally the same function. An example of this sort of treatise is Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Civilitate Morum Puerilium*, a book on the education of manners and courtesy for children, published in 1539. In tracking down the beginnings of the notion of civilization, Elias stressed the importance of these treatises, particularly because of their capacity to illustrate a point in history when sensibilities started to change with regard to feelings of embarrassment and shame. The changes he exposed throughout his work show how this process of civilization took many years, during which many specific changes “in the feelings of shame and delicacy” took place.

Many of the changes proposed by the treatises were related to body posture, gestures, and to different ways to display them publically. In these treatises, instructions were given on how to model body posture and on how to regulate gestures in order to reveal a more civilized attitude. According to Elias, the notion of civilization was constructed around the general idea of controlling drives and passions. In this sense, the Renaissance paintings studied by Baxandall and the courtesy books studied by Elias shared the same purpose: to teach them proper ways of behaving. For Baxandall, a painters’ role was to interpret and transmit Biblical stories using well-studied gestures and body postures that people could imitate; in Elias’ studies, authors on
the education of manners used classical rhetoric and images to illustrate how to correctly behave. Both works provided people with images for behavioral emulation. Lacan, in the field of psychoanalytic theory, expanded the same idea of the mirror that it has been recently used in understanding the role of images in the process of identity formation and self-consciousness. Perfection can also be read as self-improvement or civility. However, I preferred to use the term *perfection* to denote the set of attributes cultivated by a society to move toward civilized attitudes.

In Colombia during the 1930s and 1940s, the use of imagery to promote the idea of perfection can be seen in a wide array of images produced. In some cases, these images were in advertisements and articles about healthcare, hygiene, education, and culture. In other cases, visual and written narratives were utilized to describe and show undesirable conduct. The depiction of perfection implied a complex problem related to class, race, and gender. The local, white, whitened, and European-descended elite adopted discourses on progress and perfection that originated in Europe and America. These discourses reinforced ideas of racial and cultural determinism: specifically, certain classes or races were deemed to have characteristics that were incompatible with civilization.

The idea of perfection has been an appealing one to many societies and it has been frequently attached to the idea of civility. The notion of perfection has been indeed necessary to any society and has led to many positive changes. However, when its application marginalizes and stigmatizes part of the population based on race, class, and gender, many problems emerge. In the case of Colombia and other countries in Latin America, these problems are inextricably linked to the history of the conquest and colonization. Today many of these problems no longer legally exist but persist through cultural practices in everyday life.
Creating Patterns of Perfection Through the Manuals of Civility

While most references to progress dealt with the built environment and infrastructure, references to perfection dealt with the conduct of individuals and social groups. The Colombian elite was eager to be acknowledged by Europeans and Americans as part of the civilized world. However, the growing number of rural Colombians who were moving to the city challenged this goal. In 1930 almost 80% of Colombia’s population lived in rural areas. That soon changed, as 1930 was the beginning of industrialization in Colombia. In matter of a few years, Bogotá had a huge influx of immigrants from these rural areas and had a larger population than it was prepared to handle. Many of the immigrants and displaced people lived in peripheral areas that quickly became a problem of permanent concern for the municipal authorities and the SMOB. The problems of the newcomers were mainly behavioral and the difficulty to adapt to urban life. The elites and the municipal authorities tried to promote civic behavior by granting access to manifestations of high art and culture and also through the distribution of manuals of civility.

The manuals of urbanity, whose local versions appeared until the mid 19th century, played a fundamental role in the promotion of this ideal in the early 20th century. This topic has gained attention from Latin American scholars who in recent years have started to publish results of the studies on the manuals of courtesy and civility. The most common in Latin America is the Manual de Urbanidad y Buenas Maneras de Manuel Carreño or “Manual of Civility and Good Manners by Manuel Carreño” (Figure 24a/b). The press in Caracas first published this manual in 1853, and it was reedited and distributed throughout Hispanic America. Carreño’s manual was based on European books of courtesy from the 19th century that likewise were based on the books of courtiers and mirrors of princes from the 16th century.

Different roles have been attributed to Carreño’s manual in the configuration of Latin American early capitalist societies. According to Lander, Carreño’s manual was fundamental in
bring notions of European modernity to the new republics of Latin America.\textsuperscript{526} It also promoted the idea of an ideal citizen, but the parameters of an ideal citizen excluded the \textit{Negro}, \textit{Mestizo}, and \textit{Indio}.\textsuperscript{527} Carreño’s manual of conduct gave legitimacy to the creole elite, calling them \textit{honnêtés gens} or men of virtue, a term adopted by the creole elite from Louis XIV’s court. Likewise, the creole elite adopted French 17\textsuperscript{th} century class distinctions between literates and illiterates, civilized and barbarian.\textsuperscript{528}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure24.png}
\end{figure}

On the other hand, Díaz also considers Carreño’s manual a model of citizenship that reinforced traditional Catholic values.\textsuperscript{529} The manual followed similar social conventions and precepts to those of the Catholic Church in which social codes, such as the gaze, gestures, and body postures, were regulated. According to Díaz, the manual’s precepts are an inventory of the prejudices and beliefs of the society. In the manual, sex was never mentioned.\textsuperscript{530} Instead, the
manual highlighted the necessity to regulate and police sexual drives in almost every social situation. Between Catholic precepts and Carreño’s manual there was almost no aspect of people’s lives that was not regulated.

Other scholars have seen the manual from the perspectives of gender, to simulate modernity, and to foster class-consciousness. In terms of gender, Tova studies the role played by the manual in the creation of a new notion of citizenship, in which the role of women was attached to the hegemony of the masculine gaze of the 19th century emerging Venezuelan bourgeoisie. To Straka, the manual represents an attempt to simulate modernity by the second part of the 19th century. A fundamental problem of the creole elites soon after the independence was their inability to overcome the colonial order, a situation that was worsened by immediately committing to achieve a European modernity. To Muñoz, Carreño’s manual represented an attempt to model “docile bodies” to configure the modern ideal of citizenship in terms of discipline and behavior in a clear reference to Foucault’s notion of biopower. The normativity contained in the manual provided the means to achieve the corporality that was needed to configure the new republics. In the early 1900s the notion of citizenship was based on the virtuous citizen but also the “disinfected citizen,” two conditions that were widely reinforced by Carreño’s manual. On the other hand, Lander identifies the reasons that explain why the elites adopted so quickly and spread these manuals throughout Hispanic America: 1) the pleasure in seeing themselves portrayed in the behaviors described by the book, and 2) the possibility of identifying their own morals and ethics as the ones that were better suited to be spread to the rest of the community.

In the 1930s and 1940s in Bogotá, the gaze is the element situated at the center of the negotiation of social relations. Carreño himself defines the first principle of urbanity as an act of communication through which it is possible to convey “dignity, decorum, and elegance,” all
visible qualities. These visual qualities, among others, rendered a perfection that was being portrayed not only by Carreño’s book but also by the media and in a way that many people in Colombia were not able to fulfill.

*Depicting perfection*

Carreño’s manual was not the only device used to disseminate ideas and imaginaries about perfection and civic behavior. In the 1930s to 1950s, magazines and newspapers also played their part in this task through circulating advertisements that reinforced these ideals. In this section, I present a sample of these advertisements, grouped into four categories: 1) gender, 2) lifestyle, 3) education, and 4) lower classes’ way of living.

The first group of images was selected after identifying a persistent focus on gender in the advertisements. Images related to gender and gender roles are consistently on display in cultural and variety magazines and newspapers. The images frequently displayed the feminine figure in medium and close up shots in the early 1930s and in whole body shots by the late 1930s and the 1940s (Figure 25). The women in these images are usually staring at the camera, looking relaxed, and transmitting confidence and intimacy to the viewer. There seems to be a preference for European/American looking women, and it is very likely that many of these images were acquired through international news agencies.

The feminine figure was also used to convey nationalism, as shown in two depictions. The first one is a monochromatic drawing of a woman pointing her finger at the viewer (Figure 25a). This image is clearly based on James Montgomery’s Uncle Sam, designed for WWI to recruit soldiers. The Colombian version is of unknown author, and it was also designed to help recruit soldiers for the Colombia-Peru conflict in the 1930s. The model wears a Phrygian cap, a national emblem that has also been traditionally associated with the ideals of the French
Revolution. For those who might have been familiar with the image, there is a clear reference to Delacroix’s famous painting *Liberty Leading the People*. Also, the woman’s body is wrapped in a Colombian flag and she holds the Colombian emblem in her left hand. With her right hand, she points at Colombians willing to fight for their country. According to Mitchell, the gesture of the woman pointing at the viewer becomes “a common feature of the modern recruiting poster.” The invitation to move and mobilize the viewers to recruitment centers corresponds with what he calls “overt signs of positive desire.”\(^{536}\) However, the main difference from Montgomery’s image is that this icon was not really trying to convince the masses to join the army. This image circulating in *El Gráfico* had the purpose of conveying emotions aroused by nationalism and to celebrate the abilities of the culturally literate, of those who could decipher the meanings and allusions to the original image.

The other image conveying nationalism shows an advertisement of “Colombiana” a soft drink that has been promoted ever since as the national soda. The publicists seemed to have made an effort to try and find a phenotype that would look representative of Colombian women with dark long hair. The model in the image is vaguely reminiscent of the female icon of the Good Neighborhood Policy period, Carmen Miranda with a touch of Rita Hayworth. Overall, the women depicted in this group of images no longer correspond to the stereotype of the Latin American average women, submissive, dependent, and caring.
The representation of the male figure was also mediated by preconceptions of gender roles and attached to foreign phenotypes. With few exceptions, the advertisements and even photographs portrayed white, European-looking men (Figure 26). The images convey success and strength. England and the U.S. seem to be the dominant reference, with references to the ideal “American gentleman.” Men in the pictures wear suits and hats in a sort of Dick Tracy style (see Figure 26b-Figure 27c). By the late 1940s and early 1950s styles reflected those of Hollywood actors like Clark Gable and Humphrey Bogart. Also, trend topics such as scientific
progress and technical development are usually accompanied by an image of a male figure.
Science, power, and knowledge were mostly the terrain of men. Powerful political leaders were also men: Churchill, Eisenhower, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Rommel, as well as local leaders and presidents.

Images of males and females interacting reflect gender roles and were used to promote new lifestyles. The women’s gaze in the images is subordinated to the male companion (Figure 27). The composition and the messages are constructed around the male figure. Overall, women look younger than men, who look mostly middle aged. Men are protective, strong, successful, savvy, attractive, and always occupying positions of power. The so-called American lifestyle was being decidedly spread among the Colombian upper and emerging classes. This American lifestyle can be seen in the flapper-style looking ladies surrounding a successful businessman, the couple loading their trunk with baskets of food for a picnic, the Dick Tracy-looking middle class couple studying the plans of a Tudor-style house shown in the background, and the salesman talking to a lady about the advantages of acquiring General Electric appliances that will “keep them young,” because “they will help their maidens to be more efficient.” (Figure 27d)

The visual language of progress and the American lifestyle took over the pages not only of magazines but by the early 1950s also informed the displays of the department stores in Bogotá. The visual synechdoque was enacted at many different levels to secure its effectiveness. The buildings and radios were based on the same design pattern and styles of the buildings (Figure 18). The advertisements were reproduced in the showrooms of department stores, interior and fashion design, billboards, the printed media, and the movies (Figure 28). In an attempt to bring the language of progress to the countryside, the Instituto de Crédito Territorial or Land Loans Institute, built for peasants a number of houses that adopted foreign styles like the Dutch colonial style cottages, shown in (Figure 31).
Likewise, there was a narrative about perfection regarding the lower classes. On one hand, the printed media echoed the governmental policies for self-improvement and perfection of the lower classes through culture. Articles encouraging people to visit museums and libraries and learn about the arts were recurrent during this period (Figure 29a). As mentioned in the previous
section, after the killing of Jorge E. Gaitán in 1948, the fear of another revolt fostered a discussion about the possible ways to control the masses and culture. The media sought to convey this idea of self-improvement through culture, as can be seen in the articles published in *El Tiempo* in 1948.

On the other hand, the media continually published articles about the reasons the lower classes lacked perfection. Starting in the late 1930s, there was frequent reflection on the living conditions of the lower classes. Articles illustrated the pitiful housing conditions and how they detracted from the beauty of the city (Figure 30). The peak of the discussion about the appearance of the lower classes in relations to issues of hygiene and aesthetics took place in 1936 during the mayoralty of Jorge E. Gaitán (Figure 29b). As part of his proposal to modernize the city, he emitted a city ordinance banning the use of certain traditional garments.

The city Mayor has decided to prohibit the use of *ruana* [woolen poncho] and *alpargates* [canvas/jute sandals] to city workers. The municipal workmen should wear bourgeois footwear and protect themselves from cold by wearing overcoats.\(^{537}\)

The combination of discourses about perfection in the manuals of civility combined with the written and visual narratives that circulated in the printed media often rendered the lower classes as inconvenient for the progress of the nation. Also, the intellectuals of the Liberal Republic considered the lower classes as part of a melting pot from which a national Colombian identity would emerge. However, the lower class’s image, outfits, and customs did not seem to fit in modern Colombia, unless the lower classes were willing to perfect themselves, give up their own identity, and assume a new global identity of modernity and progress. The contradictory nature of the discourses about class, national identity, and aesthetics made it difficult to develop a unified national identity and promote social cohesion.
Figure 29. a) Photo-Chronicle about Museum and Lecturing. El Tiempo, July 12th 1948, p. 18. n.a. b) La Ruana, Los Alpargates, y el Baño. El Tiempo, 1936.
Figure 30. a) Article “The Shack and the Laziness.” Estampa, August 29 1942. b) Article about the “Little Stairs Street.” Cromos, 1938.
Figuring Out an Identity

The problem of national identity was rapidly identified a few years before the independence from Spain as a problem of visual representation. Since the first participations of Colombia in the Universal Exhibitions in the 19th century, there was a clear consciousness among the political leaders about the importance of the consolidation of the nation at the symbolical level. One of the main challenges for the Colombian elites after the independence from Spain was to assure the legitimacy of their power over the territory and the population. That was a challenge that required taking measures at the practical but also at the symbolic level.
The period between 1930-1950 in Colombia was characterized by an unprecedented amount of professionals in engineering, architecture, mineralogy, geography, topography, and many other pure and applied sciences. Along with the physical construction and the controlling of territory, it was also necessary to symbolically construct the nation. Through the consolidation of national symbols and the acknowledgment of popular cultural productions, the Colombian elites tried to create a sense of cohesion around the idea of a national identity.

**The Conflictive and Imperfect Visual Identity of the Nation**

In the 1930s, cultural policies regarding printed media and cultural productions changed significantly. For instance, the program *Bibliotecas Aldeanas* or “Village Libraries” provided villages and small towns in Colombia with books upon request. Likewise, through the use of radio and cinematography, the government tried to reduce the high illiteracy levels. According to the Colombian government, technology was supposed to help reduce illiteracy in rural areas and instill the habit of reading in urban populations in the 1930s.

According to Muñoz, music, dance, folklore, radio, and cinema were all part of the so-called “Liberal Republic” cultural strategy, which sought to civilize the country and give it “the elements for active and prolific political and economic participation through education.” These policies went hand in hand with the idea of a single racial identity for the whole country. The ideas of a single unifying race and constructing a national identity were being circulated at this moment in several Latin American countries: Fernando Ortiz promoted the construction of a Cuban identity or Cubanness, a racial combination of European, Taíno, and African descent. Gilberto Freyre saw Brazil as a single homogenous race that tried to unify the whole nation under a single Brazilian identity. José Vasconcelos with his “cosmic race” theory conceived the mixed Mexican race as superior, in part as an authentic quest for a national identity but also in
response to the derogatory stereotypes about Mexicans. In Colombia, writings of intellectuals such as Germán Arciniégas circulated the idea of the *crisol nacional* or melting pot. Indeed, Arciniégas’s ideas are mentioned in Melitón Escobar’s article, discussed above. These different Latin American nations attempted to create a unified national identity that erased all the racial differences. In Colombia, the desire to construct a single national identity and race can be seen in the Bachués movement, an artistic movement that also tried to find an identity in pre-Columbian cultures (Figure 32). In the following section, I present a case study of what I call a visual attempt to figure out what being Colombian was.

Inventing Colombianness

In November 1942, Estampa published a double-page visual essay with 12 images depicting characters that were supposed to represent the country. Each image represented a different region of the country that when added up, should create a representation of Colombia’s national identity (Figure 33). Every single image out of 12 illustrated a different persona who depicted a particular idiosyncrasy of a given region or ethnicity. Four of the twelve images are located on the first page with the title Colombianos todos or “Colombians Everyone”. The upper half of the first page contains an image of a group of people gathered in an unidentified public plaza. This image acts as a background for the whole composition on the page. At least half of the audience is wearing clear hats with a dark band, in the fashion of the lower lands and rural areas of the country. Overlapping the image of the whole crowd and decentered toward the upper left corner, there is an image of eleven indigenous people in what appear to be a familial group. They are standing by a wall, shoeless, apparently in the street, wearing woolen striped ruanas. There are children and adults in the group and all of them look shy or intimidated. The caption reads, “The Sibundoy Indians [They are also Colombian, making reference to the headline of the article] who, when walking down the street, greet with enthusiastic patriotism, ‘what’s up paisano!’ (Countryman), and then someone replies to them, ‘good bye paisano.’” In present day Colombia the word paisano is no longer commonly used, but I still remember elders around me using it frequently some thirty years ago. According to the Real Academia Española, the word paisano was used in the 1600s to denote an inhabitant from a small village or aldeano, but in the 1930s the word was used to describe somebody coming from the same region or country as the one who uses it. However, the use of this word in colloquial terms is to denote proximity with that person and to inspire confidence and also to give a sense of parity. So, the colloquial use of the term is what really conditions the “reading” of this image.
The lower left corner of the page is occupied by an image of a peasant from an agricultural region called Boyacá. The picture portrays a man wearing loose thick trousers, an old hat, a white shirt, and what appears to be a *ruana* or poncho on his right shoulder he appears to be carrying a large package of produce. The image is a low-angle shot with the man showing a certain pride and toughness in his expression. The upper part of the man’s torso is silhouetted and its location on the page overlaps the image of the crowd described earlier. The caption starts describing the man in the picture using the diminutive *campesinito*, or little peasant, denoting some condescension from the author. To create contrast, the text complements the description using adjectives such as “unflinchingly shy, stone-faced, stubborn, and unpretentiously brave.”
The text also describes his modest outfit as one composed of traditional clothes from this region, Boyacá, while remarking that he is a “true lover of his plot and, subsequently, a good patriot.”

The final image on the first page stands out from the others. It is located at the lower right section of the page, and depicts a movie-like scene. The background is unclear but there are two main characters in the scene, a man and a woman coming out from a car. The car is partially shown but it looks similar to a Chrysler, Buick, Chevrolet or any of the streamlined cars designed by or after Loewy or Earl’s influence. There is a man standing right by the car helping the woman out. They smile at each other and they both wear fancy Victorian style outfits. Their skin is clearly lighter than the rest of the people in the two-page composition. The young, healthy, and attractive couple inevitably evokes a Hollywood movie scene rather than a casual urban scene in a South American city. The caption reads, “to the club, to the cabaret, to the fancy hotel. This couple, impeccably dressed, is able to enjoy however they like. They are in Colombia anyhow.”

The second page is crammed with eight images depicting more Indians; some soldiers; some mulatas from the Caribbean coast; a paisa, an old man from a region in Colombia that is ethnically ‘whiter’ than the rest of the country and whose figure is also silhouetted; a Bogotan gamin or homeless boy; a strange character from the Valley of Cauca; two unemployed men; and a “mulata-negroide” also from the Caribbean coast, wearing what seems to be a “tutti-frutti hat” that is actually a bowl of fruit for sale.

The written style used for the captions, though at times pejorative, is a mix of colloquial and friendly descriptions of the different types of Colombian people and the different ways of being patriotic. The way national identity is depicted and constructed in these images is consistent with the ideas of Latin America as “melting pot,” “national cresol,” or “racial democracy.” The elements of design and composition and the editorial decisions are made
with subtlety to reinforce the discourse of nationalism while also reinforcing class hierarchies (Figure 34).

Through these images, the editors of the magazine provide their readers with a recipe to construct the nation. This visual essay uses the same typeface that is used to advertise a locally produced soda called “Colombiana,” whose slogan is “la nuestra,” or “our Colombian soda” (Figure 35). The heading was made using a brush script typeface,\(^548\) which is slightly slanted to the left, and distributed following an ascending curved path.\(^549\) Two of the elements that represent modernity in the composition, the typeface used for the headline and aspects of the image of the young couple (the car and the Hollywood style), clearly refer to a discourse about modernity that was being fed from the center, Europe and North America, to the periphery.
The editors used the first page to make a statement about the constitutive elements of "Colombianness." The second page elaborates on this concept. The image occupying the most space on the first page is the crowd of people gathered in a plaza with two other overlapping images that seem to push it into the background. The two overlapping images are those of the indigenous people and of the peasant. The indigenous people are described in a friendly manner, almost comradely, and are presented as equals. There is no reference to their body posture or their garments, or to the fact that they are not wearing shoes in the sometimes-harsh Bogotan weather. Individuals that have many different stories are presented homogenously as Colombians. The Sibundoy, the Boyacense peasant, and the Bogotan versions of a lord and a
lady visually represent the country, while none of them are identified by name or even by their territorial location.

The indigenous people in the upper left corner of the second page stare at the camera, which looks back at them at the same level. They do not look powerful, or proud, but rather curious, baffled, or confused. They serve the purpose of being part of a landscape called Colombia, but they had only recently been granted citizenship by the Liberal thinkers, the same ones who ran this magazine and other cultural publications in the 1930s. According to historians like Pécaut and Castaño, the period of the Liberal Republic was a moment in which new ways of representing the relationship of power between dominant and dominated were achieved by invoking the triumph over the oligarchy. Although this can be true based on the literary sources, the imagery I have examined offers a different version of the discourse. Interpretations of this visual imagery suggest that the Liberal Republic was not an agent of real change. Instead, the ruling bourgeoisie of the Liberal Republic’s strategy was to gain people’s support while neutralizing them in the case of an eventual social mobilization of the masses.

While this conclusion, based on a single set of images, may seem bold, a further discourse analysis of imagery produced during the 1930s and 1940s can shed light on a period in which social tensions and class struggle were revealed through cultural productions. The class struggles revealed in the analysis of the imagery are in sharp contrast to the alleged racial homogeneity of the country. The analysis renders void the democratic-based discourse that was supposed to be the foundation for the cultural policies of the Liberal Republic. The conceptualization of race and national identity based on a homogenous society with no racial differences erases the historical legacies of racial inequality and marginality. This unresolved history is glossed over by the notion of a single unifying citizenship: there are no whites, Indians, mestizos, or blacks but just nationals, regardless of their origins. Instead of class and race
equality, colonial hierarchies persist, even among the most avant-garde intellectuals of this period.

Further analysis is needed to gauge how the symbolic violence contained in images such as these may have contributed to the physical violence that erupted by the late 1940s and how they also contributed to the creation of cultural practices regarding the urban space. In terms of the tensions visible in these cultural productions that contributed to the creation of segregated spaces in the city, Yúdice argues that the representation of subaltern groups such as the indigenous population and blacks, as in the Estampa magazine image, can represent the desire of recognition and adoption of the hybrid and mestizo as part of the national-popular identity, but can also represent their stigmatization. This seems to be the case for this particular set of images, based on my analysis and my experience as a Colombian national.

These images also raise questions about the way they contributed to the construction and the interconnection between class, race and gender. In terms of the representation of manhood and femininity, it is possible to observe differences in these pictures. In the case of the elegant couple on the first page of the article (see Figure 33), the man and woman are clearly defined in terms of their roles in society. The man provides care and support, while the woman is shown as receptive, delicate, beautiful, clean, and cheerful. Regarding gender, the first of the two images depicting indigenous people is somewhat opaque. A woman can be seen carrying a baby and surrounded by two more children. Her gender is represented only based on her motherhood. Aside from this, it would be hard to point to the differences between her and the men that surround her. Regarding class, the non-verbal language of the whiter men represent positions of power, like the soldiers, the gentleman with the lady, and the paisa who stares down at the camera with his right fist lifted. The non-white population’s bodies usually display an insecure
and dislocated image. This kind of representation is not too far from the eighteenth-century genre of casta paintings.

The other woman that can be clearly identified as “mulata/negroid” in the second page is described in the caption as Colombian, “Just as the cachaco [the man from Bogota] is and the indigenous people from the Amazon.” The two male characters that are next to the “mulata/negroid” are presented not as white men but rather as behaviors. The man “resting” in the park and the reader are also Colombians. “Good for them that can do nothing in an agonizing world” reads the last sentence’s caption, subtly criticizing their behavior. The Bogotan gamin (homeless boy) is part of the urban landscape and is represented in a paternalistic way. He is willing to accept his role. The last man is boquetunel or “tunnel-mouth” (Figure 24b), whose gender is secondary to the fact that he is part of the Valle del Cauca’s landscape and forms part of their popular culture as a freak.

This case study can be seen as an attempt to display a visual construction of the nation’s identity, attempting to represent a liberal utopia of equality. It can also be said that the narrative resembles the nineteenth-century costumbrista paintings or even the eighteenth-century casta paintings in the way of laying out the social hierarchies. In this sense, this set of images ends up reinforcing stereotypical depictions of race and also the system of classes, and it is intriguing to consider the importance of this imagery in the configuration of the present-day Colombia’s veiled system of classes.

Printed media and particularly cultural magazines played different roles in the configuration of the visual codes in the transition to modernity. The notions of progress and perfection—or self-improvement—were inherent in the idea of modernity and were permanently part of the visual and written narratives of this period. The imagery produced during the 1930s and 1940s used foreign references as ideals and left most of the population and references to the
local culture out of the picture of modernity. Representations of different aspects of modernity promoted a sense of dislocation among the locals. Likewise, the intellectual and political elites that undertook the task of creating a national identity did not share cultural values with the lower classes. Because of their self-consciousness about their superiority, the elites found it necessary to instruct the masses on how to adapt to modernity and look modern. However, they ended up creating visual narratives whose ultimate goal was to mirror their ambitions. Their restricted conception of modernity became a sort of class-monologue.

The architectural language of the elites’ idealized version of the city was a language unfamiliar to most of the population and from which they were excluded. In a similar fashion to the role of photography in the visual education of Chicago’s 1893 fairgoers, the representations of this ideal model of Bogotá city gradually became a parameter of representation for the elite that had access to these sorts of publications. Likewise, Rydell remarks on the effect of the White City Movement in hiding or trying to turn invisible everything that was out of the movement’s aesthetic guidelines. The kind of things that fell outside of these guidelines were usually lower class’ aesthetic and, overall, undesirable representations of the city that were not susceptible to being patronized, indoctrinated or classified as folklore. El Gráfico’s and the SMOB album’s visual narratives seemed to be thought off as a dialogue within a circle of peers. The visual discourse was intended to speak to people of the same social status while putting the lower classes aside. Exclusive ways of thinking about the modern project marginalized alternate cultural productions and aesthetics as well as different conceptions of city dwellings.

The images presented in this chapter could be seen as isolated cases, but they can also be considered representative of the larger society’s visuality when compared to other similar productions around the same period. Indeed, a similar structure, organization, and language can
be seen in subsequent commemorative publications. The celebration of the urban space was seen as an opportunity to foster the civic spirit and to promote a sense of cohesion. However, the selection of images of these commemorative pages produced historical patterns of idealization of the city according to a single perspective. The visual surveys of the city, as well as the ones undertaken around the country, had the purpose of providing a sense of appropriation and power through the gaze; these surveys displayed control over a larger cultural landscape.

On the other hand, the efforts to construct a national identity institutionalized a racially blind society. The melting pot notions, or racial democracy, and all the efforts and labels used to create a national identity, created what authors such as Needell and Guimaraes call a myth of racial equality. Almost overnight, hundreds of years of inequality, resulting from plantation and extraction economies in which the indigenous, the black, and the mestizo were marginalized, were homogenized under an imagined equality. During the period of study this phenomenon is reflected in the landscape, in the cityscape, in advertisements, in people’s garments, in their behavior, and in their cultural practices.
Epilogue

There is still a lot of research yet to be done to understand the role of the scopic regime in the configuration of modern Latin American societies. In my analysis of the scopic regime, I uncover the social negotiations and the socio historical processes that took place during this period. My analysis shows that the dominant elites controlled and used images as rhetorical tools to reinforce their sense of privilege. My conclusions are limited, however, because my research is based on the Colombian elites’ symbolic productions. Thus, it provides a single perspective, although a multifaceted one, of the scopic regime of that period. Since I began my research, I did not intend to cover the productions of the lower and middle classes to show their role as agents instead of passive recipients. Very little research has been done in this regard, and extensive field and archival research is needed to address these productions. In addition, my research covered the reception of newspapers and magazines that were produced by and for elites. However, these graphic publications could have had a more extensive audience, and the reception of this larger audience also needs to be studied. In spite of these limitations, I was still able to reach several conclusions about Colombia’s scopic regime in terms of sight, space, and social structure.

First, the 1930s and 1940s represent a period in Colombian history in which cultural magazines and newspapers took advantage of new printing technologies and adopted a new visual language to promote modernity. Although it can be said that this was already happening by the late 19th century, the circulation of images in the late 19th century was restricted to even smaller circles, and the population of Bogotá was lower compared to the peak it reached in the 1930s. Also, the first decades of the 20th century saw a substantial increase in artists’ contributions to the illustration of newspapers and magazines. After the release of El Gráfico’s
first issue in 1910, the circulation of images increased. To depict the modern progress of the city, these artists frequently depicted images of the city in the late 1920s and thereafter.

Color prints and also a variety of representational techniques from fine arts, photography, architecture and engineering, were utilized to echo modernity locally and from overseas. Artists used techniques such as ink drawing, printmaking, painting, watercolor, gravure, two-point perspective, blueprints, technical drawings, and modern photographic techniques to create an illusory modernity. The low-angle shots and the bird-eye’s views reinforced the grandiosity of works of architecture and engineering. Architects and engineers emerged as a new sort of professional elite that mastered the language of modernity while at the same time representing traditional forms in this transitional period. By the late 1930s and the 1940s, the principles and elements of modern design based on orthogonal representations, straight vertical lines, modularity, and sturdiness applied both to buildings and to the bodies depicted in fashion magazines showing sturdy, elongated, and white subjects. In advertising, the references to modernity were mostly from overseas which does not represent a problem since the formal language of modernity was standard with slight regional variations. The problem resides in the connection between the formal language and the local bodily identity of the lower and middle classes. The notion of citizenship was attached to an extraneous kind of body and behavior that automatically excluded the locals.

As seen in the case of El Gráfico’s commemorative article (chapter 4), engineers were conscious about the prevailing role of aesthetics to convey emotions and create narratives about modernity. However, only a small percentage of people, given the low levels of literacy, were familiar with the role of aesthetics and the technical concepts associated with modernity. The SMOB was composed of a large number of members with backgrounds in art, architecture and
engineering. Technical concepts, technical specifications, and aesthetic assessment, usually made after foreign references, dominated the discussions of the SMOB.

The visual language of this period, particularly the one used to depict urban life, helped defining notions in the realm of culture and aesthetics such as patrimony, cultural heritage, and taste. The contradictions between pre-modern/modern can be seen in the visual binaries of straight/crooked, modern/vernacular, modular/chaotic, clean/dirty, and healthy/unhealthy. The renderings depicting modern architecture used modern representation techniques to visually reinforce the traditional historical narratives from the colonial period.

The second insight concerns the persistence of the colonial scopic regime during the transition to modernity. On the one hand, the colonial scopic regime persisted because of two major colonial forces—the Church and the Spanish Crown—and because of the cultural syncretism derived from colonization. The imprint of the colonial scopic regime never faded, despite the adoption of modern visual codes. However, both the colonial and the modern scopic regime were consistent in the way they stigmatized large parts of the population. Lower class cultural practices, customs, and traditions were censured and many times outlawed. In Colombia’s transition to modernity, vision played a role in negotiating social relations. Contrary to the colonial scopic regime that was based on the dictums of the Church and the Crown, the modern scopic regime adopted references from overseas. The elites’ monopoly on foreign cultures guaranteed their monopoly of national culture and aesthetics as well. The lower classes’ aesthetics and cultural practices were left outside the framework of modernity. The lower classes had to learn the new codes or live on the margins, just as they had in the colonial period when the Catholic Church indoctrinated them. Gradually, the images reinforced ideas about how to gain social mobility: 1) Mestizaje: the media displayed images of different levels of racial
whiteness to convey ideas of progress and perfection, configuring the “docile bodies” of the ideal citizen as preferably white. 2) Acquisition of cultural capital: the acquisition of cultural capital was also attached to the idea of whiteness, not necessarily attached to skin color, but displayed through visual and material culture, and through the adoption of certain customs and behavior. The class warfare in the first half of the 20th century was the symbolic universe in which new social codes of conduct and aesthetics were displayed. The development and adoption of imported architectural styles created codes that supported class and spatial segregation at different levels. When the inner city was left to the poor and employees in the early 20th century, different centers of symbolic power appeared in places such as Teusaquillo, La Merced, and Chapinero.

The adoption of foreign architectural styles was used to distinguish social class in a similar way that paintings were used during the colonial period to prove “blood purity” and “lineage.” The new discourse of modernity adapted the order inherited from the colonial scopic regime. In this new discourse, architecture was powerful because it was a highly visible part of the landscape. The aesthetic experience of the city was different depending on one’s social station: the upper classes experienced the interiors and the modern way of living. The city was permanently on display, and pictures and ideas of the city reflected the class identity of the elite.

On the other hand, the lower classes experienced the transition to the modern city through their daily visual contact with it. The first working class neighborhoods were built in the early 20th century. However, when the media displayed images of these neighborhoods to celebrate the inauguration of the city, the interiors of lower class housing in these neighborhoods were never portrayed. The housing projects for the middle class were frequently announced with images similar to the housing project images for the upper classes (see Figure 27c). The inequality in the
distribution of urban space had not only to do with the physical space but with the different degrees of visibility people had depending on their social status.

The visual hierarchies established during the colonial period were translated into a newer version of an old system, and this combination of old and new led to contradictions: the lower classes were acknowledged as part of the nation but at the same time their traditions and customs were condemned. Through the use of images and visual representations of the built environment, the elites convinced themselves that they held the right assumptions about the built environment and that the lower classes needed to improve both their material living and their civic values. The images that were put into circulation in newspapers and magazines reflected a process of self-consciousness that reinforced their notions about class identity, class distinction, and provided an opportunity to legitimize their hegemony with its inherited benefits. An analysis of these images reveals inconsistencies between the liberal ideas that were dominant during this period and the traditional values, largely inherited from the colonial period.

The third important insight of this research has to do with the nature of the sources used for this research and how they functioned as mediators in the negotiations of social relations. These negotiations had implications in terms of class, race, and gender and affected the way in which the city was inhabited and the cityscape was perceived. Upper, middle, and lower classes each dealt with social status through images differently, but the images studied here largely represent the upper class perspective. The visual narratives created by the upper classes about the built environment reflect their values, beliefs, and interests. Instead of creating the discourse of national progress and national identity, they created an upper-class monologue. Through the use of images and visual representations of the built environment, the elites convinced themselves that their assumptions were right and that the lower classes needed both material and spiritual
improvement. The magazines functioned as vehicles to spread visual literacy and to reinforce class identity.

Contact with foreign countries created self-consciousness among upper classes about their built environment. Often after facing a cultural shock abroad or when having foreign visitors in town, the feeling of shame and embarrassment acted in a twofold manner: 1) to foster the elites’ desire to implement progress and promote perfection among the other classes, and 2) to use it as a pedagogical tool to acculturate the locals. To help acculturate the locals, the elites created visual codes that discouraged or even banned anti-modern behaviors; this included traditional foods and beverages, clothes, language, ideas, and customs because they were in bad taste. The elites also targeted communism for its bad taste and criminal activities. The assessment of the aftermath of the events of April 9 1948 included many references to disgust and bad taste, and even the killing of Gaitán was quickly attributed to the communist rabble. This was of course aligned with the U.S. policies in terms of hemispherical control to fend off communism from Latin America.

The construction of a national identity also proved problematic in different ways. The upper classes were probably intellectually convinced of the virtue of the liberal ideals of equality. However, the need to establish a difference between classes and secure their historic (or recently acquired in many cases) privileges prevailed over the liberal ideals. Subsequently, a whole symbolic universe was created combining elements of tradition and modernity. Tradition reminded people about the privileges derived from history, while modernity recognized Colombia’s place in the rest of the civilized world.

In spite of the seemingly passive stance of the lower and middle classes in terms of imagery, there were mechanisms of resistance. At first, it seems that the lower classes were able
to hold onto their customs, traditions, and linguistic uses. However, the emergence of the middle class during this period brought a new variable to the class warfare. This new middle class created a buffer zone between the upper and lower classes. The increasing access to instances of power provided eventually the middle classes with the opportunity to identify the origins and the problems of the Colombian conflict and to discuss them as part of the national political agenda.

Race is another topic that is frequently present in the visual narratives. In advertisements, Caucasian models were almost always used. The images of the city and architectural renders, on the other hand, showed abstractions of people that usually corresponded to foreign standardized phenotypes. These abstractions associated the city and the architectural projects with racial whiteness. The notion of whiteness and whitening is not new to Latin American history. There are case studies about Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, among others, documenting the existence of policies of *blanqueamiento* or whitening since colonial times but also during the post-independence periods. In the case of Bogotá and the images studied here, the elites emphasized more the social construction of whiteness rather than the actual application of a policy of whitening. The social codes developed during this period created a regulatory system of segregation based on the familiarity or ignorance of those codes. The manners taught through the manuals of etiquette and urbanity, the objects, the architecture, and the way of speaking, were all part of these social codes. The *mestizaje* or miscegenation was part of that policy of *blanqueamiento*. However, the culturally constructed whiteness also led racially mixed people to try and secure their status by any means. This resulted in a permanent state of anxiety and compulsion to appropriate the cultural capital contained in the discourse of modernity and to put it on display. In sum, the discussions and images of modernity in magazines and newspapers represented a way to increase and preserve whiteness. Some of the architecture of this period
even reflects this social anxiety. The abundance of “Frenchy-looking merengue-style houses,” for instance, reflected the insecurity that characterized the transitional society of early capitalism in Colombia. On the other hand, the people, the mestizos, negros, and Indians, were subordinated, and images of them in the city were rare as well as it was for a long time, uncertainty or invisibility of their spatial location in the city. Also, the mestizaje, as part of the policies of *blanqueamiento*, is intrinsically associated with the emergence of the middle class and also had implications in labor negotiations and sex relationships.

In terms of gender, the images present stereotypical representations of women but also chronicle *profesionistas* or professional women. This was an interesting finding, also related to the consolidation of middle class women. Many of the images, mostly from advertisements, transmit the idea of a powerful woman, emphasized using the same techniques to depict buildings, such as low-angle shots. However, the racial aspect of the women depicted contradicts the stereotype of a submissive woman. The influence of the American culture is undeniable and reminds me of the “pelonas” in Mexico, upper-class women who challenged the stereotype of femininity by cutting their hair and adopting the flapper style of the 1930s. These powerful women were associated with good taste. The advantage women were supposed to have in terms of aesthetic experience, emotions, and sensibility, seemed to give them authority in the realm of taste. Columns about interior design, fashion, and modern living were published by women or under feminine pseudonyms.

Since the 1990s, the historical images of the city have gained a renewed interest. However, their study and use for the creation of historical narratives is still problematic. Nobody doubts the troubling racist character of the image I used to introduce this dissertation (the Hola Magazine image). However, few people would view a postcard or a commemorative album as
racist or discriminatory in any way. The power of landscape representations lies in their ability to trigger emotional reactions. The cityscapes in these images are presented as acts of control, discipline, and as sites where cultural and social negotiations are taking place. They also reflect the historical problems of the city that remained unresolved. Notions such as patrimony and cultural heritage are still based on the perpetuation of the values established during the heyday of modernity. The Colombian cityscapes and the architecture, similarly to the “Colombianos todos” image, are devoid of race, class, and gender. However, when compared to the present-day Colombian built environment, a great deal of segregation and marginality is still implicit.
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*Dictionary of Art Historians (Website)*. Art History Webmasters Association, 1943.

*Dictionary of Art Historians (Website)*. Art History Webmasters Association, 1943.


*Diccionario castellano con las voces de ciencias y artes y sus correspondientes en las tres lenguas francesa, latina e italiana [...]*. Madrid: Terreros y Pando, Esteban, 1767.


Endnotes

1 Andrea Savini, "Las Mujeres Más Poderosas Del Valle Del Cauca (Colombia), En La Formidable Mansión Hollywoodense De Sonia Zarzur, En El Beverly Hills De Cali," Hola, Dec, 2011.


6 Alberto Escovar, Margarita Mariño, and César Peña, Atlas Histórico De Bogotá, 1538-1910 (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2004). Since there is no English version of this book, the in-text title corresponds to the literal translation from the Spanish original title by the author.

7 Pueblos de indios is a category in Spanish baroque urbanism used to describe small villages created to group and control indigenous population in the Spanish America. Control was exercised in these pueblos through indoctrination, taxation and availability of labor.

8 The use of the term “scopic regime” is in that sense of Metz, in the field of media and film studies, that would be later adopted by Jay to describe the cultural complexities involved in the act of vision instead of just a mechanical act. Another term, which is similar to this one, is visuality that was coined by Hall to also define vision as the result of a social agreement.


12 The Consequences of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1. Since this study deals with the idiosyncrasies of Latin American history, I will need to revise Giddens’ periodization for the purposes of this investigation.


15 All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity, 17.


18 The Civilizing Process, 268.


26 Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity, 1.
27 The Consequences of Modernity, 17-18.
28 The Consequences of Modernity, 19.
29 The Consequences of Modernity, 20.
30 The Consequences of Modernity, 59.
31 García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, 1-7.
33 Real Academia Española, "Mestizo, Za. Adj.", Diccionario De Autoridades (Real Academia Española, 1734).
35 "Mestizo, N. And Adj." (Oxford University Press).
37 García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, 41.
38 Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, xxiv.
40 Chasteen characterizes four different approaches to the study of Latin America from North American scholars during the twentieth century: Racial, cultural and environmental determinism until 1930; modernization theory between 1930 and 1940; Dependency theory after the 1960s; and social constructionism from the 1990s and on. John Charles Chasteen, Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 21-24.
42 Ibid.
43 First implemented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s, these policies were in effect for five more decades after their implementation. This was part of a propagandistic effort made by the United States, to include visual materials to educate and indoctrinate. Particularly interesting for the purpose of this research is the role played by the chief of visual education for the Pan American Union during the 1940's. Under his supervision, several books and videos were produced about different countries in Latin America.
44 Oxford English Dictionary, "Ideology, N." (Oxford University Press). The first references to the use of the term come from the French philosopher Étienne Condillac—whose focus was on sensations and psychology— who, in the eighteenth century recognized the relationship between ideas and sensations: All ideas were supposed to be derived from sensations.
47 Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. Cf. Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 57.
48 Karl Marx et al., The German Ideology. Part One: With Selections from Parts Two and Three, Together with Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy" (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), 64.
50 Nicholas Abercrombie, Bryan S. Turner, and Stephen Hill, The Dominant Ideology Thesis (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1980), 3. In reference to feudal and early capitalist societies, he states “as a general rule, historical studies of the dominant classes of feudal and capitalist societies suggest that the dominant class was more exposed and more receptive to the dominant ideology than subordinate classes.” This is something that I can see applicable to the Colombian context, but still needs to be proved. My assumption is that Colombian elites’
concerns were more related to class legitimation and conservation of family property rather than subjugating the people by using ideology.

52 Ibid.
56 "Holding Aesthetics and Ideology in Tension," 126.
57 Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*.
68 In my introduction I explained the critical stance I assumed after publishing the Historical Atlas of Bogotá, 1538-1938, especially in relation to the narratives we helped to reinforce based on limited and elitist, and sometimes patronizing, notions of patrimony and cultural heritage.
69 One more limitation with the sources has to do with the fact that most of the analysis was made based on PDF files and JPEG. Because of the limitation of time, most of the images from *Cromos* and *Estampa* are photographic reproductions of the originals as well as the minutes from the SMOB and the Bogotá City Council. *El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*, and *El Gráfico* are completely digitized at the National Library and the images obtained from them come from a PDF file. Although most of the files were created in high resolution, the quality of the images is poor.
70 W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 336-37. This is, of course, a short and, consequently, a limited definition of the nature of visual culture as field of study. Nonetheless, for our purposes here, it is appropriate.
72 Paul Duncum, "An Eye Does Not Make an I: Expanding the Sensorium," *Studies in Art Education* 53, no. 3 (2012). Duncum stresses how vision has been privileged by the modernist legacy over other senses in the whole spectrum of the aesthetic experience; Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 13. To Eagleton, aesthetics was born as a discourse of the body. Through the Greek root *aisthesis* he remarks on how the whole range of human perception through the body is involved in the aesthetic experience.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
87 Uccello’s Battle of S. Romano is a case he presents to illustrate this point. C.f. Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 89-91.
88 Foster, Vision and Visuality, ix.
89 Baxandall, Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style, 29.
90 Denis Cosgrove, "Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea," Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 10, no. 1 (1985): 47. For the plastic and visual arts (painting, sculpture and architecture), geography and cosmology, all concerned with space and spatial relations, form and structure were determined by the quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy)—even if the contents were still provided by the trivium (rhetoric, grammar, and logic). Trivium is comprised by grammar, logic and rhetoric whilst quadrivium by arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. The counter position between the two curricula presented by Cosgrove has the goal to emphasize the major role played by perspective in changing the way people apprehended spatial relation and the configuration of a new kind of visuality.
91 "Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea," Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 10, no. 1 (1985): 50. This can be observed when using the constant number π to calculate the capacity of a barrel, or when surveying land, or calculating the quantity and volume of a pile of bale. Here Cosgrove is indeed based on Baxandall’s concepts as well as on the fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian treatises by Fra Luca Pacioli and Silvio Belli on how to instruct people on visual measuring and proportionality.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
99 Charles Baudelaire, "The Modern Public and Photography," ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 88-89. Inquiries about new technologies and the changes these ones fostered in the field of cultural production were not new. By the mid nineteenth century, Baudelaire questioned the validity of photography as an emergent artistic expression. In one of his essays, he denounced the negative influence of photography, both among the artists and their capacity for dreaming through their art and within the observer. Both artists and observer were prone to be daunted by the “great industrial madness” and to be forced to accept photography’s outcomes as beautiful.
103 Leitch, The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, 1108.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Leitch, The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, 1471.

The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, 1469.


"The Order of Things (Preface, Las Meninas)," 440.


Ways of Seeing, 33.

Ibid.

Ways of Seeing, 11.


Ibid.


Louis Althusser, Essays on Ideology (London: Verso, 1984), 32; 17. Althusser’s notion of ideology has to do with an overarching structure that permeates every subject and their set of values and ideas. “Ideology is the system of the ideas and representation, which dominate the mind of a man [sic] or a social group.” Althusser ideas were informed by his adherence to the communist party, and on his view on how ideology must be understood for political purposes. Ideology to him is conformed by the set of background ideas that are supposed to be informed by what he calls the State Apparatuses such as the religious institutions, educational systems, the family, the political institutions, the trading system, communication systems, and cultural productions.

James Elkins, "Marks, Traces, "Traits," Contours, "Orli," and "Splendores": Nonsemiotic Elements in Pictures," Critical Inquiry 21, no. 4 (1995): 823. Also in this sense, Elkins has claimed for the implementation of a visual language non-dependent on linguistic structures. Both, Clark’s and Elkin’s postures, concur in claiming the immunity of artworks and images to their instrumentation-conceptualization for only ideological purposes; Sturken and Cartwright, Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture, 70. Also, Sturken and Cartwright remarked on how Althusser’s notion of ideology had been fundamental to visual studies by stressing his use of the term “imaginary” to define ideology as one that does not mean “false or mistaken” but rather “a set of ideas and beliefs, shaped through the unconscious, in relationship to other forces, such as the economy and institutions. By living in society, we live in ideology.” Nonetheless, Sturken also recognizes how potentially disempowering images can be in the case of them being always defined by the super structures. Althusser’s notion of ideology takes agency away from the spectator, which is something that Elkins and Sturken/Cartwright resist assuming ideology as fundamental for the study of imagery.


Lee Sorensen, "Alpers, Svetlana," in Dictionary of Art Historians (Website), ed. Lee Sorensen (Art History Webmasters Association, 1943); Erwin Panofsky, Meaning in the Visual Arts, Phoenix ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 5. Even though, Panofsky is usually associated with a more traditional approach to art history, in the 1950’s he was already exploring ideas that were to be considered seminal for the so-called new art history or visual culture: “Man’s signs and structures are records because, or rather in so far as, they express ideas separated from, yet realized by, the processes of signaling and building.”


Mirzoeff, An Introduction to Visual Culture, 4.


Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. "City".

Ibid.


Ibid. "The country and the city are changing historical realities, both in themselves and in their interrelations. Moreover, in our own world, they represent only two kinds of settlement. Our real social experience is not only of the country and the city, in their most singular forms, but of many of intermediate and new kinds of social and physical organization." The persistence of rural costumes and forms of inhabiting space in the city that were rural-based, can be inferred merely from looking at city plans throughout most of the twentieth century. As with the English cities studied by Williams, Colombian cities can be understood as the result of their interdependence with the countryside, rather than as being an entirely separate entity.


Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, 1212.


On Individuality and Social Forms; Selected Writings (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 331.


The Fall of Public Man (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 196.


The Practice of Everyday Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 94. In the English translation of De Certeau's L'invention du quotidien, nowhere is used as wordplay to establish a parallel with the use of the term nowhere. By nowhere he makes reference to pre-modernity when time was not affixed to schedules, time planners, or, in general, to the mechanical conception of time of modernity.

Ibid.


Ibid.

According to Le Gates and Stout, among urban cultural analyst that have used Mumford’s idea on the city as a stage are: William Whyte and his idea of the “street ballet”; Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard and their
proposition on the necessity of planners to provide for “fantasy and exoticism” to citizens. The City Reader, 91-92.


162 Ibid. This notion of the multi-nucleated city is pertinent to understanding Bogotá’s urban development during the twentieth century. This is especially true when considering the role played by Le Corbusier himself in Bogotá’s development in the forties, in addition to the processes of conurbation that took place in the fifties. I will go back, further ahead in this document, on Le Corbusier’s influence and the configuration of Latin American cities.


164 Muisca is the name of the people who inhabited the plateau where Bogota is now situated. Most of their lands in the surrounding area of present-day Bogotá were floodable during the rainy season.


167 Latinoamérica: Las Ciudades Y Las Ideas, 68-72.

168 Latinoamérica: Las Ciudades Y Las Ideas, 137-50.

169 Latinoamérica: Las Ciudades Y Las Ideas, 193.

170 Latinoamérica: Las Ciudades Y Las Ideas, 275.


172 Another relevant idea taken from Elias establishes a link between civility and the idea of the mirror, or the necessity for people to have some visual references that would configure right behavior. Lacan, in the field of psychoanalytic theory, expanded the same idea of the mirror, and it has been recently used in understanding the role of images in the process of identity formation and self-consciousness. I will further elaborate about this matter and, specifically, about Mitchell’s Lacanian approach to the study of images in my methodology chapter.

173 Baxandall, Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style, 101.


175 Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin, and Gill Valentine, Key Thinkers on Space and Place (London: Sage, 2004), 86.


179 Hubbard, Kitchin, and Valentine, Key Thinkers on Space and Place, 330.

180 Key Thinkers on Space and Place, 333.

181 Key Thinkers on Space and Place, 332.


183 Ibid.


188 Ibid.

189 Architecture in the United States, 28.

190 Architecture in the United States, 37.

191 Architecture in the United States, 84.

192 Architecture in the United States, 96. A complementary example to this is the case of something he calls “naturalized monuments” through which some rich families tried and legitimized their not-old enough money. Interventions like the ones made by the Ames family through the commandment of monuments (like the Ames Monument in Sherman, Wyoming) were intended to serve this purpose.


All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916, 17.

All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916, 31.

Harris, *The Nature of Authority: Villa Culture, Landscape, and Representation in Eighteenth-Century Lombardy*, 20. The author also uses this term in the way Bourdieu coined it. She clarifies that early in the text on page 4.

*The Nature of Authority: Villa Culture, Landscape, and Representation in Eighteenth-Century Lombardy*, 90.


The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 211. Cf. American Anthropological Association, "Aaa Statement on "Race";", 2013(2013). "Historical research has shown that the idea of "race" has always carried more meanings than mere physical differences; indeed, physical variations in the human species have no meaning except the social ones that humans put on them."

"Aaa Statement on "Race";.


The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 230. Négritude was a movement that “emerged in Paris in the early 1930s, amongst African and West Indian students under the leadership of Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire, a Martiniquian and the Guyanese León Damas.”

The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 211-12.

Similar to the situation Irish Catholics in Belfast or Muslim fundamentalists in Bradford have lived though. The editors make reference to concepts originally coined by Bhabha to which I will directly refer from him later in this section.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 212. Bhabha illustrates his point by mentioning the cases of minorities that were not classified by race but by their religious affiliation. Such is the case of Catholics in Belfast and Muslim fundamentalists in Bradford, England, but it could also be the case of gypsy communities in Latin America. Their lifestyle, in spite of their skin color, is definitely at odds with modernity.

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe commonly referred in scholar works as CEPAL.


Ibid. “The power of the post-colonial translation of modernity rests in its performative, deformative structure that does not simply revalue the contents of a cultural tradition, or transpose values cross-culturally.”


Ibid. Mignolo made this assertion in 1995 and somehow it still applies to the vast number of Latin American academics. Although the generational renewal and the increasing number of students that coming to the U.S. have pulled out the topic and bring into discussion when talking about Latin American modernity.


Ibid.


Cf. Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005); Cf. Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). The idea of Latin America has been widely debated among scholars. The most controversial part is about the over simplistic use of the term Latin America to label a wide variety of cultures under this single term. However, several authors agreed on the idea of Latin America as a political construction, a site that has resulted from the tensions between hegemonic and local powers.

McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"," 89.


Bhabha, "Race, Time and the Revision of Modernity," 223.


In 2012 Mignolo participated as curator and coauthor of an exhibition and catalog in Bogotá called “Estéticas Decoloniales” (De-colonial Aesthetics). The information about the project and a link to the catalog can be found online at Mignolo’s website: http://waltermignolo.com/from-bogota-y-berlin-esteticas-descoloniales-and-be-bop-2012-catalogos/


Ibid.


*Columbia Latin America*, 8.

Art of Colonial Latin America, 11.


Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 1-5.


emerging industrial class in between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially regarding the aesthetic insecurity displayed in their cultural productions.

Martínez, *El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita: La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900*, 131. “Cultural diffusion is worthy only if political circumstances demand it; in the mid twentieth-century Colombia, the will to take control over a mob that seems prone to be easily manipulated by the adversary, explains the mass diffusion of imported rationales from the civilized world, whether liberal or conservative.”


Ibid.


Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, Rev ed. (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006), 45. In his studies on the French Court Society Elias’s posited the idea on how “the structure of dwelling” could be understood “as an indicator of social structure.” This is a notion he further develops in his *Civilizing Process*.


*The Court Society*, 47-48.

Martínez, *El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita: La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900*, 321. Martínez recurrently mentions how Colombian nationalism was settled around the permanent reference to modern Europe during the nineteenth century. Through the experience of travel and through the use of images of modernity, Colombian nineteenth-century elites appropriated the discourse of modernity by always making reference to the “spectacle of progress from western civilization, modern and Christian, contrary to the Muslim’s barbarism.”

Cf. Angel Rama and John Charles Chasteen, *The Lettered City* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), vi. The term *discursive* here makes reference to the *lettered city* coined by Rama to emphasize the importance of literacy in the foundation and maintenance of colonial cities in Latin America. This persistent phenomenon became conflictive after the implementation of the discourse on modernity in the nineteenth century. Martinez illustrates this by showing the cultural shock Colombian elites faced during the World Fairs, when they realized that their appropriation of the European ideals of progress and modernity was more of a discourse than a reality. “Despite the lack of concrete realizations that could reflect some material progress, the universe of rhetoric represented by newspapers, books, discourses, and banquets, allowed Colombian patriots to praise, at the very least, their good intentions, their promises, and their ability to create laws. Nonetheless, because of the demand of World Exhibitions of showing actual physical and visible products, they were confronted with a serious problem: What to show?” (Translated from Spanish by me).

It is important to clarify here that according to the Constitution, Colombia is supposed to be a lay state. Nonetheless, there is a lot of counter evidence about the full applicability of this amendment. For instance, in present day Colombia masses or ecclesiastical events precede several State acts. Separation between Church and
State was established in 1991 with the promulgation of a new constitution but, as stated above, the momentum of the Catholic Church makes it still an active powerful force that is always close to political civil power.

280 Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, 4. According to Chasteen, there have been four different ways to approach the study of Latin America from the perspective of North American academia. One of them is the modernization theory, which is based on the assumption that the main reason for Latin America to remain underdeveloped was the lack of industrialization. Therefore, Latin America needed to modernize. The ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization) program led by the ECLAC was the main initiative towards industrialization of Latin American countries.

During the period known as *La Regeneración* or The Regeneration (1886-1930), the conservative party renewed the consecration of the country to the motherland’s values based on its Spanish Catholic origins. Germán Mejía P, *Los Años Del Cambio: Historia Urbana De Bogotá, 1820-1910*, 1. ed. (Santa Fe de Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana/Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispanica, 1999), 196.


Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms; Selected Writings*, 325. This is derived from Simmel’s description on the experience of living in modern cities, which implies the “intensification of nervous stimuli.”

Cf. Deborah L. Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis: *Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Cf. Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988). Parsons posited that the term *flâneur* was coined from a white, European, bourgeois, even aristocratic, male perspective. Subsequently, questions about its universality must be addressed.


Cf. "Notas Sobre El Proceso De Segregacion Social En El Espacio Urbano," 80-87. According to Aprile and Mosquera, since colonial times there has been a permanent process of social differentiation originated in the center and spiraling out towards the periphery. The process of refining this system started in the late nineteenth century and continued until the mid twentieth century and its constituents can be summarized like this: 1) Segregationists and speculative demands from the oligarchy. 2) Theories and ideologies of urbanism and architecture. 3) Design (aesthetics). 4) Normativity and lawmaking support. 5) State apparatuses of control. 6) Social distribution of space.

My elaboration around this idea is also based on Lacan’s notion of the mirror stage, which has been recently used by Mitchell and others, to study the relationship between images and self-consciousness.


Cf. Henry McDGoodwin, *Architectural Shades and Shadows* (Boston: Bates & Guild Company, 1904). I have no found evidence thus far about the textbooks and the curricula at the School of Architecture in Colombia but it is very likely that the manuals were started to being imported from the U.S. A small caption reads in the image: "Property of Mr. Aníbal Velásquez, M […] sel and Williamson Architects." So, the company was either an American company or a Colombian-American one.

William R. Ware, *Shades and Shadows: With Applications to Architectural Details, and Exercises in Drawing Them with the Brush and Pen*, 2 vols. (Pennsylvania: International Textbook Co., 1912). Del Alarife al Arquitecto or From the Bricklayer to the Architect is a research book recently release by the National University of Colombia. Its importance comes from the fact that is the most extensive work done thus far about the teaching of the architecture in Colombia during a gray period in the history of architectural education (1840s-1930s). Due to its recent publication and its unavailability in the U.S., the references about this book are based on a short article published by the same author in a Colombian journal. Cf.

256


330 Ibid.


334 “¿Piensa Usted Construir Su Casa De Habitación?,” *Cromos*, April 30th 1938.


337 “Acta 10 Del 7 De Abril De 1943,” (Bogotá: SMOB, 1943), 51.


341 Cf. Pierre Francastel, *Art & Technology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). “Toward 1890, following the triumph of the machine, which was marked by the Paris Exposition of 1889, a new attitude developed not only among those who used machines but among theorists and society in general. In the wake of their incontestable successes, engineers began to claim title as the creators of beauty, following the example of Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel. But it would be more accurate to say that the word beauty disappeared from their vocabulary and was replaced by the word utility.”

342 During the course of this research no further information was found about Mr. Velásquez but is assumed to have been a notable wealthy person.


344 This connection between displayed images and social status was very common in Colombia and the rest of the former Spanish colonies. However, is not common to represent it through representations of real estate.


346 Aprile-Gniset and Mosquera Torres, "Notas Sobre El Proceso De Segregación Social En El Espacio Urbano."

347 Luis Eduardo Abello, "Los Barrios De Bogotá: La Perseverancia,” *Estampa*, June 20th 1940.

348 Escovar, Marío, and Peña, *Atlas Histórico De Bogotá, 1538-1910*, 500. The Paseo Bolívar takes its name from a road that surrounds the Quinta that belonged to Simón Bolívar that, according to the historical records, was one of the first settlements people coming from the country squatted in. It was a place where initially Bogotans went for a walk and also to buy fruits and vegetables that were being brought in by peasants coming from the East across the mountains. The authorities decided to demolish the shacks after the 1918 influenza pandemic. However, the scattered shacks from the beginning of the twentieth century, evolved into a slum by the 1930s as is recurrently mentioned on the SMOB in their meetings.

349 Abello, "Los Barrios De Bogotá: La Perseveranca."

350 This term is still of common use in present-day Colombia. It is an affectionate but also informal and a silly way to refer to the children in some cases but its use is mostly pejorative in reference to homeless children or a lower class person. The word chino was also used in some parts of Latin America to describe the inbreed resulting from the mix between mulato and Amerindian parents. This was a feature particularly observed in the genre of casta paintings. Also, in 1925 the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* of the *Real Academia* defined it as the descent of india and zambo. In the particular case of this description, it would be very unlikely for the narrator to use the word chinos to refer to upper class children.

351 Abello, "Los Barrios De Bogotá: La Perseverancia."

352 Silva, *República Liberal, Intelectuales Y Cultura Popular*, 14. Silva remarks on the theoretical efforts made in Colombia during the 1930s through 1950s by what he calls “a sort of spontaneous sociology” to describe popular culture in Colombia that aligned with what I am stating, they ended up rendering scenes following the fashion of nineteenth-century literary costumbrismo. Although the intellectuals of the liberal republic claimed for them the authorship of the interest in rescuing lower-class cultural expressions, the truth is that this was already an endeavor of the elites since nineteenth century. According to Silva, citing Deas, during the nineteenth century members of the Bogotan elite were put to the task of looking for rhymes and popular tales in the fashion of the Grimm Brothers in Europe.


354 Ibid.
By standard the author seems to make reference to the “standard way of life” of rich people, according to his imaginary.


Ibid. A series of articles following the idea of an ethnographic approach to different lower class neighborhoods was published in Cromos. For instance, the chroniclers usually attributed moral qualities to the inhabitants of Las Cruces (a lower class neighborhood), in accordance to the shape of its streets that were “tortuous and twisted” and inviting people to a tortuous and twisted life.


John A. Agnew, David N. Livingstone, and Alisdair Rogers, Human Geography: An Essential Anthology (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 1-2. The use of the term human geography is based on the definition made by Agnew, Livingstone, and Rogers in which this term is used to make reference to a broad field of study that looks for the understanding of “the relationship between the natural and human worlds, the spatial distributions of human phenomena and how they come about, the social and economic differences between parts of the world.” In this case, it will also be used to describe the different parts of the Bogotan society during the period of study.

Silva, República Liberal, Intelectuales Y Cultura Popular, 64. Silva quotes Dario Achury Valenzuela.

Republica Liberal, Intelectuales Y Cultura Popular, 98.

Ibid.

Republica Liberal, Intelectuales Y Cultura Popular, 23. Silva quotes Alfonso López Pumarejo, one of the liberal presidents in office during this period.


All of the men listed here occupied positions of power during the two decades of study and all of them were affiliated to the liberal party. Germán Arciniegas was Ministry of Education and ambassador to different countries; Darío Samper, advocate of Americanism was a journalist but also a politician who was appointed president of the Bogotá City Council in the 1940s; Gustavo Santos was a painter affiliated with the liberal governments, was appointed General Director of Fine Arts; Jorge Zalamea was the director of Estampa Magazine and, later on, Minister of Education; Darío Achury, indigenist, member of the group known as the Bachués, was director of the Magazine of the Colombian Army, founder of the Caro-Cuervo Institute, and Director of Cultural Outreach at the Ministry of Education and of the National Radio.


Ibid.

Ibid.


El Arte Colombiano De Los Años Veinte Y Treinta, 303.

Ibid. Mariano Ospina was the first conservative president after fourteen years of liberal hegemony.

Brett Troyan, "Re-Imagining the "Indian" and the State: Indigenismo in Colombia, 1926-1947," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes 33, no. 65 (2008): 81. “Indigenismo started off as a mainly artistic and intellectual search for a Colombian identity that was linked to a desire for Latin American cultural independence from Europe and the United States.”


Catalina Muñoz, “To Colombianize Colombia: Cultural Politics, Modernization and Nationalism in Colombia, 1930-1946” (Penn State University, 2009), 205.


"Acta 39 Del 15 De Noviembre De 1944," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1944). Although their statement about being an apolitical institution is not included in their regulations formulated in 1932, it is something that is repeatedly mentioned in their meetings, especially by the late 1940s. “…. The people cannot be abandoned, otherwise it will
be easy prey for politiqueros [populists and demagogues]; the ignorance and the lack of guidance confuses them, and if the associates of the SMOB would pay a visit to their boards of public improvement they could eventually guide and advise them. There is no one better than this apolitical and disinterested Corporation who could positively influence the local neighborhoods and their boards of public improvement.” The translation from Spanish is mine.

383 "Acta 1 Del 5 De Febrero De 1936," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1936).
385 María Clara Torres and Hugo Delgadillo, Bogotá, Un Museo a Cielo Abierto: Guía De Esculturas Y Monumentos Conmemorativos En El Espacio Público (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, 2008).
389 Martínez, El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita: La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900, 246.
393 Ibid.
394 Rosales’s intervention is based on an article published in the newspaper Mundo al Día, on November 7th, written by the same SMOB associate that is reading it during the meeting.
396 Ibid.
400 "Acta 30 Del 8 De Septiembre De 1943," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1943), 103. “INICIATIVAS PARA LA CÁMARA [de Representantes]... Solicítense de la honorable cámara de representantes, en nombre de la ciudadanía de la capital, se sirva tener en cuenta las siguientes iniciativas al considerar el proyecto de ley por la cual la nación se asocia a la celebración del cuarto centenario de Bogotá, proyecto de cuya elaboración está encargada una comisión especial de la referida cámara. Tales ideas o iniciativas son las siguientes: La construcción del grandioso monumento a la apoteosis del Libertador, cuyos elementos se encuentran hace varios años en esta ciudad; La erección de una estatua o monumento a los fundadores de Bogotá y otro a la raza indígena...”
402 Cf. SMOB, Bogotá, Publicación De La Sociedad De Mejoras Y Ornato Con Motivo De La Celebración Del Cuarto Aniversario De La Fundación De La Ciudad (Bogotá: Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato, 1938).
405 The term Americanism is used here in its linguistic variant in which Americanism makes reference to the aboriginal languages of America. Therefore, the term applies to the whole continent not only to the U.S.
408 Torres and Delgadillo, Bogotá, Un Museo a Cielo Abierto: Guía De Esculturas Y Monumentos Conmemorativos En El Espacio Público.
409 Cf. Martínez, El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita: La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900, 245-46. “El descubrimiento de los prejuicios europeos hacia los latinoamericanos, es, al fin y al cabo, el legado más importante del viaje; ese atterrador encuentro con la ignorancia y el desprecio, percibidos con tanta intensidad por los viajeros colombianos, desempeña a su vez como reacción, un papel fundamental en la aparición de un sentimiento de pertenencia y de identidad nacional.” The finding about the prejudices and contempt from the Europeans towards Latin Americans, turns out to be the most important thing about traveling; that terrifying encounter with ignorance and scorn, perceived so intensely by the Colombian travelers, plays a crucial role in the emergence of a sense of belonging and national identity. There is no English version of this text so the translation is mine.
In this session, one of the topics of discussion was the demolition of the eastern aisle of the San Francisco Church. The voices of those opposing the idea, posited arguments about its historical importance and artistic merit that was something that was frequently, and many times exclusively, recognized by foreign visitors.


Martínez, *El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita: La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900*.

Clément Thibaud, "Reseña De "El Nacionalismo Cosmopolita. La Referencia Europea En La Construcción Nacional En Colombia, 1845-1900" De Frédéric Martínez," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'études andines* 31, no. 2 (2002): 397-98. It is also important to acknowledge the fact that these cultural and ideological exchanges were not blindly adopted and implemented to the national context but were tweaked to accommodate the local needs and to serve the local private interests.


Julián Vargas Lesmes, *La Sociedad De Santafé Colonial* (Bogotá, Colombia: CINEP, 1990). The chicherías were a sort of pub to consume a traditional fermented beverage called chicha. Vargas Lesmes in his studies on colonial Bogotá characterized them as the cultural embassies for the indigenous population in Bogotá that just arrived to the city. In there, the indigenous people were able to find a place that would allow them to have a smoother transitional period to their new life in Bogotá.

Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms; Selected Writings*, 331.


Ibid.


Abel Ricardo López, "We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955" (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001), 21.

"We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955" (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2001), 38.
Literally would translate as "vile labor or vile profession."

López, "We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955," 29.

Luis Augusto Cuervo, "Bogotá En 1938," Cromos, Aug 6 1938. The reference to the guayaco or loincloth is to sarcastically make reference to the fashion of bathing suits.

López, "We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955," 4-5.

Luis Augusto Cuervo, "Bogotá En 1938," Cromos, Aug 6 1938. The reference to the guayaco or loincloth is to sarcastically make reference to the fashion of bathing suits.

López, "We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955," 29.

Sociedad de Mejoras y Ornato de Bogotá, "Acta 4 Del 4 De Febrero De 1948," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1948), 256.


López, "We Have Everything and We Have Nothing": Empleados and Middle-Class Identities in Bogotá, Colombia: 1930-1955," 44. The Cartilla de Empleados consulted by López is from 1942 and provides examples and morals about how it is better to be an employee than a worker. One of the stories that illustrate this point is the one about two brothers, Tomás the worker  and with darker skin, and Tomás, an employee of lighter skin. Luis was convinced that being an empleado “was the most beautiful that ever happened… despite the economic problems, he was thankful to be given the opportunity to be someone important, because empleados, well-educated and always professional, win in the game of social relations.” On the other hand, his brother Tomás who was an obrero, “just wanted to get money to drink chicha (corn beer).”


Ibid.


"Acta 25 Del 25 De Agosto De 1948," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1948), 375. “Al tratar de la ola de vulgaridad que azota a la ciudad, se refiere… al hecho de que los obreros, los maleantes y los desocupados, hayan convertido los prados de vías, parques y jardines públicos en alcobas y comedores. Qué espectáculo tan impropio una ciudad ver a los obreros durmiendo en aquellos prados, despues de haberlos convertido en comedores y en lugares para arrojar toda suerte de desperdicios.” After April 9th the discussions about the aesthetic and bad taste of lower classes intensified. There is persistent mention of their habits such as taking naps during the day in the public space, eating their food, showing bad habits, and not cleaning up the leftovers after their lunch break.

Ibid.


Hobsbawm and Ranger, The Invention of Tradition, 9.

Bogotá, "Acta 26 Del 8 De Septiembre De 1948," 387. The word piquete for cookout in Colombian Spanish implies class and social status. A piquete would be an inappropriate behavior for somebody with good taste, according to the standards of the Bogotan elite, even more accompanied with champagne.


Silva, República Liberal, Intelectuales Y Cultura Popular, 27.

Ibid.


García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, 1-2.

Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, 7.

Latour, We Have Never Been Modern, 46-47.


Bhabha, "Race, Time and the Revision of Modernity," 219.

Leitch, The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, 1276.
The use of the term vulgarization is following one of its meaning in the Oxford dictionary but also it is used in accordance to its Spanish equivalence vulgarización and its use by the early 1930s in Colombia, to refer to “the action of making [something] usual or common; the process of rendering familiar or popular; general dissemination.” If preferred, read as “popularization.”


There were only a couple of advertisements whose authors were identified during the course of this research and the two of them belonged to Santiago Martínez Delgado. The two drawings were signed “S.M.D. Ltda.,” the name of the company created a few years after returning from Chicago where he studied at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, currently known as Art Institute of Chicago.


Galén Cranz and Michael Boland, "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks," *Landscape Journal* 23, no. 2 (2004): 102-03. The park typology called pleasure ground (1850-1900) was characteristic of urban interventions made both in England and the U.S. Pleasure grounds are characterized by the use of curvy lines and the natural use of vegetation and water. Its location was usually the city outskirts with a design that represented a transition between urban and rural. This characteristic made them harder to access for the working classes that was one of the reasons for the emergence of reform parks (1900-1930) whose main goal was to revitalize city areas, provide ease of access to people. Its design was thought to fit the city pattern following a rectilinear design and also included children’s playground. The park of Teusaquillo seen in figure 19e represents...
the mix between the pleasure and reform: it was located in the city outskirts, it had plenty of vegetation, it combined rectilinear and curvilinear pathways, it had a playground, and it was hard to access for the lower classes.


Cf. Lübken, "'Americans All': The United States, the Nazi Menace, and the Construction of a Pan-American Identity," 390-91. Pan Americanism was a term attached to the foundation of the Pan American Union in 1890 to promote cooperation between American countries. By the late 1930s Pan Americanism was promoted by officials of the FDR administration as a way to define a hemispherical identity different to that of Europe and Asia. According to that theory, American countries had several things in common: political systems, historical experiences, and cultural values were part of this new chapter of what started with the Monroe Doctrine in the early 1800s under the motto America for the Americans. The Good Neighbor Program was also part of this discourse and its main objective was to fend off European and Asian countries from intervening in Latin America.


"The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"", 88-89.

Cf. Mignolo, The Idea of Latin America.; Cf. Gobat, Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule. The idea of Latin America has been widely debated among scholars. The most controversial part is about the over simplistic use of the term Latin America to label a wide variety of cultures under this single term. However, several authors agreed on the idea of Latin America as a political construction, a site that has resulted from the tensions between hegemonic and local powers.

McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"", 89.

Cf. Belko, "The Origins of the Monroe Doctrine Revisited: The Madison Administration, the West Florida Revolt, and the No Transfer Policy."


Cf. Lübken, "'Americans All': The United States, the Nazi Menace, and the Construction of a Pan-American Identity."

Escobar Larrazábal, "El Desarrollo De Bogotá," 636. The actual term used by Escobar is “crisol nacional” to define the heterogeneity of Colombia’s population that converges in Bogotá, its capital.


Cf. "Acta 16 Del 13 De Julio De 1936: Letreros Comunistas," (Bogotá: SMOB, 1936), 326. “La SMOB se permite solicitar que sean borrados los letreros de propaganda comunista, de pésimo gusto, mala redacción y peor ortografía, que se advierten (sic) en los frentes de las edificaciones situadas sobre la Avenida del Ferrocarril de Cundinamarca y son los primeros avisos que leen los pasajeros al llegar a la capital de Colombia.” The SMOB request to wipe out the communist propaganda posters, because of its bad taste, poor grammar, and worst spelling, from the facades of the buildings on the Cundinamarca Railroad Avenue… those are the first ones the passengers read when they first arrive to the capital of Colombia. (The translation is mine)

To be a model for (a person) in conduct or behavior. Obs. rare. Oxford English Dictionary, "Mirror, V." (Oxford University Press).

This is a book about courtesy and manners in children education written for Henry of Burgundy, heir of the prince of Veere in Netherlands, and it is one of the central pieces for Elias to illustrate the history of manners and their role in the civilizing process. Its success made it widely popular in Europe during the sixteenth century and thereafter.

The term “whitened” here makes reference to two aspects of racial construction in Colombia and Latin America. First, it has to do with the colonial hierarchies based on race that were enforced both, by legal and cultural practices. During colonial times there was also the idea of whitening that it was possible to achieve through power, influence, and money and it was possible to put on display through different means (see chapter 2 on Blood Purity, Casta Paintings and Monjas Coronadas). On the other hand, it makes reference to the policies implemented during the first half of the 20th century in which many racial policies regarding whitening were implemented. In countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, and Peru there were governmental policies to promote whitening through immigration from Europe and in some cases from Asian countries like Japan. In some way, the idea of *blanqueamiento* or whitening has been part of the discourse of perfection of Latin American societies.


Marcela Muñoz, "La Construcción De La Idea De Ciudadano Desde Los Manuales Escolares En El Proceso De Formación De La Nación Colombiana, 1910-1948" (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2012), 129-30. Cf. Rojas, Cristina, La construcción de la ciudadanía en Colombia durante el gran siglo diecinueve 1810-1929, *Revista Poligramas*, 29 ( junio 2008): 2-34. Muñoz bases her characterization of the different types of citizenships on Cristina Rojas’ work about the construction of citizenship in Colombia during the Great Nineteenth Century, 1810-1921. Rojas defines three broad categories based on historical periods: 1) The “citizen patriot” influenced by nationalists ideas (1810-150), 2) By the mid 19th century there is the “civilized citizen”
who looks back to Europe for an identity but because of the internal conflicts derived from the independence, this is also the period of the “citizen soldier” (1850-1886). 3) The “virtuous citizen” and the “disinfected citizen” were the ruling assumptions about citizenship between by the late 19th and early 20th centuries.


Mitchell, "What Do Pictures "Really" Want?," 77.


Muñoz, "To Colombianize Colombia: Cultural Politics, Modernization and Nationalism in Colombia, 1930-1946," viii.

Spanish official institution that oversees the use of the Spanish language,


David Gartman, "Harley Earl and the Art and Color Section: The Birth of Styling at General Motors," *Design Issues* 10, no. 2 (1994): 65. General Motors hired Harley Earl to direct a new design department, the Art and Colour Section (renamed the Styling Section in 1937). Loewy, on the other side, is well known as one of the fathers of modern industrial design and styling. The level of sophistication of the formal language of these designs contrasted with that in materiality of a country that was barely starting to develop an industrial infrastructure. The cars designed by these two iconic, and strongly style-based designers, were part of the changing cityscape of Bogotá city.

The term *paisa* is a gerund used to refer to people born in Antioquia and Viejo Caldas, two regions located in the highlands towards the westernmost part of Colombia.

Jeffrey D. Needell, "Identity, Race, Gender, and Modernity in the Origins of Gilberto Freyre's Oeuvre," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (1995): 52. “He [Freyre] first popularized and legitimized the notion that Africans had made a positive contribution to Brazil. He joined others in championing the positive role of the plantation and its patriarchal family. Both stances were connected to his effort to establish the colonial slave plantation as the origin and classic expression of Brazilian civilization.”

The term “racial democracy” is a construction posterior to the writings of some authors that are sometimes mistakenly attributed with coining this notion. The term has been lately used to discuss the theoretical construction around race and identity of Fernando Ortiz in Cuba and Gilberto Freyre in Brazil. All the terms used to describe Latin America’s diversity are close to the notion of the melting pot developed in the early 1900s in the U.S.

Robert E. Smith, a Chicagoan type designer, designed the Brush Script typeface in 1942.

Estampa, "Colombianos Todos," *Estampa* 1942.

Liberal Republic is a term used for the period between 1930 and 1948 following several years of conservative rule.


Ibid. Daniel Pécaut and Jesús María Castaño as opposed to Richard Stoller and Álvaro Tirado, dismissed the positive view on the intentions and effects of the so-called Liberal Republic.

George Yúdice, "Comparative Cultural Studies Traditions: Latin America & the U.S. ," in *A Companion to Cultural Studies*, ed. Toby Miller (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 220. To supply the lack of clarity of the case study image, the *boquetunel* image was recovered from the Digital Library of the ICESI University, Cali, Colombia. The date referenced in the online archive is 1945, however, this image is part of the two-pages article published by Estampa in 1942.

Gordon, *The Urban Spectator: American Concept Cities from Kodak to Google.*


SMOB, *Bogotá, Publicación De La Sociedad De Mejoras Y Ornato Con Motivo De La Celebración Del Cuarto Aniversario De La Fundación De La Ciudad.*


Most of the lower classes had to walk several miles from the former *pueblos de indios* that surrounded Bogotá to get to their places of work.