



Seeing the city from below

Experiences of urban
liveability in Guatemala City

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liveability in Guatemala City**

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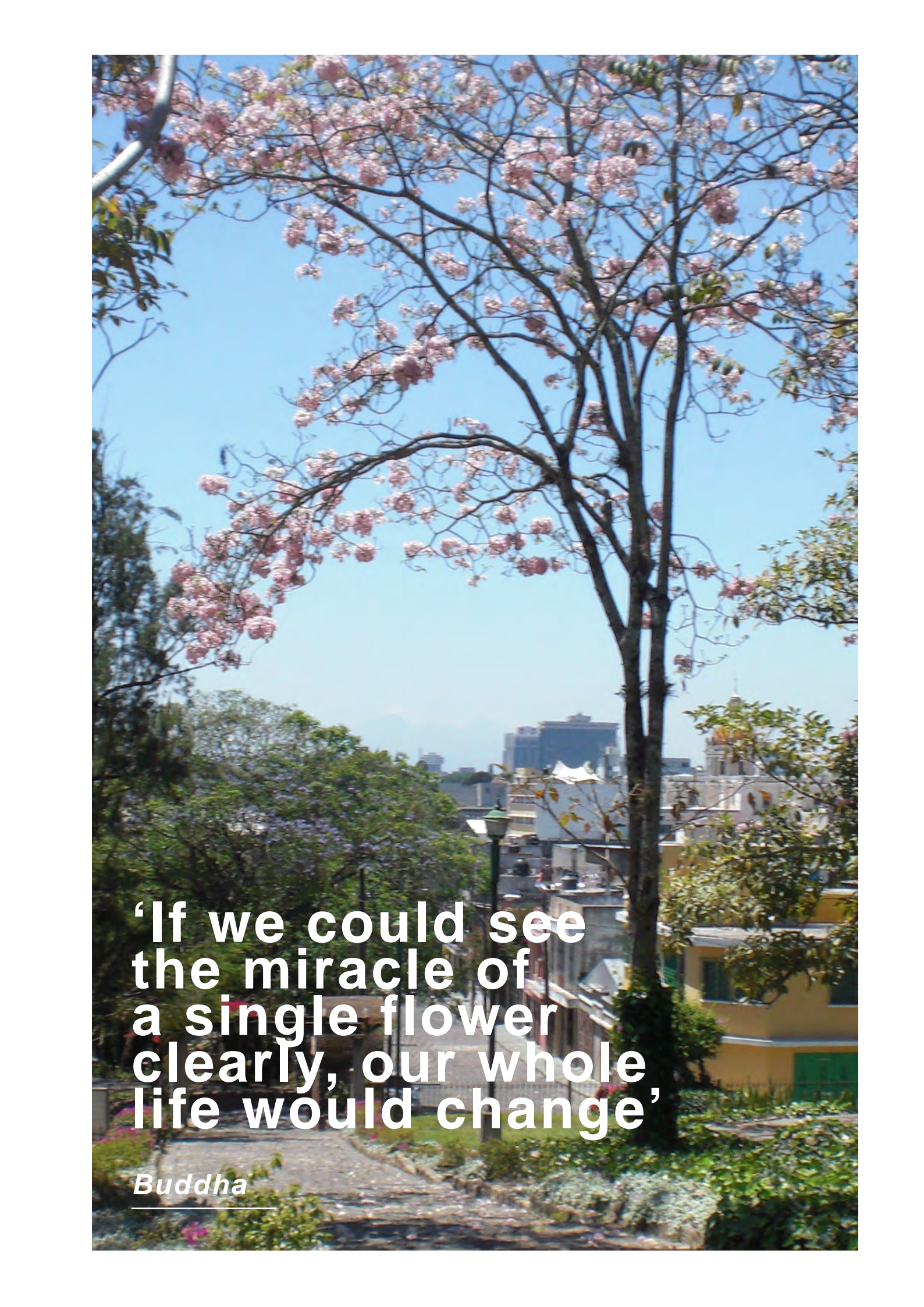
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A photograph of a large tree with pink blossoms in a park setting. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading out and covered in clusters of pink flowers. The background shows a city skyline with various buildings and a clear blue sky. The foreground is a paved path with some greenery and a small fountain. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant day in a park.

**‘If we could see
the miracle of
a single flower
clearly, our whole
life would change’**

Buddha

Preface

This thesis is the final part of the master program Human Geography. During this master program, my knowledge about the meaning of sustainable urban development and the relation between people and places has greatly increased. The master has proven to be a complementary learning trajectory for my background as a social designer. While researching and writing this thesis I have deepened my knowledge on urban liveability. During this process of writing my thesis, I learned a lot about myself and more in particular, the (professional) direction I want to develop further in my life.

During the process of writing this thesis I have done an extra internship at DRIFT, the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions. Here I learned a lot about (urban) transitions, which has greatly contributed to understand the position I would like to take as an interdisciplinary scientist with a social design background. Although this master now comes to a close, it has opened my view how I can connect both fields, design and science. During the writing process I came across an interesting sentence; “sustainable development requires searching, learning and experimenting” (van den Bosch, 2010). I applied this to the process of writing this thesis, as it was a qualitative step in the right direction my life is heading.

Now I can see clearly not only where I wish to head for, but not less importantly, how I would like to get there. I have come to the understanding that being purposeful as a scientist and in life in general, requires to connect head, hands and heart. Not only have I understood that this is the professional foundation I want to embark on, writing this thesis has also been a journey of personal development. Discovering the possible connections between science and design has inspired me to create an in-between space, where I will continue to explore the connections between both fields. As a starting point, I will continue to study how people behave in space and make place taking quality of life into account in its broadest sense. The road towards a more sustainable (urban) future lies ahead of us. May this thesis may be the beginning of a life long learning journey.

This thesis process has been challenging, but it has been a great learning process, which has given me the opportunity to deepen my knowledge about liveability. I would like to thank the equipo at Urbanística in Guatemala, where I did my research internship for this thesis, who gave me the room to develop the fieldwork. They have given me the chance to develop myself and to explore what it means to work in the Guatemalan context. Thanks to my host family, who cared for me during my stay.

Thanks to my family and friends, to all who contributed to this explorative journey.

Thanks to my supervisor Lothar Smith, who gave me the time to make the most out of myself while writing this thesis.

Thank you for taking time to read it.

Enjoy!

Anne

Summary

Currently, cities all over the world are rapidly growing, and will continue to grow in the (near) future. Latin America is considered to be the most urbanized region. Hence, Latin American cities are increasingly put under pressure in terms of urban liveability. Guatemala City, being the largest metropolis in Central America, is one such city that is facing urgent socio-spatial questions concerning liveability in the city. In this thesis, the focus is placed on the human being and on his or her everyday life. Facilitating participation of urban inhabitants in the development of their own living environment is considered to be an important factor towards the creation of liveable cities.

Hence, in this thesis experiences of urban liveability 'from below' were studied, from the perspective of urban inhabitants. Facing the urgent need for including urban inhabitants in the creation of their city, this thesis focuses on so-called urban revitalization processes in public spaces that are initiated to enhance the cities' vitality and liveability. Hereby urban inhabitants are taken into account in the process of creating and maintaining these urban revitalization interventions. This strategy is often chosen to help build social capital among urban residents (Phillips, 2002). As such, support is being created among residents, and hence interventions are more likely to create a positive impact and thereby enhance liveability. In this study, people's lived spaces are seen as accounts or indicators of the current liveability situation in a place that can inform both short and long term strategies for urban liveability improvement in the city.

As liveability is a broad concept, in this study has been focussed on the social and the spatial domain. The social domain has been conceptualized by social capital, the spatial domain by placemaking. The framework of the French urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre has been used to frame the coming to being of place. Thereby the focus was on people's socio-spatial practices in lived space as leading aspects in the placemaking continuum that has been used as a central concept.

To gather insights in people's lived spaces, different methods have been used to obtain insights in the experience of urban liveability from below. In-depth interviews have been conducted, observations have been done, and a neighbourhood mapping workshop has been done with various inhabitants of the research area; the neighbourhood surrounding the Cerro del Carmen park.

From the different data sources that were collected by using these methods, spatial stories have been constructed. Each of the four stories gave insights in the use, appropriation and experience of different public spaces in the research neighbourhood. They showed differences in the possibility for constructing social capital among residents. As these spatial stories have shown, through socio-spatial practices people are (temporarily) claiming spaces to use them for their activities. Yet, conflicts of interest are at play in claiming public spaces. Different neighbour groups are active agents in the neighbourhood in their search to increase social capital. However, this process is impeded as groups that are normatively seen as conflictive and hence undesired render spaces insecure. Therefore, and in response to a perceived lack of trust in governance institutions, people use ways of self organization that are understood as governance from below.

This, as well as the temporary use of space seem strategies that contribute to constructing social capital, as well as they allow urban inhabitants to revitalize their environment. What is yet to be seen, is how each actor can continue to have a stake in a liveable urban landscape in the future.

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1. Seeing the city from below

Introduction





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ESTACIONAR
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Shop for Groceries
Save at Shell
shell.us/grocery

My Mi Tolo

1.1 Project framework

Cities all over the world are rapidly growing, and will continue to grow in the (near) future (Pacione, 2009; UN-Habitat, 2008). As such, cities are increasingly put under pressure to serve their inhabitants as liveable places. Latin America is in this context considered to be the most urbanized region, with almost eighty percent of its population living in cities, in fifty-seven million-plus city regions in 2006 (UN-Habitat, 2012; Soja & Kanai, 2007). Latin American cities are among the most dual and divided cities, both socially and spatially. This leads to an increasingly divided landscape of people who have access to spaces and resources, and those who are increasingly deprived of access to these resources. (UN-Habitat, 2012).

As people are living in cities that are changing and developing everyday through globalizing influences, they are simultaneously being confronted with multiple urban realities: an overlap and a juxtaposition of emerging global spaces and local places (Amin, 2002). One such example is the increasing pressure on public spaces in the city while shopping malls are simultaneously rising (Jiménez-Domínguez, 2007: 96). As cities are expanding, the questions arise, whether and how liveability can be created and sustained for the cities' inhabitants, today and in the future. These questions uncover the urgent need for a transition to adequate urban planning and urban development strategies that can enhance urban liveability now and in the future (Roorda, C., Frantzeskaki, N., Loorbach, D., Steenbergen, F. van & Wittmayer, J., 2012).

The need for developing liveable public spaces is adequately illustrated by the Danish architect and professor Jan Gehl in his documentary 'The Human Scale' (Dalsgaard, 2013). In this documentary, Gehl shares his perceptive reflection on his concerns about liveability in today's emerging cities. He illustrates this search for transitions to more 'human' urban development strategies on the basis of public spaces around the world, which he redeveloped. As part of this strategy, people are invited to think along with planners how they can collectively enhance the places in which they reside in, in their daily lives. One of the planners argues: "life comes when you give people a chance to contribute something, illustrating with places to dance, play chess or do tai-chi. (...) People need spaces to just come and do these kinds of things" (Dalsgaard, 2013). Gehl argues for designing cities with the human inhabitant as a central starting point in the built environment that surrounds them to create vital, human scale public spaces (Gehl, 2010). Therefore, he perceives the city from a human dimension, questioning the cities' functioning in its current state as an adequate place for life that contains enough space for using the city from a human scale. Walking and cycling are examples of aspects he highlights as ways of achieving inclusion and intimacy, which is needed for a liveable city, he argues (Gehl, 2010).

scholars and urban philosophers such as Jane Jacobs, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre have made. They also highlighted the human scale as a central aspect of the city, focussing on the city 'from below', from the viewpoint of the urban inhabitant in his or her everyday life. Jacobs highlighted the necessity for streets and public spaces where people can meet and interact. According to her, this is an important aspect as it could contribute to the creation and enhancement of social capital on a neighbourhood level (Hospers, 2006; Jacobs, 2009). As an example, she proposes to see the success of neighbourhood parks in terms of usage; whether they are successfully being used, or let down by people. Jacobs is critical as she questions whether parks are indeed lively and liveable places, or "urban vaccums, eaten by decay, little used, not loved" (Jacobs, 2009: 127). This is in line with the focus of this thesis, to look at the use of various public spaces, that may reveal what value they have in people's experience of liveability in a neighbourhood. This will be further explored in chapter 4.

De Certeau focussed on the tension field between the planned city 'from above' (with which he meant both conceptual plans and the built environment) and the everyday, lived city 'from below'; the place of meaning, use and experience of the cities' inhabitants (de Certeau, 1988). The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre pointed to the shared space for planners and inhabitants in the process of placemaking. According to Lefebvre, in this process, urban planners and urban designers as well as urban inhabitants who eventually use these spaces are part of the coming to being of the city (Lefebvre, 1991). The approach of this thesis, to see the city from below, was inspired by the work of these scholars. Lefebvre's notion of the production of space later serves as a theoretical framework for researching the uses of different public spaces.

What is interesting in these observations is that although cities are growing, the focus is placed on the human being and on his or her everyday life, which should be explicitly part of the process of shaping cities, both for their well-functioning today and in the future. Facilitating participation of urban inhabitants in the development of their own living environment is thereby an important factor towards the creation of liveable cities (UN Habitat, 2008; Pacione, 2009).

The imperative for seeing the city from below

Using a people-centered approach can be a valuable way to see what liveability means in the lives of urban inhabitants. Hence, in this thesis I will focus on small-scale processes in people's daily lives. These processes may provide insights in aspects that enable or disable the improvement of liveability. I will do this by zooming in on lived space, observing which groups are residing in the neighbourhood, if they have (enough) access to public spaces, how they use it and if there are also conflicting issues at stake regarding the use of public space. Hence, the viewpoint from below functions as the main perspective to address people and

places that are involved in coming to being of urban liveability. This perspective will be further explored in the theoretical framework in the following chapter.

Facing the urgent need for including urban inhabitants in the creation of their city, this thesis focuses on so-called urban revitalization processes in public spaces that are initiated to enhance the cities' vitality and liveability. Hereby urban inhabitants are taken into account in the process of creating and maintaining these urban revitalization interventions. This strategy is often chosen to help build social capital among urban residents (Phillips, 2002). As such, support is being created among residents, and hence interventions are more likely to create a positive impact and thereby enhance liveability. In this study, people's lived spaces are seen as accounts or indicators of the current liveability situation in a place that can inform both short and long term strategies for urban liveability improvement in the city.

As urban inhabitants shape their daily lives in the spatial environment of the city, the nature of the connection between people and place is an important aspect to understand when researching urban liveability (Leidemeijer & van Kamp, 2003). Researching the everyday lived experience of urban inhabitants can give insight in this connection. Urban planners are shaping places for urban inhabitants to use and live in, and thus they should take people's perception of their lived environments into account. As such they can understand better the meanings people attach to a place, and thus connect better to the needs people have. This may increase people's involvement in (for example) social activities, which in turn may have a positive impact on the perception of liveability of urban residents. For real (re-)vitalization the urban space needs to be filled with meaning and activities that can enhance liveability in return.

Therefore, in this thesis I will research experiences of liveability 'from below', from the perspective of the urban inhabitants. Thereby I will focus on how people experience liveability in their neighbourhood, and on the relation between urban revitalization processes and the impact they make on their perception of liveability. Hereby I will perceive liveability as a process, as a dynamic condition that can be influenced by people themselves with their daily practices.

The meaning of liveability in the lived experience of the cities' inhabitants is an important aspect as each inhabitant can experience the city and its liveability in different ways (VROM, 2004). The relation between people and their everyday urban surroundings or lived spaces plays a central role in this regard (Pacione, 2009). This relation will be further explored in the following theoretical chapter. Understanding this relation is vital in

the process of urban development, as by doing so, according to Pacione, the “degree to which the city satisfies the physical and the psychological needs and wants of its citizens” can be explored and ideally also be improved (2009: 396). This is important, as the citizens are the ones who are (going to be) the users of the spaces. This relates to the concept of urban liveability as introduced above. According to Pacione (2009: 416), the meaning of this concept consists of the subjective meanings people attach to their environment. There seems to be consensus about the presence of (a combination of) social and spatial aspects when giving content to the concept of liveability (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003). In this thesis, these aspects will be leading to interpret liveability. This seems to be a relevant approach, as Fran Tonkiss, urban theorist at the London School of Economics states in her book *Cities by Design – the social life of urban form*: “Focusing on the interplay between the social and the physical shaping of contemporary cities makes it possible to see how the material organization of urban space is crucial to the production and reproduction of social (...) arrangements, divisions and inequalities.” (Tonkiss, 2013: 1-2). As set out above, this will be done from a human scale perspective, so not focussing on larger urban structures, but rather on small-scale practices and experience. This is in line with Tonkiss’ argument, as she states that “people’s experience of the city is not only or always determined by larger social or economic structures, but also fashioned by their individual perceptions, neighbourhood maps and spatial practices” (Tonkiss, 2005: 113).

In this thesis I will focus on how urban liveability is being perceived by the inhabitants of Guatemala City, a city in one of the countries in the world’s most urbanized region, Latin America. The city is considered to be the largest metropolis in the Central-American region (Palma Urrutia, 2009). The city is facing an emerging population, which is putting pressure on resources and space that is available, such as the limited availability of urban parks (Palma Urrutia, 2009). Hence, in this thesis will be focussed on the city ‘from below’, to explore what urban liveability means in the lives of urban dwellers. How do they experience their city,

regarding the liveability? What can, or should the liveable city be in their view? And how do they give meaning and attach themselves to the places they inhabit, which shape their daily lives? These contemplative questions shape the context for this research. By researching these questions, I will try to gain more insight in how the urban space functions according to its inhabitants, and how it can be adapted, integrated or redesigned to function according to the needs of its users.

1.2 Seeing Guatemala City from below

The field research for this thesis took place in Guatemala City, a city with a current population of 3,1 million in the larger metropolitan area (INE, 2012). In this urban space, many different kinds of places coexist. Goog-

¹ Other aspects that are threatening urban liveability in the city are adequate access to land, urban transport and the waste dump that is located in the city.

leaving for images of Guatemala City depicts the image of the city 'from above', as a neoliberal landscape where skyscrapers dominate, and where hardly any inhabitants are visible. This view leaves out the human being as an active agent shaping his or her own lived environment. It presents the city as a final product, rather than as an ongoing dynamic process of social behaviour and movements (Kaminer, Robles-Durán & Sohn, 2011). Seeing the city from below makes visible that the global logic is intermingling and juxtaposing with the local logic, and in the midst of these connections, people are creating their lives as shown on Figure 1-3. Figure 1 shows a tienda del barrio (neighbourhood shop) that represents both global influences in the advertisement for popular soda, as well as in its name, imported from another continent. Together they create a mingling of cultural resources that come together on the façade of the shop. Next to the various representations of place captured on the outside shop wall, it is simultaneously a growing house, adapting itself to the necessities of the family, which can be seen as an informal way of using the space needed.

Regarding Guatemala City from below thus shows the human scale of the city, the place in which people reside and act in order to shape their lives. This comes to being (for example) through informal (economic) activities that are practiced on the street. As shown on figure 2 and 3, people invent adaptive ways in which they can provide in their livelihoods. The space is used in such a way that it can serve to present goods. A screen that is placed in front of a window that usually serves against housebreaking is temporarily used as a clothing rack during a street market (figure 3). Hence, the city is always in motion as people use and appropriate different spaces. It is there where the city obtains its characteristic liveliness, through these temporary informal practices (Mehrotra, 2012). The city may thus be best interpreted as being in a constant state of 'in-betweenness'; in-between global and local, in-between public and private, in-between formal and informal, and thus in-between permanent and transitory (Ruby & Ruby, 2008). In the midst of these concepts is where people apply meaning to places. This happens in the way they use space: how they appropriate space, adapt it to their needs and make it personal. In the context of this urban reality in Guatemala City is where different actors are involved in the quest for urban liveability from below. This comes to being in a range of practices from a range of different urban actors, who explore and simultaneously shape this quest: from urban farming initiatives as Q'anil and a new master in urban sustainable design at Rafael Landívar University, to the practices of Urbanística, the organisation where I did my research internship for this thesis, among many others. These efforts demonstrate the collective drive and action for shaping a more liveable city. In section 3.3 a more detailed description of the research area will be presented.



Figure 1. One building containing a neighbourhood shop and a growing house (Photo: author)



Figure 2. A man is shaping his lived space through informal practices in Guatemala City (Photo: author)



Figure 3. Spatial form used for socio-economic practices, together 'shaping' the city (Photo: author).

1.3 Research relevance

Societal relevance

Latin American cities are facing mayor challenges when it comes to urban liveability. As stated in the introductory section, in this research I will focus on the relation between urban revitalization processes and the daily experience of liveability of urban inhabitants in Guatemala City. This I will do, to gain insight in the experiences of liveability ‘from below’. This is important, as Flusty describes:

“The lived realities of the city (...) are seldom (if ever) so univocal. Rather, within the material framework of the city itself, the ‘hard city’, are a plethora of overlapping and interpenetrating ‘soft cities’, subjectively apprehended cities built of each urbanite’s experiential perceptions of the ‘hard city’” (cited in Reinders, 2013: 37).

Seeing the city from below provides this ‘soft city’ perspective by focusing on the experience of urban inhabitants. How do they perceive urban revitalization processes in their neighbourhood? Do they enhance their experience of liveability? Defining together with local actors what liveability means for them allows me to better understand challenges and opportunities that are expressed through people’s lived experience.

Urban revitalization processes not only comprise the physical intervention, but not less important, also the “practices of use, perception and meaning giving with which people endow [places] with codes and meaning” (Reinders, 2013: 37). In this study I would thus like to ‘see’ the liveability of urban places through the eyes of the people who use and appropriate these places. This is important, as (public) places may as such improve in terms of liveability as these places carry the potential for human encounter (Madanipour, 2013).

As such, this thesis strives to point out why seeing the city from below is important, and how this can be done. This study can therefore inform and inspire urbanists, whether this being urban planning professionals and architects, (for example at Urbanística, the organization where I did my research internship), policy makers, urban activists, theorists, civil pioneers, or all those involved in the process of ‘making place’. This thesis can be used as a guide for monitoring or evaluation; as a reflective, conceptual ‘process guide’ for developing, learning about, and / or providing focus during the process of placemaking. This can result in learning moments and reflexive action; to gain insights on what can be done better during the process of placemaking.

Moreover, by choosing the perspective from below, I explored opportunities to connect the field of human geography to the field of social design. I did this for example through the methodological approach that is explained in chapter 3, that was designed to engage with people in their lived spaces. The approach in chapter 4 served as a way to pre-

sent the lived experience of urban inhabitants. Hence, by exploring the 'edges' of the human geographical discipline in these ways, I strive to contribute to the interdisciplinary understanding between different disciplines that are concerned with the relation between the human and his or her environment. Furthermore, by applying different (visual) methodologies I strive to improve the communication between the audience and this research. Finally, by doing this study I strive to contribute to the becoming of 'La ciudad para vivir' (the city to live in), as is the slogan of the municipality of Guatemala City (Muniguate, 2014). Yet, even though the research area is located in Guatemala City, focussing on the lived experience of urban liveability of urban inhabitants can also contribute to future urban planning processes in other urban contexts.

Scientific relevance

As already stated above, cities are in need of new ideas and visions for how to create more liveable environments for their growing population. This thesis strives to contribute to, and to elaborate on the scientific viewpoint on liveability 'from below'. As described earlier, this path has already been widely explored by different scholars such as Jan Gehl, Jane Jacobs, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre. All argued for designing cities with the human inhabitant as a central starting point in the built environment that surrounds them, and were thus directing to the perspective of 'seeing the city from below'. This viewpoint seems to be relevant when researching the theme of liveability, as this is something that is being (inter)subjectively experienced (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003).

Following these scholars, in this thesis I chose the perspective from below, which needs to be developed more extensively both in a theoretical as well as in an empirical way for today's urban contexts. In this way, I can approach liveability and placemaking as dynamic processes that are constantly being produced and reproduced by urban inhabitants. By choosing this human-centric approach, through this thesis I strive to contribute to the understanding of the meaning urban dwellers give to their environment. Hence, I hope to contribute to the scientific discourse by posing arguments for approaching the city from below. By doing this, scientists can be informed how to approach the perspective from below, both theoretically and practically. In this thesis I would therefore like to explore the possibilities to improve the engagement with people 'on the ground', those who experience liveability in their daily lives. This can contribute to the linking of theory and practice about urban liveability and placemaking in urban space.

By connecting theoretical insights with empirical data in the form of interviews, (photographic) observations and neighborhood maps, this thesis searches for a direct connection with the urban inhabitants in the research area. Handling a 'localized' approach by focussing on a specific case, I zoomed in to neighbourhood level to 'let the people speak'. Ur-

ban inhabitants have “intimate knowledge” of the neighbourhood that is “detailed and complex” (Reinders, 2013: 196), which can reveal the fine-grained experience of urban liveability. The (inter)subjective perspective that I chose in this thesis, allowed me to see the human scale; the urban inhabitant as an (active) agent or place-maker in the urban landscape.

This point of view builds forth upon the discussion about the relations between seeing the city from below or from above. From Jane Jacobs onwards, it has been debated how the city could be best approached or theorized. Jacobs plead against Robert Moses, an urban planner, who – in her eyes - was literally over-looking the city. According to her, with his standpoint ‘from above’, Moses could only see ‘big’ structures and perceive the world as a final product, losing eye for the urban inhabitant (Jacobs, 2009). Michel de Certeau aptly expressed the importance of seeing the city from below in a similar way as Jacobs did, in his book ‘the Practice of Everyday Life’ (1988). Both scholars denounced the view ‘from above’, appointing to the rich ‘textures’ the city has to offer if one would take time to see the city from below.

Another way, in which this master thesis is both a search for societal as well as scientific relevance, derives from observations I made during the master. I observed the need expressed by many – both from science and society - to make science relevant for society.

The perspective as well as the methodology I chose for in this thesis, to see from below and to engage with urban inhabitants, was for me a logical decision, as I believe that that is a proper way to search for societal and scientific relevance. With this thesis, I attempt to create space for dialog between different people, and therewith I hope to be part of the process of creating connections.

The research position that I took, to actively engage with the urban inhabitants (see methodological chapter), was part of my search to connect to society. Next to that, both during my master study as well as during the process of writing this thesis, I became aware of my own scientific position. In my search for meaning and relevance, I became inspired by my design background, which informed this thesis to bring across complex information in a readable way. I believe that the ability to communicate is key in the quest for bringing across (complex) information.

Thinking about the goal of this research brought me important insights. As a designer as well as a scientist-to-be, my desire is to bring across my message, to make contact with the reader. It is important for me to make my research meaningful to the reader. This notion has guided me along the way of doing research and writing this thesis. Hopefully it has contributed to my goal: to connect to, and to inspire the reader.

1.4 Research objective and questions

As laid out in the project framework, the focus will be on the Latin American city, and more in particular on Guatemala City. As described above, the urban population in cities in Latin American is ever increasing. As such, the urban environment transforms which challenges the concept of urban liveability. In this thesis I will research the concept of urban liveability and how liveability in Guatemala City may be influenced by urban revitalization processes, according to the urban inhabitants. Therefore, the objective of this research is:

To gain insight in the relation between urban revitalization processes and the experience of urban liveability 'from below' in Guatemala City. Therefore, in this study a qualitative research will be conducted on the experience of urban liveability among urban inhabitants in Guatemala City in the urban neighbourhood surrounding Cerro del Carmen.

Obtaining an insight in this relation can be relevant to understand better what liveability means for a city in the Latin American context. To be able to fulfil the research objective, I have formulated a set of research questions. The central question of this research is:

How do urban revitalization processes in lived space in Guatemala City influence the experience of urban liveability according to the urban inhabitants in Guatemala City?

To be able to answer the central question of this research, I have formulated sub questions. These sub questions are:

1. In what way are the urban inhabitants in the research neighbourhood involved in the urban revitalization process?

By answering this question, I can gain insight in the way urban inhabitants participate in this process. This can indicate the way in which the inhabitants are being involved in the urban revitalization process. Answers to this question can be gained by observation and through interviews with residents and urban planners.

2. What socio-spatial practices can be observed in lived space of the research area?

Answering this question provides me with insight in how people give meaning to place through their social actions and spatial practices in the research area. This insight can be gained by observing how people are using the place(s), and what places are especially used for the creation of social capital. Furthermore, I will interview people about the meaning they attach to the places.

3. What effects do people experience on social capital in the neighbourhood as a result of the urban revitalization processes?

Answering this question provides me with insight in the possibilities that the research area provides for the construction of social capital among residents involved in the process. Do they experience the interventions in a positive way, for example as enhancing social capital in their neighbourhood, or do they also bring negative effects?

4. How do these effects influence people's perception of urban liveability?

Answering this last sub question can provide me with insight about the extent to which urban revitalization processes have influenced people's experience of urban liveability, i.e. the 'fit' between inhabitants and their environment. This can form a preliminary answer for the central question of this research.

1.5 Thesis layout

Reading this thesis will provide you with insights about how the different chapters together provide understanding of what it means to see the city from below. This chapter gave an introduction on the research matter, which will be further explored in the next theoretical chapter. This chapter provides insights in the ways the perspective from below is conceptually framed in the context of this thesis. Chapter 3 translates the theoretical concepts that are explored in chapter 2 into a set of practical instruments with which I did my fieldwork. These instruments give insight in how to apply the perspective from below 'on the ground'. Chapter 4 gives insight in the stories 'from below', that were collected by using the methodological instruments that are presented in chapter 3. Chapter 5 synthesises the insights with the research question that was posed above. This synthesis brings insights to the foreground about urban liveability as perceived from below. The following figure visually reflects the connections between the chapters, how all chapters complement each other and thus together provide the theoretical and practical 'ingredients' of this thesis.

Seeing the city from below

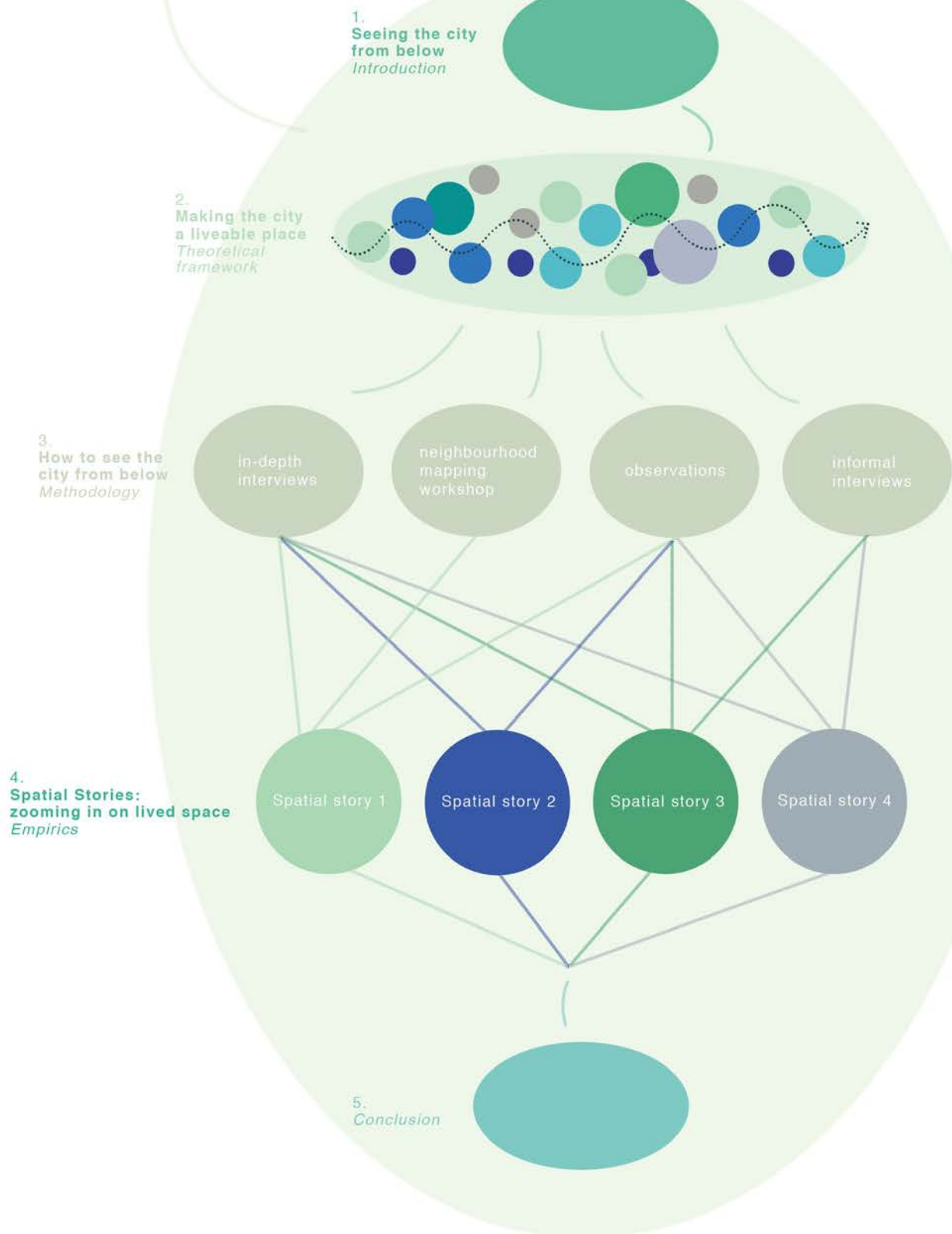


Figure 4. Thesis layout.

A photograph of a brick archway and a large tree, with text overlaid. The archway is made of red bricks and is partially obscured by the tree's branches. The tree has dense green foliage. In the background, a fence and some buildings are visible. The ground is paved with light-colored stones.

2. Making the city a liveable place

Theoretical framework



2.1 Remaking the liveable city

“The city goes soft; it awaits an imprint of identity. For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. (...) The city as we imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real than the hard city one can locate on maps in statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture.”

(Raban cited in Reinders, 2013: 36-37)

This quote reflects the viewpoint of this thesis, the perspective ‘from below’, denoting the focus on the experience of urban liveability of local urban residents. This perspective can be described as the ‘soft city’, the city of experience, use and meaning. Jonathan Raban first introduced this idea of the city in his book ‘Soft City’, where he focussed on the subjective identities with which people let the city ‘come alive’, and thereby attempt to make it a liveable place (Reinders, 2013). The quote reflects the perspective of this thesis as it focuses on people’s position as active agents in the urban landscape. Through their actions, people may adapt their experience of urban liveability by ‘remaking’ their environment.

Hence, in this theoretical framework the possibilities people may have in the city to “remake it”, will be conceptualized by placemaking as set out in the third section in this chapter (Raban cited in Reinders, 2013: 36-37). By remaking it, they may adapt their experience of urban liveability, which is also explored as a theoretical concept. Yet, as this concept entails many domains as will become clear, the social and spatial domains will be leading in this thesis. This is conceptualized by social capital and placemaking, which will be set out in the next sections. At the end of this chapter, in the final section the concepts that are presented in this chapter are related to each other in a visual way in the conceptual model, which synthesises the content of this chapter.

2.2 Urban Liveability in the soft city

2.2.1 Urban Liveability

As introduced in the project framework, the concept of urban liveability is being widely discussed in the debate about the growth of cities. However, there is no consensus in the literature about the exact meaning and theoretical understanding of the concept. Leidelmeijer & van Kamp (2003) have done an extensive study on the existent liveability literature, demonstrating the comprehensiveness of the concept. Liveability appears to be a clear concept, but it has been explained in different theoretical ways (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003; de Hart, 2002). What these explanations have in common is that they regard liveability as a multi-dimensional container concept addressing the ‘fit’ between the human and its environment. Dependent on the type and goal of the research, foregoing studies have assessed different combinations of social, spa-

“The city goes soft; it awaits an imprint of identity. For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. (...) The city as we imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real than the hard city one can locate on maps in statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture.”

Raban cited in Reinders, 2013: 36-37

tial, cultural, economic, health and security aspects (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003). The coming to being of the fit denotes a continuous process of constant fitting, “of adaptation and accommodation”, in which a person values his relation to the environment (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003: 73). Then, he searches for a situation in which the environment suits his needs and desires (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003).

This notion of constant fitting between people and their environment is important in this thesis as it denotes liveability to be an ongoing process of adaptation of a person to his or her environment through social and spatial actions; the remaking that was mentioned in the former section. This will be further conceptualized through the concept of placemaking that will be set out in the next section.

The RIVM, the Dutch national institute for Public Health and the Environment (in Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003: 29) denoted the emphasis on everyday experiences, defining liveability as “the experience of the daily lived environment”. This definition is in line with the perspective of this thesis. As was introduced in the former section, the ‘soft city’ points to people’s experience of their lived environment, thus the subjective meaning people attach to their interpretation of their surroundings. There seems to be consensus in the literature that assessing the human-environment fit, both social and spatial characteristics are involved, as it is a constant ‘negotiation process’ between a person and his or her socio-spatial environment. Hereby the quality of the environment is not so much defined by the actual presence of (for example) the built environment, but by the perception of it (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003).

Urban liveability is a process of constant fitting between the human and his or her environment, and as such it is constantly being shaped and can be adjusted. It is thus inherently a socio-spatial construct. In this thesis, urban liveability will be studied in relation to urban revitalization processes in lived space, by focussing on people’s socio-spatial practices. This can be conceptualized as placemaking, the coming to being of place by use and appropriation of people, which will be explained more in depth in the third section of this chapter. In the literature on liveability, often is spoken about ‘objective and subjective’ characteristics of liveability, as if it were constructed out of a duality (see for example de Hart, 2002; Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003; Wittebrood & van Dijk, 2007). When looking closer at this apparent duality, this seems to be rather vague. Namely, looking closer to the word objectivity in its literal meaning denotes an ‘object’ of study, whether this be a physical, material object or a certain situation that is being seen as an object. In my point of view objective characteristics cannot be characterized as such, as they are always a human interference or an effect of a (political, economic etc.) decision, which may be based on a subjective idea. Tonkiss (2005: 113) accordingly states: “Cities may be the densest of object realities but one

comes to know them as a subject. (...) The view will depend, partly, on where you are standing and where you have come from". Hence, looking beyond the apparent 'objectivity' of an object reveals the story behind it. Richardson makes a plea for this same argument, stating that "if the concept [of liveability] is taken seriously, existentially, as a description of the human condition, then the so-called objective reality to which people subjectively respond is itself not an external given, but the very result of their actions" (2003, p. 76). This statement explicitly points at the relation between people and their practices through which they 'respond' and 'adapt' to their lived environment.

Yet, where does the experience of liveability take place? Within the self, as a subjective experience of feelings and thoughts that are 'translated' into ways of interacting socially and spatially? With our selves, our minds and bodies, we 'make' the city, we act in it, we 'are' in it, in a certain way. We understand it through perceiving a complex whole of signs that we translate as codes of meaning. Both inside and outside the self, a person is 'confronted' with codes of meaning, or frames, that he or she has to relate to, recognize, confirm, and / or reject and remake them if necessary. 'Being in the city' is a constant interplay of codes of meaning between 'the city' - a place or other persons - and 'the self' (Richardson, 2003). Thus experiencing liveability seems to be an (inter) subjective process, in which liveability may be adjusted by people's practices. This is line with what Richardson states: "through our actions, our interactions, we bring about the world in which we then are; we create so that we may be, in our creations" (Richardson, 2003, p. 74). The notion of intersubjectivity seems an adequate position when looking at liveability in an urban neighbourhood, which will be the case in this study. This is where different people subjectively experience their lived environment. In a neighbourhood, many subjectivities together share the same space, which may also influence common ideas or normative understanding of a place. Hence, in this study liveability is seen as an inter-subjective experience. People may thus perceive their environment both through their own eyes, as well as in relation to the groups they may be part of such as a family, or a neighbourhood-based group.

Other scholars appoint liveability in similar ways, highlighting the bonding to the neighbourhood and the physical and social wellbeing, both on the individual as on the collective level (Duyvendak & Veldboer; de Straat & Bron in Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003: 29). In this thesis, the social domain will also be the leading domain that will be explored in the local context of a neighbourhood in Guatemala City. This understanding gives space to inhabitants in the urban landscape to enhance their lived spaces and to construct social capital, which will further explain the social domain.

Pacione indicates dimensions according to which liveability can be specified. The dimensions that will be relevant for this study are domains, i.e. the aspects of attention in the study, which in this study will be the

socio-spatial domain, geographical scale level, which in this thesis will be the neighbourhood level, subjective indicators and context dependency (for example time, place, culture and social group aspects) (Pacione in Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003). According to Leidelmeijer & van Kamp (2003) it is the local scale, which is best suitable for the assessment of liveability, as it is in that scale that humans interact with their environment, and as such a certain degree of specificity can be reached. Within this scale level urban inhabitants are being observed and interviewed to obtain an idea about their subjective and intersubjective view of liveability, and on the basis of this experience, how they interact with their socio-spatial environment. The neighbourhood can thus rather be seen as the 'context' in which the research takes place. To be able to 'see the city from below', the actual scale level will thus be the (inter) subjective scale.

2.2.2 Social capital in the neighbourhood

To capture experiences of urban liveability and the influence urban revitalization processes have (had) on that experience, the (inter)subjective perspective will be leading in this thesis. Therefore people's urban livelihoods will be taken into account. This is a way to "place people back at the centre of attention and explanation, endowing them with a degree of agency to struggle against, take advantage of, and resist or rework their political, economic, social and environmental milieu" (Rigg, 2004: 29), and thus fits the perspective from below. Livelihoods (can) contain various types of capital, namely financial, human, natural, physical and social capital (Rigg, 2004). In this study, social capital will be used for assessing the experience of urban liveability, as it is believed to be a "vital part" of livelihood strategies (Phillips, 2002: 133).

Apart from the spatial connection between the human and his or her environment which will be explained further below, social capital is regarded in this study as the social dimension of that connection. It is an indicator for liveability, showing the extent to which there is a sense of social bonding between neighbours, for the existence of social relations and activities and for feeling safety in the neighbourhood. It can thus be seen as a resource that people use to create networks and bonding at a neighbourhood level. In an urban neighbourhood, social capital may come to existence through neighbourhood-based groups, gender and age-based networks, kinship based associations and linkages with NGO's and other civil society organisations (Phillips, 2002: 136). These groups or networks can serve people for example in their common struggle for improving certain situations in their neighbourhood. These networks can also be vulnerable, as they have to deal with heterogeneity or mobility in the neighbourhood or come under pressure because of (increased) urban violence (Phillips, 2002: 134-137). Mihaylov and Perkins conceptualize social capital as consistent of four components: social bonding, "the affective attachment to the social aspects of place", neighbouring, the

informal help provided between neighbours, empowerment, “people’s confidence in the efficacy of organized collective action with their neighbours” and citizen participation (2014: 68-69). This conception of social capital relates to the approach of Putnam, who regards social capital as an aspect of “community and collective action” (in Rigg, 2007: 52). These “place-based social interactions” are often referred to as bonding social capital (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014). In this study, social capital can be ‘measured’ in a qualitative way by the existent relations and activities (social environment and social practices), the experience of social ties and a sense of safety (social bonding). The spatial environment, such as the form of public space, its degree of accessibility and the existence of public facilities can also influence (the perception of) the construction of social capital, as it may enhance or deplete possibilities for interaction between neighbours (Wittebrood & van Dijk, 2007; Wittebrood, 2008).

To observe social capital in the urban neighbourhood that will be studied in this thesis, socio-spatial practices in the lived spaces of urban inhabitants will be focussed on. They may reveal the extent to which the construction of social capital is possible or comes to being in the neighbourhood, which will be introduced further below. How do people experience the possibility for constructing social capital in their neighbourhood, both on a subjective as well as on an intersubjective level? How do people use spaces as groups or as individuals? What practices indicate the enabling or disabling of social capital? As this study assesses both subjective views as well as intersubjective views of the neighbourhood, the practice level seems adequate for revealing possibilities for the construction of social capital.

2.3 Making place in the soft city

2.3.1 Meaning of place and place attachment

Place is the setting in which life comes to being. Researching the definition and the content of the word place, it becomes clear that it has been understood as a dualism in many ways to capture its meaning. The French philosopher Marc Augé for example, denoted ‘place’ as being the opposite to non-place; thus creating an apparent distinction or dualism. He defined place as being “relational, historical and concerned with identity”. A non-place he describes as being the opposite: “a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity”. It defines “a world surrendered to solitary individuality”, which is inhuman, expressed in the ‘homes’ of super-modernity, such as airports or other transit spaces for example (Augé, 1995: 77-78). The duality that Augé describes seems to me as an abstract categorisation. It can be a tool to understand the essence of a place, to what extent a space is actually a (non-)place. Yet in that sense, it is interesting to see if, and to what extent it can be observable in its ‘pure form’, or to what extent non-place exists in place and vice versa. If, and what kind of socio-spatial practices happen in a non-place can for example be a way to observe

this. In this study, as the research area is a traditional neighbourhood, in Augé's terms I will look at a place as it is indeed "historical, relational and concerned with identities".

To assess the way people regard the liveability of a place, it is necessary to understand the different components of place. Place has been conceptualized by many as 'subjective space': particular, lived and experienced space becomes place (Reinders, 2013). Relph, whose ideas can be placed in the phenomenological approach, defined place as a combination of a physical setting, activities and meanings (Gustafson, 2001). He thus described it as a combination of a spatial surrounding filled with social action and subjective meanings. This description is in line with how Cresswell (2004: 7) defines place, as "a meaningful location". If we look at places, we can "see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience", he states (Cresswell, 2004: 11). These approaches are in line with the argumentation of Madanipour (2001), who argues for approaching place at the intersection of traditional dichotomies, which is where the meaning of place can be found (Madanipour, 2001: 159). He states: "recognising that space has multiple meanings is just the first step in searching for an answer for the problem of approaching the subject matter. If we review the current and historical approaches to space, we see many dichotomies; as one approach has been established, another has emerged to challenge it. Yet often the meaning can be found beyond those narrow dichotomies" (Madanipour, 2001: 159). Following this debate, in this thesis, I will look at the multilayered meanings inhabitants give to the places they inhabit, their lived space. Hence, place can be more dynamically understood, which is needed according to Madanipour (2001). To find the meaning of place, in this thesis I will thus search beyond dichotomies, focussing on these layered meanings of place by focussing on the (inter)subjective experiences of places in a neighbourhood in Guatemala City. As such, I will be 'challenging' ontological understandings of place as a dualism by searching for the meaning people endow in places, remaking them to improve social capital.

Places often come to being through "everyday practices" (Cresswell, 2004: 82). Cresswell (2004: 82) explains: "places are never finished but produced through the reiteration of practices – the repetition of seemingly mundane activities on a daily basis". In line with these scholars, in this study place is seen as a meaningful location which urban inhabitants 'remake' through their socio-spatial practices. A place is thus always in process, as different people make use of it in time (daily, weekly, temporarily, incidentally) (Gustafson, 2001), shaping their lived space. A street can for example obtain additional meaning if it is being used as a marketplace during weekends, providing people with different forms of capital (money, goods, social contacts) that contribute to their urban livelihoods. In this study, as will be presented in the empirical chapter,

a place can be revitalized over time by people's practices. Hence, the meaning of place can change, for example from being perceived as an insecure place to a secure place.

To capture the meaning of place, John Agnew indicated three aspects that are similar to the foregoing understanding of Relph: location, the geographical area, locale, the material setting in which social relations and interaction can be constituted and shaped, and sense of place, the "subjective and emotional attachment people have to place", where place obtains subjective meaning (Cresswell, 2004: 7; Gustafson, 2001: 6). Both understandings point to the connection of the social and the spatial, the social relationships that shape the environment and the subjective perceptions that fill a place with meaning. Yet, when place is perceived as an inter-subjective entity, it may obtain various meanings. Madanipour explains: "place is embedded in social processes and its meaning is derived from the social practices of a particular society. (...) As different groups give different meanings to space, it becomes a multilayered place, reflecting the way places are socially constructed" (Madanipour, 2001: 158). It is thus interesting to see how a place obtains meaning, both through the different meanings people may assign to a place as well as possible adjustments of meaning over time. Following this reasoning, in the empirical chapter of this study different views on place will be presented that reflect the experience of liveability of (a part of) the city.

'Manifestations' of place meanings can also be visually observable in the physical appearance of a place. A place can be used, adapted or appropriated in a certain way that reveals people's bond to that place. Regular maintenance can for example be an expression of appropriation and attachment. Giving meaning to place is closely connected to identity and attachment to place: the way inhabitants spatially or symbolically claim space, and by doing that, identify with others or distance themselves from others. These processes exist in the everyday lived spaces of neighbourhoods and public spaces (Reinders & Bosch, 2012: 10).

According to Stedman, Amsden, Beckley & Tidball (2014: 112), place meaning and place attachment are very similar, but differ in that place meanings are subjective descriptions about the nature of place, as one can call a place "friendly", or "home". This descriptive content is "created through human activities, including interaction with the material environment, and with other social actors" (Stedman et al., 2014: 113). The way people perceive their living environment can indicate how they regard the liveability of the place. People can perceive their neighbourhood as a nice place to live or for example as a safe or dangerous place. These perceptions can be based on the (lack of) social capital that exists in the neighbourhood. These subjective expressions are meanings people attach to their lived environment. Place attachment is the emotional or affective bond between people and their environment (Low & Altman,

1992; Stedman et al., 2014). It can indicate whether people feel connected to a place, i.e. if it feels like 'their' place as an extension of the self, as providing a sense of ownership of the place (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014: 66). It comes to being "through experience and engagement with the local environment and social actors" (Stedman et al., 2014: 112). It is thus mostly dependent on if one can identify with a place, i.e. "the extent to which [a place] serves a meaning-making function about who we are" (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014: 67), and the extent to which one can connect to the social environment, i.e. to what extent social capital exists in a place. Connecting the concept of place attachment to an actual place, for example a neighbourhood, can give insight in the extent to which people feel they belong to that neighbourhood. As such it can reveal if a neighbourhood 'feels like home' for its inhabitants, or if it is rather a place for short term stay where they wish to leave again.

2.3.2 Placemaking in the soft city

As we have seen in former paragraphs, "people do not simply react to their physical environments; they endow them with meaning, they interpret and change them. And the manners in which they do so are not independent of their social relations. These relations do not occur, as it were, outside of the physical world. That is, the particular man-made physical settings in which social interaction tends to occur are not mere containers of social action; they embody socially constructed meanings" (Harris and Lipman cited in Reinders, 2013: 43). This quote underlines the socio-spatial connection between people and their environment. It reflects the possibilities for people to remake places, informed by the soft structures of social capital. It assigns agency to people in the place-making process, which will be explained in the coming paragraphs.

As come to the foreground in the former section, places are socially constructed. Yet, the process of the coming to being of place is often framed by preconditions in and by which this can take place. Preconditions are means by which human interrelations and interactions may establish in space and create place. These preconditions can enable or disable people to make place. Objects that may be placed, such as fences, may interfere with the possibilities for the making of place. Policies and rules such as opening hours in public parks can also be part of these preconditions that may for example structure accessibility. However, is it not necessarily rules that are imposed by governance institutions that may restrict to make place, as people themselves can also en- or disable this process through their practices. In this thesis will be looked at if and to what extent such preconditions render the making of place (im)possible by focussing on people's actions and activities, that may also be seen as a form of governance. This will provide insights about who can use or appropriate a place, when and by what means, thus, preconditions for the construction of social capital.

The way in which places are being shaped, used and appropriated by urban inhabitants can be conceptualized as ‘placemaking’, a dynamic process of planning, meaning giving and appropriation (Lupi, 2009). The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre has created a framework for understanding the way in which places are being made, which he explained in his book ‘The Production of Space’ (1991). In this framework, place is not only understood as conceived by planners (what he calls ‘representations of space’, or ‘conceived space’), but the space as used and inhabited by people is also an important part of the production of space. This is being conceptualized by Lefebvre as ‘representational space’, or ‘lived space’, “the space of everyday experience where the spatial practices of everyday life and the routinized social relations of production and reproduction occur”, which was already referred to earlier in this chapter (Rigg, 2004: 16). ‘Spatial practices’, or ‘perceived space’, are the social activities and spatial actions that take place in lived space. Through this understanding, Lefebvre wanted to emphasize the importance of everyday practices as part of the coming to being of spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). This framework is useful in this study as it creates space for understanding the way people make use of, and appropriate planned space. Hence, in this approach there is space for human practice and interpretation (Reinders, 2013). Taking urban revitalization processes into account, these are “interventions in the social and physical space of a neighbourhood, but this [revitalization process] also brings up pertinent questions about the role and significance of space in the daily lives of people” (Reinders, 2013: 119). This notion informs the research question, as in this study will be looked at the lived space of people. Lefebvre’s framework is helpful to reveal who is reached and involved in the urban revitalization process, and what effects it has on people’s experience of urban liveability of the places under study in the neighbourhood. It will be the conceptual foundation for the empirical chapter to get insight in the extent to which people connect to a place, use the place, and thus make the place, as will be explained in the methodological chapter.

The way people endow places with meaning and use space in their everyday lives reveals how people inscribe space with ‘codes’ and as such adjust themselves to the planned space, i.e. how people make it ‘their’ place by appropriating the space (Manzo, 2005; Reinders, 2013). The understanding of this appropriation can be a way to evaluate the effects of a planned space in lived space. Understanding how people use space can give insight in if and how it makes an impact on people’s experience of liveability. Hence, in this thesis I will focus on lived space and the practices people perform therein. Thereby Lefebvre’s ‘spatial practices’ will be enriched to ‘socio-spatial’ practices, as this theoretical framework shows they are inherently connected in this study.

A way, in which people become more involved in the placemaking process of for instance a revitalization process of an urban neighbourhood,

is participatory planning. In this way, planning is regarded as a joint production of planning professionals and the (future) users of the planned space (Hague & Jenkins, 2005). This approach is meant to better suit the needs of the users, to already involve them in the placemaking process in the planning stage. In regard to liveability, participatory planning can be a tool to influence the (experience of) liveability of a place. It may influence peoples' experience of liveability as a condition that people can have influence on as people get a say in how they would like the place to be adjusted or revitalized. Liveability in this study is thus seen as a condition in process that may be influenced, and at best enhanced by placemaking (from below). Yet, as will be focussed on socio-spatial practices in lived space, the design phase through which the interventions came to being will not be researched in depth in this study, but will be explored as a background.

Placemaking is regarded as the whole of the coming to being of a place: from the design process (in which inhabitants are involved in participatory planning) to the implementation of the design, to the process of appropriation, use and meaning giving of a place, through which people could become more (or less) attached to a place. In line with Lefebvre and hence with the focus of this thesis, Tonkiss also makes an argument for seeing and recognising the 'whole' design process in which urban inhabitants have a stake. She states: "city design captures a range of activities and interventions that shape urban environments, construct and respond to urban problems, and integrate social, spatial and material forms in the city. (...) What happens in a city happens as the result of innumerable more or less conscious designs and plans on the part of urban inhabitants: improvised or long-game, intentional or incidental, temporary or more permanent" (2013: 5-6). This is a relevant stance, which in this study will be explored further in an empirical way.

The idea of placemaking came to being as a critique on the modernistic perspective of urban design in which the architect was given a dominant role in designing buildings, public spaces and even whole cities that in the end did not serve the (majority of the) people, or that were not used by them (Reinders, 2013). An example in Latin America that is often referred to in this context is Brasilia, the (political) capital of Brazil, which was top-down planned and designed by the French architect Le Corbusier. By over-looking the human scale in the master plan, by the time the city was 'ready', it turned out not to function properly. Large parts of the day streets were empty as a result of separation of functions. Moreover, the streets were designed as car dominated spaces, which made them not attractive nor usable for social interaction or walking (Reinders, 2013: 34).

To focus more on the inhabitants of a city, and give them thereby more agency, the placemaking concept as well as the method strives to in-

clude people as part of the placemaking process, as they are the ones using the spaces and make it into places.² Jane Jacobs was one of the first scholars making an argument for people's agency in the coming to being of a city in her famous work 'Death and life of great American cities' (1961). In this book, she warns against the 'danger' of only seeing the city from above, leaving out the perspective from below. This 'warn' for the gap between planned and lived space, is a recurring theme over time that different authors wrote about (Jacobs, 1961; de Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre, 1991; Reinders, 2013). The concept of placemaking can be a conceptual tool to bring the 'planned city' and the 'lived city' closer together, to connect them better. Therefore, in the empirical part of this study I will take a closer look at the coming to being of place by focusing on lived space to see how conceived space is indeed lived, how it is experienced. This is a way to understand urban revitalization processes from below: to see urban inhabitants as co-creators who have a stake in this process. This can be a way to go beyond the dichotomy and to bridge the 'gap' between planned and lived space.

² As developed by 'project for public space', see www.pps.org

2.4 Conceptual Model

This theoretical framework that was set out in this chapter, has given conceptual insights in the coming to being of a liveable place, and how these conceptual notions are applied to this thesis. In the framework it has been explained that placemaking is inherently a socio-spatial process, through which social capital may be constructed by different forms of use and appropriation of places.

What comes out of the above-described relations between theoretical concepts that are relevant in this study is the following conceptual model that reflects these relations in a visual way. The model shows different socio-spatial practices that are happening in lived space as part of the placemaking continuum, through which places are used and appropriated in time in a certain way. In the process of urban revitalization places are being made and remade by urban inhabitants by their socio-spatial practices in lived space. Each of these practices creates experiences of a place by endowment of meaning. These experiences of a place produce a certain sense of place. Social capital is 'woven through' this process, as this is enhanced or disabled every time by the socio-spatial practices that happen in lived space. As described above, social capital is in this thesis used to 'capture' the social domain of liveability. In the empirical chapter this model 'comes alive', as these socio-spatial practices will be looked at in the locality of the research area, which is conceptualized by lived space. The research area will be introduced in the next chapter. Together, socio-spatial practices in lived space produce a process of constant fitting. This is a constant adaptation to the environment that develops on the basis of the experiences of former socio-spatial practices of the human and his or her environment.

All these concepts together provide a theoretical framework for the un-

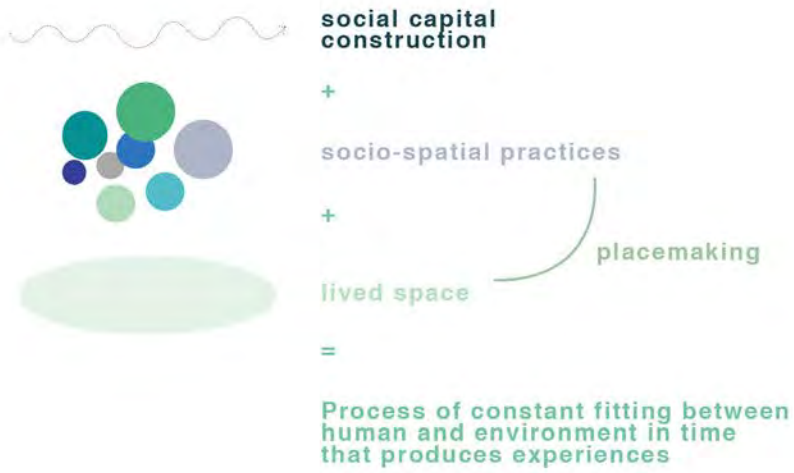
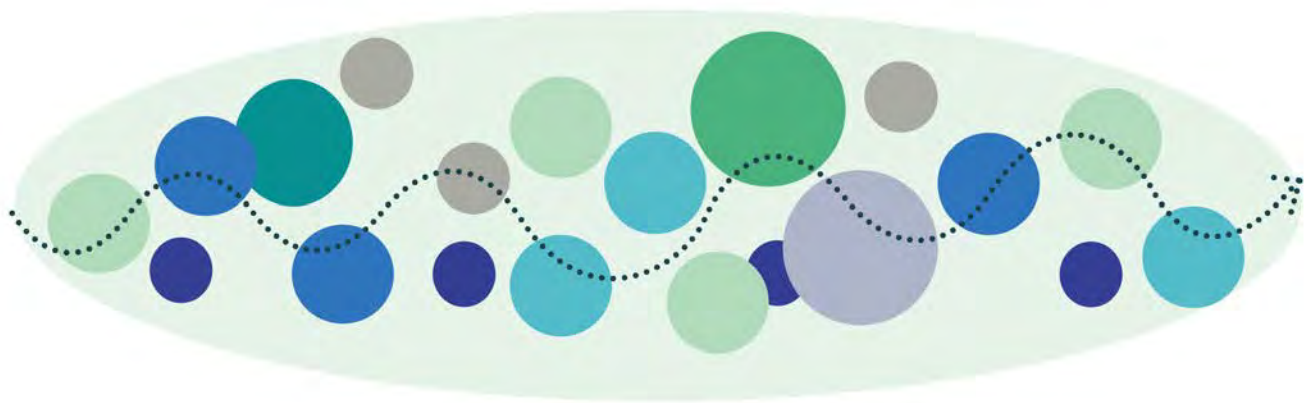


Figure 5. Conceptual model.

derstanding of how a certain part in the city may be revitalized, and how this has an effect on the experience of liveability, i.e. to what extent it is perceived as a liveable place.





3. How to see the city from below

Methodology

3.1 Research strategy: Seeing from below

3.1.1 Introduction

“People’s experience of the city is not only or always determined by larger social or economic structures, but also fashioned by their individual perceptions, neighbourhood maps and spatial practices” (Tonkiss, 2005: 113). In line with Tonkiss’ argumentation, in this thesis the perspective ‘from below’ is chosen, as was already conceptually framed in the former chapter. In this chapter this will become more concrete, as the methodological approach that was chosen to bring people’s experiences of urban liveability to the foreground will be explained. To apply the perspective from below, the ideas about the production of space of Henri Lefebvre will be used that were already set out in the former chapter. His ideas are applied to this study in the table below. From there, the methods that have been used will be further elaborated on.

As the title of and the cover image of this research depict, this study is about liveability in the city. They denote the approach ‘from below’, from the perspective and experience of the urban inhabitant. Hence, I introduced the perspective of the soft city in the former chapter. In this study I will try to understand the experience of urban liveability by focussing on people’s “perceptions, neighbourhood maps and spatial practices” (Tonkiss, 2005: 113). Seeing through the eyes of the daily users of urban space, the inhabitants, may reveal how they experience urban liveability. More in particular it will reveal how urban revitalization processes influence their experience of liveability. Exploring people’s subjective meaning and experience of a city is very important, because according to Pacione, “meanings tell us not only about the places to which they refer, but also about the people who articulate them and the social context in which they live” (Pacione, 2009: 373). As such, the city may ‘unfold’ itself through the experiences and meanings people attach to their city. In this way, the ‘soft city’ comes to existence, the city of meaning, use and experience. In my point of view, ideas and experiences of the inhabitants, users or people that are somehow connected to a place, are essential for understanding and conceptualizing a place.

The title of this research and thus its content are a reflection not only of the subject of this thesis, but it also reflects a broader perspective I have on the way I wish to do science. This perspective ‘from below’ is about closely engaging with the actual research material. To experience and to engage is needed to observe in an integral way. This stance is reflected in the methods that I chose to use. Relating the chosen perspective to science in a broader perspective touches upon ontological and epistemological questions that occurred to me during my time in university, namely, what is science, and what is a proper way of doing science? Can science be categorized in terms of a duality of objectivity or subjectivity? And if so, what do these words really mean? Can a phenomenon, which happens in society, actually be (or become) objective? Or is it a con-

struct of various subjectivities coming together? So for something to become objective, has it first to be subjective, or a collection of subjectivities? In this thesis I have tried to approach the research questions in such a way - as a collection of subjectivities - from which I have tried to 'distil' certain patterns that reflect the intersubjective view on urban liveability as denoted by various residents of the research area. This is an attempt to demonstrate the position I would like to take as a scientist; not merely as a researcher seeing 'from above', but definitely also 'from below': in and between societal happenings. In appendix A I will reflect more in-depth on my (preferred) role in the academic landscape.

3.1.2 Research approach and design

In this study, the approach 'from below' fits a qualitative research approach as it allows me to be 'in the natural setting' (Creswell, 2013); in the research area. This allowed me to interact with actors and to see their socio-spatial practices from up-close in lived space. The natural setting is described by Creswell as "the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study" (2013: 45). This is where the researcher focuses "on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" (Creswell, 2013: 47). Conducting a research 'in the field' has indeed been the case in this study, as I went on a three-month research internship in Guatemala City. There I researched the questions posed above in the area where the urban revitalization interventions were implemented (see section 3.3 for an introduction of the empirical location).

As the concept of urban liveability is a complex issue experienced in a certain way by the urban inhabitants, qualitative research is an appropriate approach for this study. It gave me the opportunity to have an open approach, to explore the ideas, meanings and experiences that were involved. I explored and identified the issues at stake in the experience of urban liveability (Creswell, 2013). As urban liveability is about the human who experiences his or her environment in a certain way, I explored the "contexts and settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (Creswell, 2013: 48). Hence, I conducted a case study to explore in an open way the influence urban revitalization processes have on the experience of urban liveability in lived space according to the urban inhabitants of the research neighbourhood in Guatemala City. Therefore I have indicated a case. This case consists of multiple sites in the form of public spaces in the research area, an urban neighbourhood in Guatemala City. In this research area urban revitalization interventions were implemented which will be explained in section 3.3. The case study allowed me to include multiple public spaces which together could provide insights in how urban liveability is experienced in public space by the respondents. The units of analysis consist of these different public spaces in which I looked at people's socio-spatial practices (see figure 5). The case study as re-

search approach gave me space to incorporate different methods, and to use them in a complementing way. An explanation of the different methods I used for gathering the data will be explained in the next section.

The persons that were informants for obtaining insights for the research questions were urban inhabitants that are using the urban revitalization interventions on a daily basis. They are the ones with the experience of liveability in relation to the interventions, and thus formed the main sources of information. Furthermore, some architects and urban planners were interviewed who were engaged in the designing of the sites, or who had knowledge about public spaces in Guatemala City. As I had three months to do the fieldwork, this gave me many opportunities to build trust with residents as I often went to the research area. By engaging with the residents frequently, I had the opportunity to learn from their experiences more extensively. For the selection of respondents I used the snowball sampling method to find respondents in the area. The aim was to select a varied mix of users of the area in terms of age, gender and roles in the area, which worked out in the selection process. In order to get broad insight in issues concerning the socio-spatial aspects of liveability, perspectives of different age groups as well as both man and woman were needed. I interviewed eight women and four men in-depth, of whom two were elderly. Four of them were active in neighbour groups, which provided me with valuable insights in specific dynamics in the neighbourhood regarding neighbour participation and self-organization. Names of participants are changed into pseudonyms to provide anonymity. In section 3.4 I will reflect more on the selection of respondents.

3.2 Methods: ways to see from below

As explained in the former chapter, the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre developed a conceptual understanding of how places are being made, which he called 'the production of space' (1991). In this understanding, Lefebvre pointed to everyday practices as important components of how spaces come to being. In this section will be explained how Lefebvre's theory on the production of space is applied to this study and how it fits the methods used in this study. Albeit in the following scheme all three scale levels are incorporated, as already pointed out in the theoretical framework, the focus in the empirical chapter will be on spatial practices in lived space. Interviews with architects and planners were done to get informed about the background of the urban revitalization interventions in the public spaces under study.

Components of 'The production of space' (Lefebvre, 1991)	Explanation	Applied to this study	Objects of research	Methodology
Spatial practices (perceived space)	The social activities and spatial actions that take place in lived space.	The socio-spatial actions and the everyday practices constituting the use and appropriation of public spaces and that constitute the construction of social capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people: urban inhabitants of research area: 'vecinos' - physical situations: interaction with environment, i.e. how residents' socio-spatial practices are reflected in public spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observation: field notes and photography of actions and behaviour - neighbourhood maps - observation: field notes and photography of the use of space
Representational space (lived space)	The space of everyday experience where the spatial practices of everyday life and the routinized social relations of production and reproduction occur (Rigg, 2004: 16).	The place meanings and place attachments of people that they assign to the urban revitalization interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people: urban inhabitants of research area: 'vecinos' - physical situations: interaction with environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - semi-structured face-to-face interviews - neighbourhood maps - observation: field notes and photography of the use of space: inscription of meaning in places
Representations of space (conceived space)	The conceptual space of scientists, planners and urbanists.	The ideas of the urban planners and architects at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the internship organisation, Urbanística - SEGEPLAN (national planning office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people: architects and urban planners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - semi-structured face-to-face interviews

Figure 6. Henri Lefebvre's production of space applied to this study: the process of placemaking and the experience of urban liveability.

As outlined in this schema, in this study I have used various research methods to explore and 'disclose' the empirical sites to collect the data needed. These methods will now be explained.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews

I did semi-structured face-to-face interviews with urban inhabitants of the research area ('vecinos') who use and appropriate the urban revitaliza-

tion interventions in some way. These were done to gain insight in the process of placemaking. The interviews focussed on their socio-spatial practices in the lived spaces of their neighbourhood, and the resulting experience of urban liveability. After these interviews were conducted, I filtered categories that were indicated as important in the experience of urban liveability by content analysis of the interview transcriptions. Through the stories, the meaning and experience of the place and ideas about how the city functions or should function to enhance liveability were explored. To get an idea of the background and context of the urban interventions, I also conducted interviews with various urban planners and architects. However, as I focussed on socio-spatial practices in lived space, the interviews with residents were the main data source. From these interviews I distilled response patterns that are set out in the following 'spatial stories', which will be introduced in the next section. From these patterns, I distilled or pointed to certain directions and interpreted what these directions mean in a larger context, which will follow-up on the spatial stories in the conclusion. The interview guides that I used can be found in appendix B.

Neighbourhood mapping workshop

As much as the (outcome of the) urban revitalization process that is subject in this thesis is visible as a spatial place, it is a social space where social relations come to being. Vecinos (neighbours living in the research neighbourhood) were asked to draw their neighbourhood ('mi barrio', my neighbourhood), to 'capture' a glance of their perception of their neighbourhood and the changes that occurred. These neighbourhood maps were used as data sources to discover how the participants experienced liveability in their neighbourhood as was asked for their socio-spatial practices in their lived space. They denoted places that they frequently visited in their neighbourhood, and how these places related to their homes. They were asked to denote places that are meaningful to them, and why, what routes they take and why and where they liked and did not like to be or go. This is a 'practical' way to map people's lived space, through their everyday experience of their neighbourhood. As Miller writes: "through an emphasis on the pragmatic, one is able to imagine the city as interwoven and overlapping provinces of meaning, coexisting, and competing dynamic and multiple conceptions of place. In this way, it is possible to conceive of a social geography that does not rely on borders and exactness but on inexactness and layers of experience" (cited in Reinders, 2013: 134). This session was complementary to the other methods used to see the city from below. This was a useful way to 'trigger' thoughts and a reflective discussion amongst the participants in a more informal way. The drawing process was a way of reflecting on one's neighbourhood in a detailed way. What is to be incorporated, and what not? What is still part of 'my' neighbourhood, and what not? What are places I go to, which places do I avoid, and why? Hereby the drawings were a mediator for the informal discussion that unfolded



Figure 7. Neighbourhood mapping workshop in the Bibliobus, a mobile cultural center in the Cerro del Carmen park, which functioned as a space for interpretation of the lived spaces of residents during the workshop. (Photos: author)

about certain places in the neighbourhood where ‘things happened’. The guideline for the maps can be found in appendix C.

For the neighbourhood mapping workshop, I was inspired by Kevin Lynch’s ‘The image of the city’ (1972), in which he explored the possibilities of using visual representations of places. Additionally, Reinders (2013) added the aspect of the group conversation to map making, thereby adding the possibility to share subjective insights with other neighbourhood residents. As such, their lived space in the city could be explored, denoting the residents as “active participants in the social production of space” (Reinders, 2013: 197). The neighbourhood maps demonstrate “the inhabitant as an expert on the geography of his or her own micro-cosm” (Reinders, 2013: 197). In this study, this was a useful way to discover the perception of places, to capture the meaning people attach to the place they inhabit, and to get a sense of the attachment people have that place.

Throughout the workshop, discussions developed and personal lifeworlds were explored, as a combination of the drawing process and the discussion in which was reflected on the maps of the participants. In this way, their lived spaces were explored. This was a way to mentally ‘walk through’ their neighbourhood, to mentally make the place. As such, patterns of practices came to the surface that indicated effects of the urban revitalization process on their experience of urban liveability in the neighbourhood. In the process of drawing and reflecting, the neighbourhood ‘unfolded’ itself as a coming together of socio-spatial practices.

This approach and workshop to make a map about one’s neighbourhood is thus in line with what Henri Lefebvre also advocated: to see the spatial environment as a “domain filled with meaning and cultural values”, and to observe the changing meanings of place through spatial practices from below (Reinders, 2013: 134; Tonkiss, 2005: 114). These practices can show to what extent the participants are socially involved in their neighbourhood.

Observations

To get insights of the places under study, in addition to the interviews and the workshop, observations of people’s socio-spatial practice have been done in the field. The observations were documented as field notes and photographs of the research area. Interpreting physical situations that were observable at the sites, served as a means to understand what urban liveability meant in the area of research. I did this for example by sitting in the park, soaking up the sun and the surroundings. These observations allowed me to see different ways of behaviour in the park, as well as in the surrounding streets. I participated in a certain way as a user of the public spaces, as I also participated in a reading workshop in the plaza Miguel Angel Asturias. I walked around, ate icecream in the park and I informally talked to people in the area.

As I have a background in public space design, I am always interested in visual methodologies for researching particular questions. I believe that such methodologies can be very helpful in transferring certain complex issues in a way that they become better understandable. For this study I applied these visual methodologies in the form of photographs of the research area that can show in what ways places are being used and appropriated for building social capital. They functioned as a complementary data source to perceive urban realities in lived space. The photos in this thesis are a way of clarifying and giving context to the words, as well as they are a way of “understanding visual aspects of social relations and identities in contemporary urban spaces”, which are public spaces in Guatemala City in this study (Rose, 2012: 298). As such, the photos show a glimpse of the coming to being of ‘*La ciudad para vivir*’ (The city to live in).

The photos are a way to show and “capture some of the sensory richness and human inhabitation of urban environments”, that can expose “the ways in which social positions and relations are both produced by, and produce, distinct urban experiences” (Rose, 2012: 298 - 299).³ In this thesis, the photos serve to give visual context to meanings that the users attached to the research area during interviews and during the neighbourhood mapping workshop. Hence, they serve to confirm and validate my analysis (Rose, 2012: 303).

³ The work of Hans Aarsman (see for example Aarsman, 2009) served as inspiration for taking and interpreting the photographs

In a broader scientific context, visual methodologies - where photos are part of - have become more popular during recent years, “at the same time as academic interest in the everyday uses of urban spaces has grown and in the sensory experiencing of urban spaces” (Rose, 2012: 299). Photos can bring across a glimpse of what it feels like to be in a certain urban context, of what is the sense of a place (Rose, 2008 & 2012). Hence, as Rose states: “it is a powerful tool in examining the socio-spatial dialectic” (Rose, 2008: 185). It is a way to engage with society, and also to connect to a larger audience. Visuals may make a text more attractive to read in the sense that photos complement the words and clarify theoretical concepts and as such the context is brought across more clearly (Rose, 2008). Rose: “photographs make it possible to represent another layer of the narrative” (Rose, 2008: 192). The photos I took were led by my research questions, which steered their content.

The use of multiple methods to gather multiple forms of data fits a case study approach (Creswell, 2013). Using the multiple data sources was a means for triangulation, to shed light on residents’ perspectives in different ways (Creswell, 2013). This methodological approach resulted in the form of ‘spatial stories’. The methods that were set out in this section support each other in telling these spatial stories, that reflect the accounts of the respondents.

After collecting the data through the methods explained above, I started the process of translating them into these spatial stories. The interviews were analysed through a process of open coding after transcribing them, by using color tags and 'in vivo coding' in which Spanish phrases were translated to English, to be able to interpret the answers better (Creswell, 2013: 185). Through this coding process, the data were reduced into meaningful words that formed the basis for the themes and patterns of use that emerged, that informed the distinguishing of the four spatial stories. Through these stories I could organize the data "into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources" (Creswell, 2013: 45). The neighbourhood maps, photographs and field notes supported the interviews, and were added to the spatial stories according to the emerging themes. Within the spatial stories similar aspects emerged, that will be reflected upon in the discussion that follows the spatial stories at the end of the next chapter. The perspective 'from below' guided the coding process, as experiences and uses of the places where focussed on.

3.3 Empirical approach: location description and empirical stance

The scheme of Lefebvre that was presented above has been applied to the research area that will be introduced in this section. In order to understand better why this area was chosen, the background of the urban revitalization interventions will be explained. Furthermore, the context in which this research was done, the broader context of public space in Guatemala City as well as the specific location will be explained. What follows is the explanation of the empirical stance that was already introduced in the former paragraphs; the spatial stories.

3.3.1 Background of the research area: 'La ciudad para vivir'

As research area for this thesis, the neighbourhood surrounding the Cerro del Carmen park has been chosen. This is the place where an urban revitalization process has been implemented in the neighbourhood. In the empirical part of this thesis, the focus will be on the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, and their experience of their neighbourhood. During the process of research I have gained insight in the effects of the urban revitalization process on the experience of urban liveability of the residents, as will be clarified below in the empirical findings.

The urban intervention that was developed in the research neighbourhood is called 'Renueva tu Barrio' (Renew your Neighbourhood). This project was created by Urbanística, 'taller del espacio público' (workshop for public space), an urban development office that is part of the municipality of Guatemala City. In the process of creating this project, Urbanística actively searched for participation of the urban inhabitants of the neighbourhood. This fits in the larger vision of the office, as they strive to develop their projects in an integral way, including environmental, social, cultural, infrastructural and economic aspects in the planning process

(Urbanística, 2013). This project was initiated in order to enhance the liveability of the city (Urbanística, 2013), creating '*la Ciudad para vivir*' (the city to live in). This is the slogan as well as the vision of the municipality of Guatemala City (Muniguat, 2014; Urbanística, personal communication, April 7, 2014). Furthermore, another project that is shortly discussed in the empirical findings, is '*Pasos y pedales*' (steps and pedals), which is a project with the intent to "provide a secure environment for the inhabitant of the capital for free movement on bikes, skates and skateboards" as stated on the website that promotes the project (Municipalidad de Guatemala, 2012). Even though this project was implemented by the social department that is another body of the municipality, it is also part of the same research area.⁴

3.3.2 The state of public space in Guatemala City

Julio Estrada, urban planner at the national planning secretary (SEGEPLAN) in Guatemala City, describes the current state of public space in Guatemala City. In the current state of the city, most of the parks and plazas aren't open spaces as they are closed off, restricting their public access. The park that is part of the research area in this study is indeed one of such places that are restricted in accessibility, as it is opened during the day from six am. to six pm. It's a controlled public space. This impedes to a certain degree the possibility for social encounter, as it limits the access to the park (Estrada, personal communication, May 23, 2014). However, different 'shades of publicness' exist (Madanipour, 2010: 17), as at six pm. the park gates close, while the street in front of the park remains accessible.

According to Julio Estrada, The restriction is done because when there is no security provided as by closing off these public places, they are being seen as unreliable to visit. In order to function as a place where social activities and interaction can be developed, public spaces in Guatemala City should facilitate openness to function dynamically (Estrada, personal communication, May 23, 2014). They function as places to recreate, but in the context of being closed-off spaces they are also segregating entities. This is reflected in that people of higher social classes elect closed-off spaces of shopping malls as recreational space that are facilitated with parking lots and security systems (Estrada, personal communication, May 23, 2014). Currently, investments are being made in simulating urban parks inside shopping malls, as is the case in for example Portales, one such shopping mall that is located towards the outskirts of the city. This reflects a tension in which private spaces simulate to be public spaces. A more extreme example of this phenomenon of re-creating the image of a public space inside shopping malls is Caya-la, a recently completed area that is in its architectonic style referring to a historic city centre. Simultaneously, as is the case in the research area, the original historic centres are degrading in terms of abandoned spaces that give rise to conflictive practices such as prostitution and delinquency

⁴ The local research area of this study is located in the 'Corridor Central Aurora-Cañas' (CCAC). This area has been indicated by Urbanística as 'the future city', which they approach as a pilot project for urban innovations. In this area they initiate projects in the realm of housing and public space, such as the Transmetro, a public transport system that makes the city more accessible for all urban inhabitants, connecting various nodes in the city. Aurora-Cañas searches for integral urban transformation, integrating social, spatial, environmental and economic aspects, with the goal of improving urban liveability (Urbanística, 2013).

(Urbanística, personal communication, April 7, 2014).

3.3.3 The research area

The area in which this research has taken place, is located in this historic centre of the city. The church in the Cerro del Carmen park was the starting point of the capital city that was founded around this Hill (Cerro). Today, the hill is known as one of the largest green areas in the centre of the city. The barrios (neighbourhoods) surrounding the hill, which has become known as 'el parque del Cerrito del Carmen' (the Cerro del Carmen park), mostly consist of traditional houses made of adobe and corrugated sheets on the roofs, reflecting the identity of the old city centre (Urbanística, personal communication, April 7, 2014).



Figure 8. Housing typology in the research area. (Photos: author)

The area is indicated as a precarious area, inhabited by people with medium to low income. It is characterized as densely populated, where 'palomares' can be found (Urbanística, personal communication, April 7, 2014). These are houses that are divided in rooms that are sub rented, sometimes by many people. What derives from the occupation of rooms and buildings by an increasing amount of people is the increasing pres-

sure on the supply of tap water, electricity, appropriate infrastructure and sufficient space (Palma Urrutia, 2009). Abandoned houses can also be found in the area, of which many in the Juan Chapin Avenue.

Before the project was implicated, the Cerro del Carmen park was “quite degraded, there was prostitution, delinquency, neighbours didn’t go there, in spite of being a public area. No one took care of it, the area became neglected” (Urbanística, personal communication, April 7, 2014). Today, the markers of conflicts of interest in the area are still visually present on houses in the form of tags of gangs.



Figure 9. ‘Palomares’, a growing house in the Juan Chapin avenue.
(Photo: author)

Moreover, today the area reveals signs of gentrification, as is reflected in the new apartment buildings called ‘Historico 1’, for which advertisement can be found along a road outside the city centre (see figure 9). The ‘palomares’, the tags and the new apartment buildings are all signs of the area as an increasingly urbanizing place, of which each in its own sense puts pressure on the area in terms of the availability of space to use. The sign on figure 9 is a reflection of these pressures, as it is a cry against inequality for which one of the houses in the ‘Cerro street’ was used as



Figure 10. On the side of the house ('palomares' of figure 9), a tag is written. (Photo: author)

a canvas. These are processes that are happening around the park, streets and other public spaces in the research area. They are relevant as 'backdrop issues' in the area, as they denote the ongoing growth of



Figure 11. Two representations of place representing the research area: billboard of the new building development 'Historico 1' along a main road, and in the neighbourhood (Cerro street) a house is used as canvas, with 'consciousness of people, feel the bitterness of inequality' written on it (Photos: author)

the local population, which induces socio-spatial pressure in the area. In the spatial stories that follow will be explored if and how these have consequences for the use of these public spaces that are part of the study (see figure 11).

3.3.4 Spatial stories

In essence, a city cannot (solely) be seen as an object, but as an experience, as a place where “spatial stories” happen, a notion that derived from de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Tonkiss, 2005: 113, 126). As explained by Tonkiss, these are “the routes people take through the city [which] can be likened to stories they tell under their breath, ways of making sense in space” (Tonkiss, 2003: 126). Urban inhabitants can be seen as co-creators of the city, as they constantly create the city with their actions. Hence, the spatial stories that will be presented in the next chapter are registrations of the relation between socio-spatial practices of use and appropriation and the construction of social capital that happens in lived space. The accounts reveal four different senses of place in the locale of the research area that was introduced above. Other than the visual signs of possible pressures on liveability that were presented above, in these spatial stories the accounts of the residents who live in the area will be leading. They provide insights if and how residents experience (these) pressures in their daily lives. They are registrations of what can be seen in the city from below in ‘reality’: how do urban inhabitants interact with physical space and make it a place? The spatial stories link up as they provide insights in where the process of constructing social capital is enabled and disabled, by whom and why.

The Cerro del Carmen park and the streets surrounding the park comprise the places in and around which the houses of the respondents are located. Researching how these spatial features are being used and experienced in their daily lives provides insights in how this space is being experienced in terms of liveability. Hereby the main focus was on the social interactions that these residents have with people in their neighbourhood that could indicate the existence of social capital, as well as the extent to which the public spaces under study provide for, and facilitate this. The stories elucidate different dimensions of what it means to meet people in the neighbourhood. They give insight in the main outcomes of the data that have been collected (see figure 4).

Figure 12 provides an overview of the public spaces in the neighbourhood that formed the basis for the spatial stories. The figure shows that each story highlights a different perspective of the area, as each zoom in on different places. Four spatial stories emerged from the data.

In the first spatial story a general view of the neighbourhood is presented as was reflected by residents in their accounts and their neighbourhood maps. It can be seen as an exploratory story that reflects the neighbour-

hood as a whole. It reflects a general exploration of different interests in, and uses of public spaces under study. How they are used, and how they provide opportunities for the creation of social capital is focussed on.

In the second story certain interventions that are organized by people from below are addressed more specifically; neighbour groups that attempt to enhance socio-cultural development in different public spaces. Spatial story three presents the use of streets by different groups in relation to social capital construction through temporal interventions organized both from below as well as by the municipality. In the final spatial story the use of the park by different groups in relation to social capital construction is focussed on. Hence, spatial story two, three and four are more specific and explanatory in nature, as they zoom in on processes of use in public space that are touched upon in the first spatial story.

Together they reveal different interpretations of the meaning of public spaces through different claims to spaces. In the discussion at the end of the chapter they will be related to each other, which will reveal their mutual connections. By distinguishing and comparing the empirical cases, differences and similarities in use and meaning will be derived.

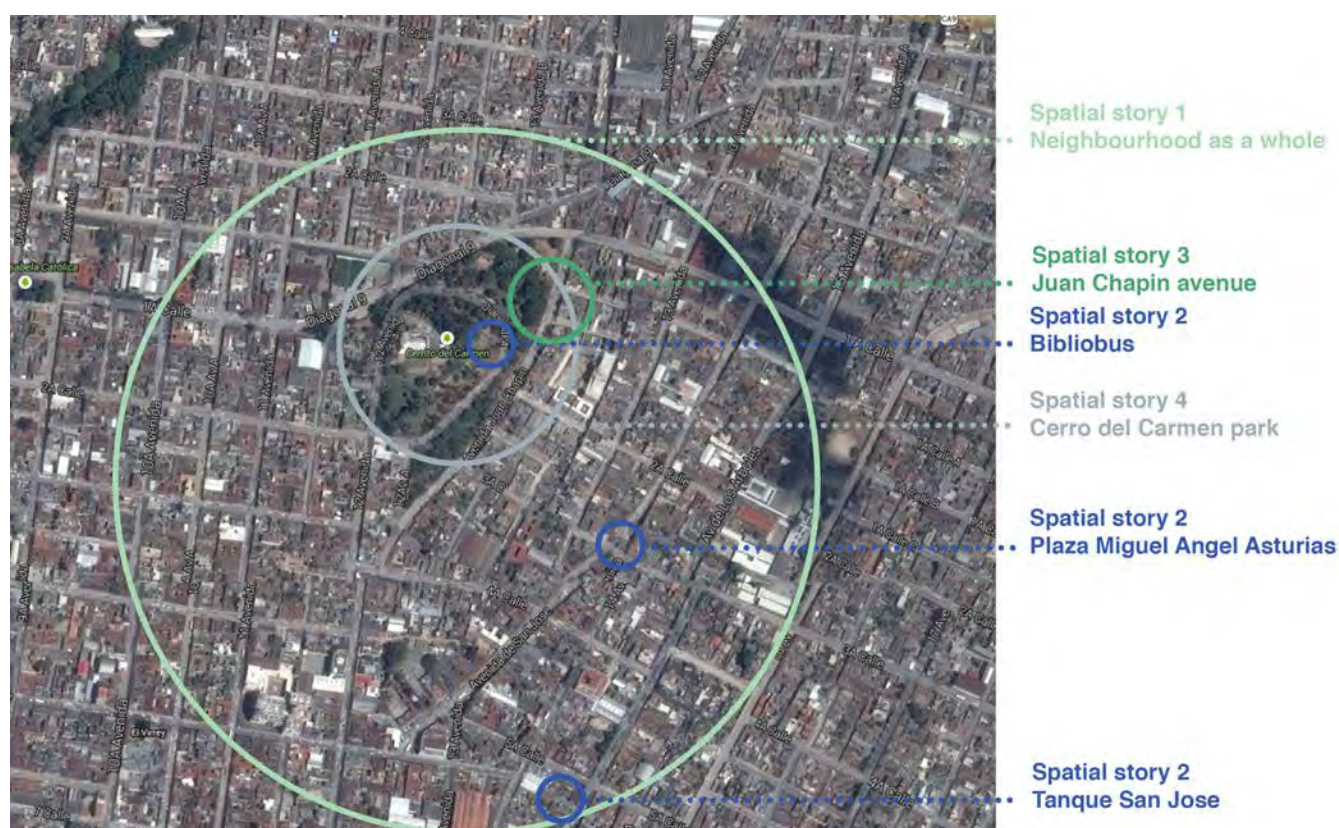


Figure 12. Spatial stories related to the places in the research area related that they account of.

3.4 Reflection on methodology

As presented above, the methodological design was made up of various methods. The combination of the methods I used has enabled me to closely engage with people 'from below'. I am not so much 'against' the perspective 'from above' as I believe that that perspective can also be useful. Yet, in this thesis I chose to create space for the perspective from below, as I believe that this is sometimes over-looked. Seeing the world from above, in big structures, perceiving the world as a fixed state may not permit to see the process, the hidden layers behind the apparent 'reality'. Applying this view to the context of this research, Guatemala City, made me see the urban space as a process, as an ever changing, complex whole of realities.

My background as a social designer is reflected in the methodology and this ontological perspective. The interest in this perspective emerged through both my design education as well as throughout this master program. Both have fed my ongoing search for interpreting the connection between the human and its socio-spatial environment.


The set of methods that I used allowed me to see small things, apparent details, nuances and thus complexity. My ability to speak Spanish helped me to merge in the research context. Moreover, to be inside the homes of people while interviewing them, really made me feel part of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, spending extensive time in the park and the neighbourhood to identify and get to know 'key' persons also helped me to merge into the local context. It made me see more clearly recurring of patterns of use, for example in terms of types of visitors, timing of use and different social activities and spatial practices. As such, different 'layers' of meaning unfolded. In the end I collected an extended database that was made up of different sources. It wasn't easy to bring them together into a coherent storyline. Yet, as step-by-step the stories emerged, it made me see that the methods complement each other in telling the story. A critical point in regard to the results is that they may be biased as I indicated some respondents that were perhaps more than average involved in, and attached to the neighbourhood. However, by including these voices I could describe the lively processes that are part of the neighbourhood in a detailed way.

Another aspect I encountered during the fieldwork process was the large data set that I collected. The initial idea for this research was to include more aspects of liveability such as economic aspects. I did touch upon that aspect in spatial story three but I did not research it further in depth. Along the way of research I found out that the chosen socio-spatial aspects were already providing enough data to write my thesis. As in the end I did not choose to go in-depth on economic issues, parts of some interviews weren't usable in the end.

A positive point about the neighbourhood mapping workshop that I organized at the end of my field research was, that this workshop was the

incentive for an idea for a new meeting that would be organized between the participants of the workshop. Knowing each other already for a long time, it seemed that the workshop initiative brought them together again. This small step might have helped to put them back in contact with each other, and to increase social capital in the neighbourhood.

Alongside my main modes of collecting data, I had many informal conversations with the members of my host family. These interviews also guided my search for the experience of liveability in the city from below. An aspect that came to the foreground during these talks was the vest that I got from Urbanística, as a means to be recognizable as a municipal officer for the guards in the park. This brought up interesting notions about my role as a researcher and as a woman doing the research, as during the fieldwork people noticed my presence as a woman on my own. Some expressed their concern for me as being on my own, and said I should wear the jacket so I would be recognized as part of a team of 'officials'. Some of the woman I encountered noticed that I shouldn't go out of the park by myself, demarking the difference in safety perception inside and outside the park, the street being a 'free space' without a guarding eye. Yet, by apparently changing my role as I wore the jacket I did distinguish myself more as an outsider. Whether to wear it or not was thus a consideration I had to make. In practice, I chose to wear it as less as possible, to be able to merge in the neighbourhood more. Even though I didn't wear it much, it did make me more aware of the position I had as a researcher in relation to the people and the places that were part of this study. In appendix A I will go deeper into my role as a researcher.



4. Spatial stories: zooming in on lived space

Empirical findings



4.1 Spatial Story 1

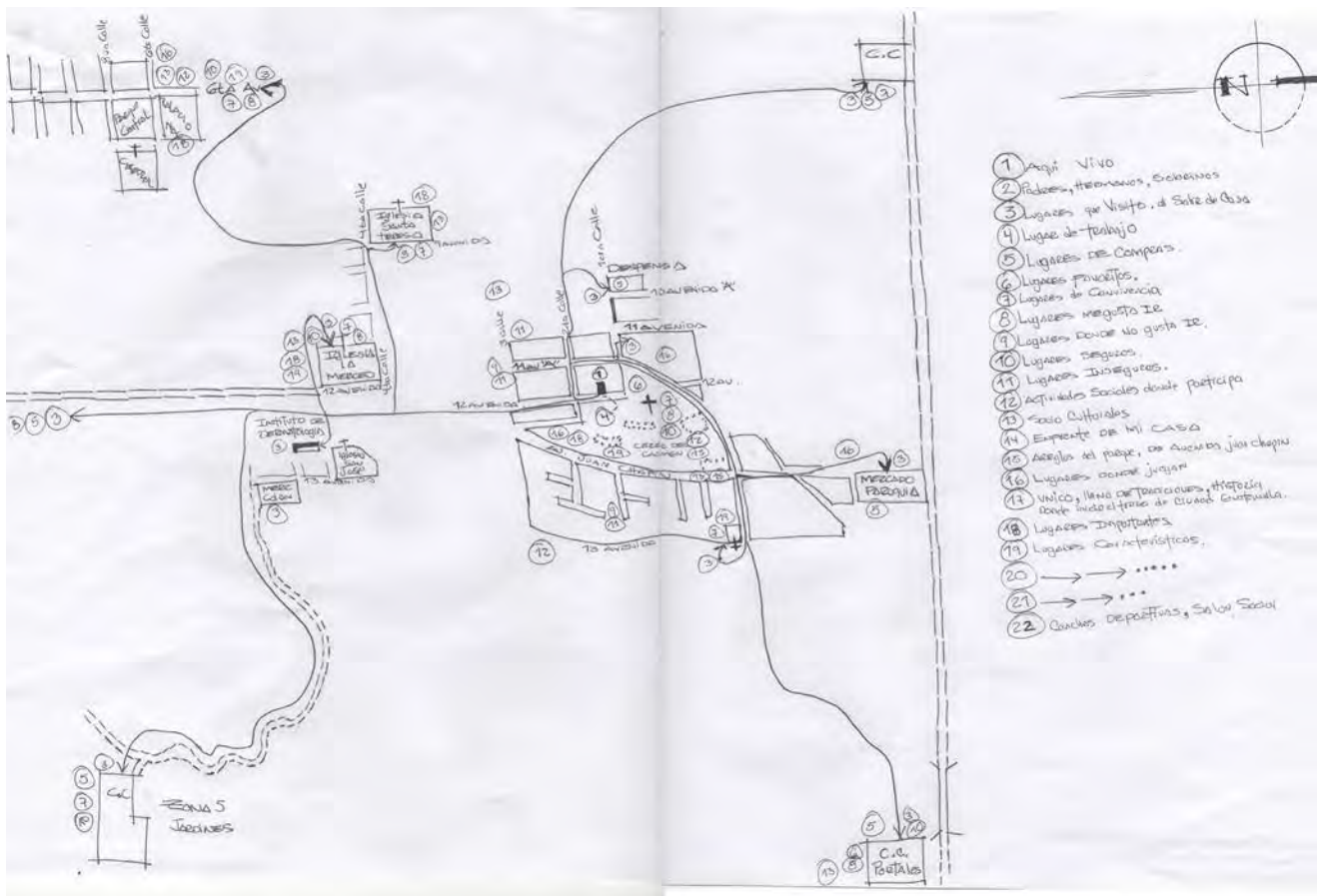
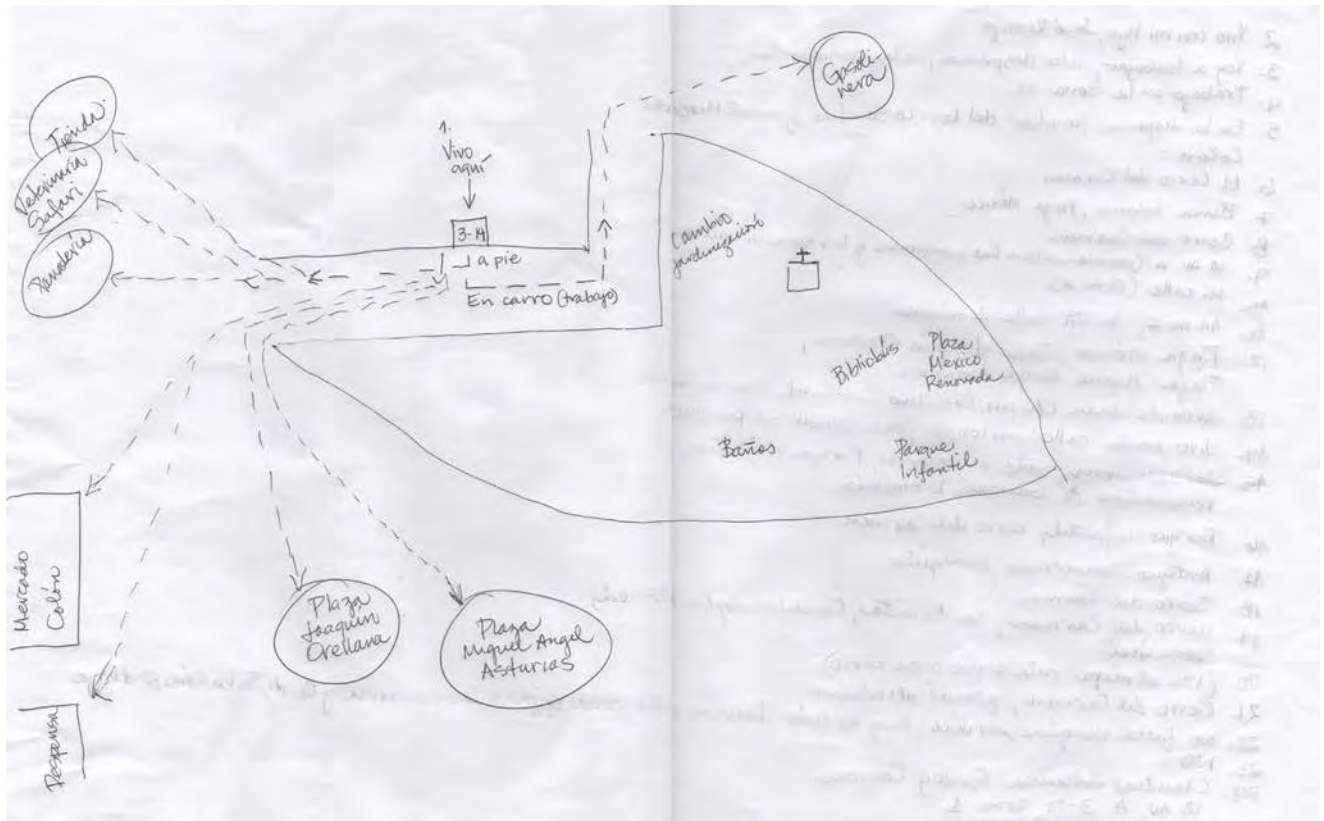
Mi barrio: a place in-between seclusion and social embeddedness

“The only place where we draw near each other as neighbours is the Cerro del Carmen. (...) There aren’t other parks or other centres that serve the family to go to and to enjoy”.

As this quote of Julio shows as an example, the Cerro del Carmen park is indicated as favourite place in the neighbourhood by almost all respondents. Activities that are being organized there, “where people gather”, contribute to this, Miguel and Julio say. Julio amplifies: “It reunites the majority of the persons who live here”. Luisa and Ana also indicate the park as the only place for conviviality as a public place. The central position of the Cerrito in the lived space of the respondents is also reflected in the maps which respondents drew, as they correspondingly placed it in the centre of their maps (see figure 13).



Figure 13. Central position of the park in maps of Barbara, Miranda and Miguel, which reflect their lived space ('my neighbourhood'). Their description of the park being their favourite place in their neighbourhood, underlines this position (see also Elena's map, figure 15). The description next to the map reflects the answers respondents gave on the guiding questions that were posed (for the guideline and the questions, see appendix C).



Furthermore, its central position comes back as a place of reference for their home location. Miguel denotes: "there isn't a 'Cerrito del Carmen neighbourhood', but as we say, we are people from the Cerrito del Carmen. It has been a focal point for us, who live here in its surroundings.

We identify as neighbours of the Cerrito del Carmen. That's how it has been". This quote illustrates the Cerrito as an overarching denominator, literally the common ground for people to refer to. Maria also notes that the park lends itself as a reference point to explain where she lives, as according to her "it's unique, and it's a high point". If she would decide, the neighbourhood would adopt its name, saying: "this neighbourhood is called 'La Merced' (according to the vicinity church), that's how they called it. I should have called the neighbourhood 'the Cerrito'". Moreover, the neighbours committee also named itself after the Cerrito, as their name 'neighbourhood committee of the Cerro del Carmen and its surroundings' reflects. Julio explains: "there isn't really a neighbourhood that is called like that. The neighbourhoods that are close to the Cerro are like four neighbourhoods with different names, but we reunite all neighbours". However, this doesn't correspond with the officially administrated names of the neighbourhoods that surround the park. There, the Cerrito is incorporated in the neighbourhood called Candalaria, which also refers to the vicinity church (see figure 14). The accounts of the residents show that they experience their neighbourhood as an entity in which the Cerro serves as a central reference point in their lived space.



Figure 14. Mental neighbourhood as reflected in accounts of respondents, in relation to official administrative borders of the neighbourhoods.

In the committee's name, their desire to unite neighbours is reflected, 'breaking through' the administrative system of official neighbourhood names. However, when the committee organizes meetings, Julio says, that "the invitation to these neighbour meetings is very selective. The meetings are only between persons that we know, so we know to what they are dedicated to". The reason why communication between neighbours "is not as one would like it to be", Julio relates to his perception that "perhaps there is not much confidence, and I imagine that most of all this is debit to the fact that there are many businesses that aren't legal", being prostitution, drug trafficking, or related practices. This makes that "one doesn't trust everyone who lives in the neighbourhood. (...) For security reasons we do not really relate". His role as a member of the neighbours committee, to which he "belongs to for around ten years now", does help to interrelate more with neighbours. However, even though their name reflects this desire to relate and unite, in practice the lack of confidence and perceived insecurity puts pressure on the possibility of increasing integration between neighbours.

Another aspect that puts pressure on integration between neighbours is the arrival of 'new' residents. As Elena explains: "The majority of us were owners of the houses. So by now, well, we know each other, we greet each other, but one doesn't relate much with the people... with the new people. Yes, now it's more uneasy". Miguel also refers to this relation between people who are embedded in the neighbourhood and those who are 'new' residents, as he says: "those who we are not really taking into account in terms of conviviality are those who are only renting". He restates: "many come to rent, but they are not there, they aren't owners, or they misuse the buildings. So with them is not much interrelation". As reflected here, neighbours who feel they are embedded in the neighbourhood in terms of time, feel distance towards those who come to rent a house.

Other residents have left because of the perceived pressures, as Miguel explains: "many have sold their houses. Many people say that they can't stay here anymore, they sell the house and they go to live elsewhere. So they emigrate elsewhere. To a residence, to a condominium, something like that. That's what has occurred. But those who have stayed with the strength of believing that the area will change, and that the area is changing, know most of the people that are living here since childhood". As referred to here by Miguel, a connection between social embeddedness and place attachment does exist. However, even though many of the respondents are grounded in the neighbourhood in terms of time living there, this doesn't mean that the connections between neighbours are profound.

Even though the park serves as a centre where people can meet, overall respondents indicate the extent to which there is contact between neighbours, is low, as they interrelate only superficially. Luisa: "Knowing them,

greeting, yes, recognizing that they live here, yes". However, those who she does interrelate with are few, Luisa says. In her case, she states, it has probably helped that her family owned a bakery. "That's why I came to know more neighbours. So that's probably why I greet them on the street. But that I have friendship with some of my close neighbours, no, not really", she explains.

Furthermore, what is recognizable in the accounts of respondents is that the lived space of elderly people becomes smaller as they tend to draw back inside their houses. Luisa says: "many people in the neighbourhood are elderly, so they hardly go out". She refers to her mom: "she doesn't go to wander to the Cerro by herself". This is confirmed by Elena, an elderly woman who lives in an alley in front of the main entrance. She prefers staying at home, which she indicates as the only place for conviviality in the neighbourhood. Her map reflects the 'thin' lived space that she describes (see figure 15). She accentuated her house, as well as the park around which she drew an accentuated border, depicting the main features in her lived space.

She does visit the park every now and then for eating an ice cream with her (great) granddaughter, who she takes care of while her granddaughter works during the day. The park has really improved, according to her. She says: "the place is more beautiful, they arranged the areas. The park is protected because there is surveillance". The surveillance she sees as necessary for controlling the park to prevent unwanted use. Even though the park has improved in terms of safety, the surrounding street she sees as an insecure domain, in comparison to before. She recalls: "I have lived here for my whole life. It's different now, because before it was safer in the street". Her perception is reflected in her increased withdrawal in her house: "at my age I no longer feel like going out. I keep myself enclosed".

As Elena indicated, the house is a place for the extended family. It provides space for taking care of her grandchildren, while her children are working. All respondents noted that they live with (a part of) their extended family, being it parents, siblings, or nephews. This endorses the house as an important place in the lived space of respondents.

In Julio's map as well as in his account, his house is emphasized as one of his favourite places in his neighbourhood. The place in front of his computer he emphasizes, as there is his workplace. He thus spends most of his day in his house. The importance of his house in his family life is enhanced by the fact that he has been living there for a long time already. He inherited the house from his father, who himself also still lives there. His house is built up around an enclosed patio. Every family member has his or her own room, with the patio as a central point. Next to his own house, he adds the houses of some neighbours and friends, as well as the park as his favourite places. The places he indicates as

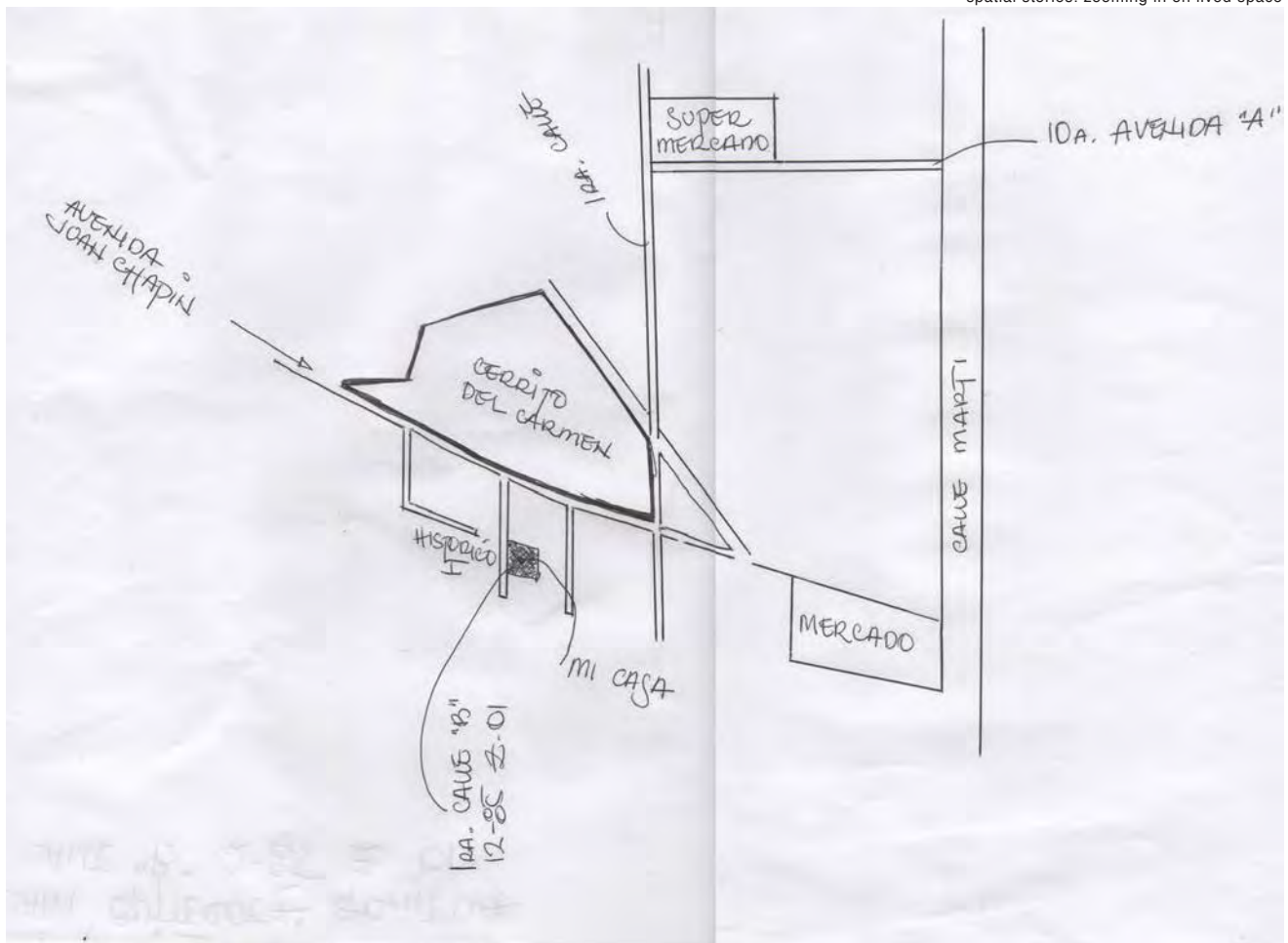


Figure 15. Elena's map in which her house and the park are accentuated as enclosed spaces.

favourite ones resemble the places that he considers places for social interaction. All are enclosed places, which is also visible in Miguel's account. His house, where he too lives with his extended family, is located inside the park. The park has an important role in his life as he works there as a maintenance officer. Apart from the central importance of the park and his house therein as reflected in his map (see figure), he also frequents shopping malls in various zones in the city when he leaves his house. Aside from the park, Miguel also indicated a particular shopping mall as his favourite place. Two other shopping malls he also indicated as secure places that are suited for conviviality. These places are loosely connected to his central living area, reflecting the distance to his house. Although the malls are located outside the research area, he does include them as being part of 'his neighbourhood'. Furthermore, he indicated three vicinity churches as places for social encounter, which are places he regularly visits. The importance of vicinity churches as places that provide identity to the neighbourhood, is also enhanced in the maps of other respondents as shown on figure 16.

Even though respondents indicate places for social encounter to be existent in their neighbourhood, Luisa indicates that what is still missing in

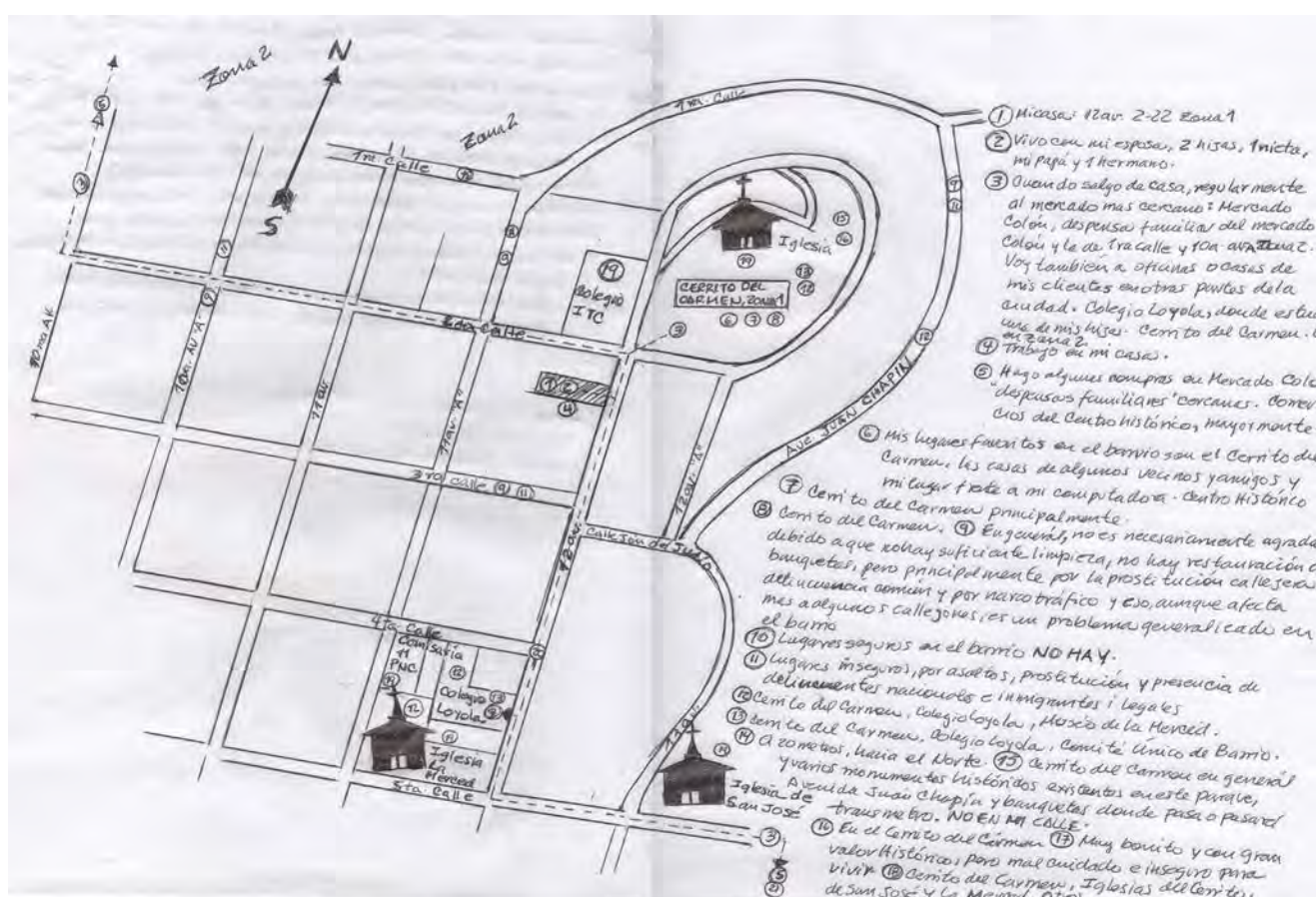
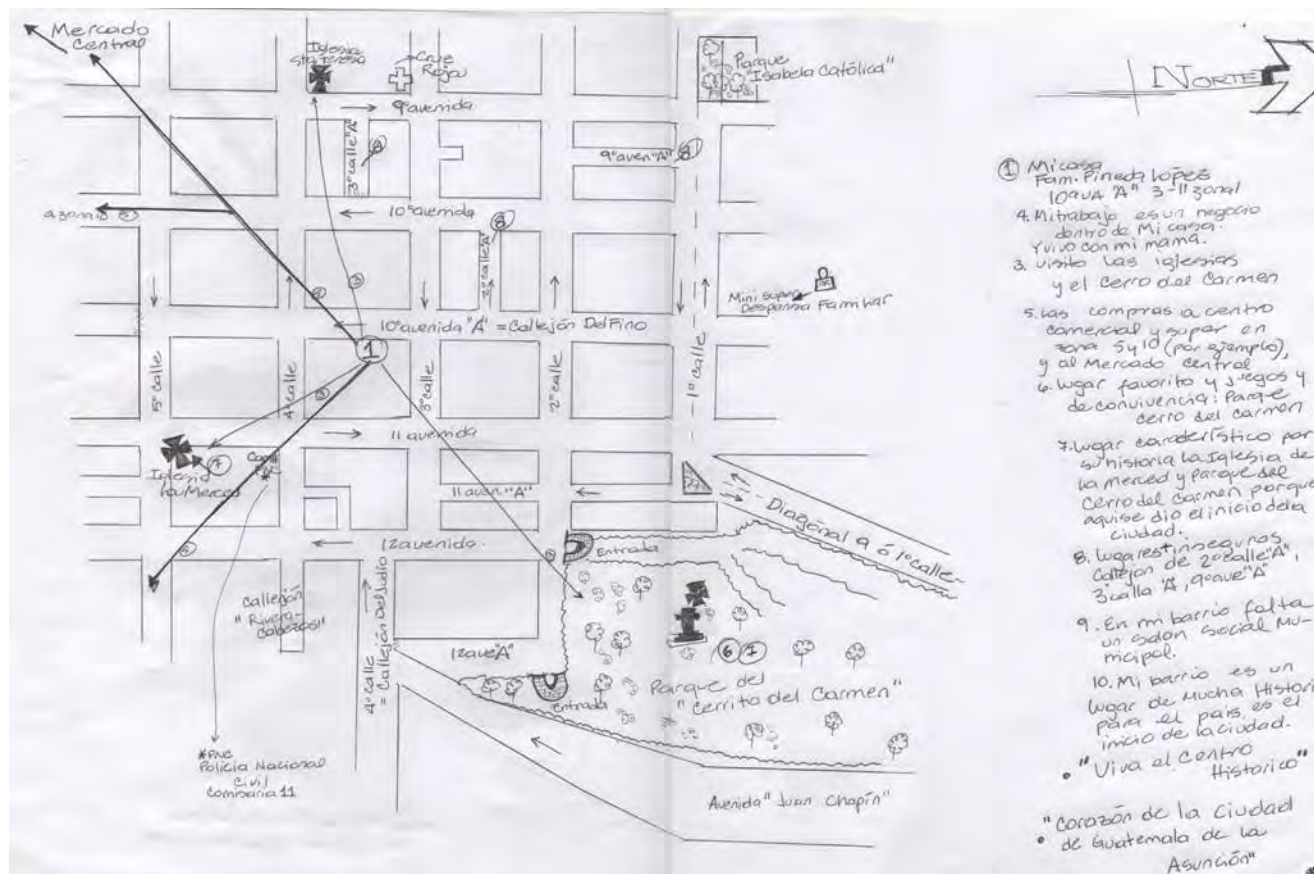


Figure 16. Examples of neighbourhood maps drawn by Luisa and Julio emphasizing importance of churches for social encounter and identity in the neighbourhood. The description next to the map reflects the answers respondents gave on the guiding questions that were posed (for the guideline and the questions, see appendix C).

the neighbourhood is a social salon which could be used by “those who desire to use them for anything”. Apart from the park that she indicated to be used for social encounter, this could be especially assigned to that use.

Even though respondents indicate places for social encounter to be existent in their neighbourhood, Luisa indicates that what is still missing in the neighbourhood is a social salon which could be used by “those who desire to use them for anything”. Apart from the park that she indicated to be used for social encounter, this could be especially assigned to that use.

The open space of the street is normatively indicated as insecure by the respondents. Especially the alleys, which Luisa assigns as those “streets that are way smaller than the normal streets” are indicated as insecure as is also reflected in the maps of Barbara, Julio, Luisa and Miguel (see figure 13 & 16). This is because in these alleys the pensions are located that are indicated by the respondents as ‘trouble spots’ of the neighbourhood (Reinders, 2013: 168), as these spots are associated with undesired practices such as prostitution and drug trafficking. These pensions should not be here, as Miguel relies on official indications of the neighbourhood to be a residential area, “that should be inhabited by families. It is not for other things”, reclaiming ownership of the neighbourhood. However the streets are indicated as unsecure places, Luisa and Ana note that if one does not call attention by wearing showy jewels, they aren’t afraid something will happen. Elena denotes, that she “doesn’t have something against them” [the prostitutes], but according to her, “they should have an adequate place for that”, as she proposes a suggestion for an alternative space for their practices.

Maria also denotes the disturbances in the neighbourhood due to undesired groups, but she too can relativize. She says: “everyone in his own space, I leave him in his, he leaves me in my place. That’s why it’s a neighbourhood, because it provides him a place, and it gives me space”. The prostitutes even keep an eye in the quarter where she lives, she states, and inform the police when necessary. To make clear that the street isn’t the domain which she is responsible for, she imaginatively draws a line in front of her door, stating, “I take care from my door towards the inside. From the door towards the street is where the government allows what they do and not allow what they do not like”. However, when it comes to governance in the street, respondents are critical towards the effectiveness of the authorities, which is regarded as a negative aspect in the neighbourhood. Julio correspondingly states that as the municipality is the authority which is “responsible for the use of the terrain”, they should “not permit those illegal businesses”, referring to the pensions as ‘trouble spots’. For Elena it is not even clear which body of authorities is responsible for the pensions, as she says: “I don’t know who has to handle it, if it’s the ministry of governance or the municipality,

I don't know". Ana makes a plea for neighbours to take their own responsibility in taking care of their lived space, stating: "I believe that we shouldn't expect that the government or the municipality do everything, but that we should do it as well. Or like, it's our responsibility". Referring to the park she says: "if we want to have a nice park, we have to take care of it too. (...) I believe that someone who can be an incentive for the people to do the things, lacks. (...) If it's one's, well, he or she should care for it. We shouldn't leave everything for the government to care for, but I should take care of things myself". Hence, she says people should participate and take ownership of their own neighbourhood. Hernando, one of the residents who lives in front of the park, is one of those residents who feels responsible for the park. Apart from using the park as a running space in the early mornings, he comes to water the plants almost every day. The small gesture of making the park his own, helps to feel ownership of the place. These dynamics show the constant 'negotiation process' of taking responsibility for the neighbourhood and taking ownership in response as a joint process between neighbours.

Apart from the street as discussed above, another place that is centre of discussion as a factor influencing the possibility of social integration among neighbours is the area in front of the park behind the avenida Juan Chapin, which is now in transformation. A new apartment building is almost finished, and a second one is in construction. These new developments reflect signs of gentrification. Julio points to the possibility that "that building will be like isolated", referring to the distance between those who will be living there and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Miguel describes that what mainly worries him of the increase of people that are coming to live in the new developments, is that "they will come with cars as the apartments are for people of a higher social class, which will increase the traffic flow in our neighbourhood". Furthermore, he states, "the increase of people makes that there will be more water consumed, and that's what we don't have in our neighbourhood". According to Miguel, the neighbours weren't taken into account sufficiently to know what possible benefits or negative aspects the developments would bring. What is positive though, according to him, is that people come back to live in the centre. Then, respondents agree that at least the new developments will increase the value of the surrounding houses, as well as it could be an incentive for more ownership of houses.

Even though respondents point to changing processes in the neighbourhood that affect their perception of the neighbourhood as a stable place as described above, they indicate that they would not want to leave. Julio for example, is attached to his neighbourhood, as he "likes the type of neighbourhood it is" and because he has his "roots here", as well as many other respondents. That is why he "wouldn't like to leave the neighbourhood". Nevertheless, he always feels some degree of insecurity

when being outside, but he does make a clear distinction between the park (which he sees as safe) and “the neighbourhood”, with which he means the surrounding streets of the park, which are not as safe according to him. He thinks that his daughters would go to live in another place though, as they “don’t have had so much time to get affection for the neighbourhood”. This illustrates the difference in attachment between generations. He ends by saying that, “even though the problems shouldn’t be here, as that would make the neighbourhood more secure to live in, I am used to the problems that exist here. I am very in love with my neighbourhood”.

As was already introduced in the former chapter, in this spatial story a broad view upon different perspectives of the neighbourhood as a whole was presented. The three following spatial stories each show a more specific and detailed description of use of public spaces within the neighbourhood as was presented on figure 12.

4.2 Spatial story 2

Appropriating place for socio-cultural development

Uploading the meaning of place as vehicle for the creation of social capital

In the middle of the park an old school bus has obtained new meaning as a place for cultural development. The bus – named ‘bibliobus’, a mobile library - contains a growing collection of books, which can be read during weekends when the bus opens its doors. Luisa, who has lived her whole life in the neighbourhood and who is part of the local neighbourhood committee, is one of the attendants. Among this small group of neighbours they organize the opening hours of the bus, and take care of it: “As a neighbours committee we are shifting to attend the bibliobus, but while there is time I am going to tidy up. Today, perhaps in the afternoon I will go to see if there has to be tidied or cleaned for the coming weekend.” As such, they support each other in the maintenance of the bus.



Figure 17. Bibliobus as a mobile platform for socio-cultural development
(Photo: author).

Apart from organizing attendance and maintenance of the bus, the group also tries to program activities around its main function as a library. Hence, they try to attract a wide public by expanding the 'pallet' of socio-cultural activities. They organize these in front of the bus, on the small plaza that was constructed as an extension of the small space inside. The stairs that connect the bus with the plaza in front, offers space for reading as well as it is used as a gallery for watching what happens on the plaza. "We had proposed to do something in the bibliobus at least once every month on the small square which is in front", Luisa says.

Activities that they organize, range from festivities around Halloween, "even though we do not celebrate that, but we just seize it on, as it attracts people's attention, legends", to 'the day of the book', 'the day of affection' and 'the day of the child'. The bibliobus itself also provides reasons for celebrating as they celebrated its anniversary. "We always search for a motive or reason to do some kind of meeting", Luisa explains. Miguel, another committee member, emphasizes their search for family conviviality. Hence, the activities they do not only organize for children, they also try to include their parents in their quest for improving cultural development that according to Luisa "lacks a lot here".

The effort they make does pay off. This is expressed when the parents visit the bus with their kids. Sometimes they want to go but the kids want to stay reading, and then, "in the end, the father ends up sitting down, reading". This connects to a larger program the state has set up as a strategy to improve literacy, promoting half an hour of reading a day. The bus attendants respond to this program as they try to expand their collection with books for elderly with large letters. As such, they attempt to expand their target group.

Apart from supporting literacy, another way through which its societal meaning emerges, is that the bus "is almost like a place for social work when you hear the stories of the kids" Luisa denotes. She says, that she hears many life stories of the kids, for example of kids that come to read with their single mothers. Hence, her role as librarian temporarily expands to social worker, seeing and listening to societal issues. She already recognises kids who come often. This indicates the social connections that are being made informally, as the bus is always open during weekends. This reflects the role of the committee as a 'sensor' in the neighbourhood, sensing the issues at play. Julio explains, that their function is "most of all to be a bridge between the neighbours of the vicinity and the municipality. (..) To see what necessities exist with regard to infrastructure and security problems, that the municipality could help to resolve".

However, Luisa does see issues that impede their operation, as "it takes an effort" to get people involved and participate, as "very few people visit the park". This she ascribes to the negative image people have of the

park, because “the park was so bad and made afraid to visit. This fear people haven’t lost yet”. According to her, there is still a lot of work to do to win back peoples confidence to visit. “We, those who are involved in the bus, have been trying to interest people. Not only neighbours, but also others, that they would come to help”. But, she says, “that is not easy, to create volunteering”.

Miguel does denote the signs of improvement that the park has gone through already, saying that “talking about the Cerro del Carmen park was talking about insecurity that one couldn’t come with family. But now, with all the changes that have occurred, many people with their family come. That has come back”. What he does note though, is that for further improvement they do need financial support, which takes an effort to get. He says, that they do not get enough response yet from the local municipality: “when we solicitate for [financial] support they negate us, even though we are working for the same good. (...) Many times we have stopped doing social or cultural activities to support the neighbourhood because government support is lacking”. Hence, they only have access to their own budget, “for the benefit of the majority”, but this is not sufficient, so it is a “tough job” to make something work, he explains.

The reason they started participating in the park, was driven from a quest for renewed ownership. Luisa recalls that when she was young, she frequently visited the park to play. After her childhood, she “stopped going many years”, when the park was taken over by people who where perceived as dangerous, such as drug traffickers and prostitutes, various respondents explain. The club of neighbours was an incentive to re-appropriate the park and “take out” those unwanted users, Luisa says. Miguel adds, that these users, “these people aren’t assigned to the park. They aren’t neighbours of the park”. Luisa explains: “the idea when we started the committee was to clean the park, the Cerro, and after that to clean the whole of its surroundings. (..) So to show that someone showed interest in that”, because, she explains, “to traverse to go to the park one has to go through all these streets that have to be clean”.

In order to accomplish this quest, firstly, the park was surrounded with a fence. This was done to establish its meaning as a park, as before “it wasn’t a park yet, it was a wasteland”, committee member Julio recalls. This indicates the impact that this physical interference made on the change in perception of the meaning of the place, towards its definition of being a park. The (re-)appropriation of the park in terms of their programming of social activities is what has helped to improve it further, according to Julio. He says: “through this, by giving a new use to the Cerro del Carmen, is what has cleaned a bit. (..) Yes, it has cleaned a lot. Or like, as a park it’s really nice”.

neighbourhood committee, she would have likened that meetings would have been organised for those involved in the development of the area. She explains, that she would have likened “that they would have been informing us concerning the ongoing developments in and around the park. We as neighbourhood committee would then also have space to inform about our activities”, Thus, what is needed according to Luisa, is a space to share opinions about the developments, ideas and information. Julio also still sees room for improving the communication concerning the park. He points to improving promotion about the current status of the park, which was referred to by other respondents as well. He says: “I still feel that it hasn’t been promoted much that there is security and that there is social activity and that it is clean and very beautiful. Many people still don’t know that by now the park can be enjoyed as a park, but that’s because many decades passed in which no one paid attention to it”.

As showed above, there are still many points for improvement, but Miguel does emphasize the necessity for participation in the renewal process. He reflects, that renewing “is supporting, to be part of a change of which this neighbourhood will benefit”. This quote gives voice to the intrinsic willingness for making place through self-organization, which is expressed by their engagement in the bibliobus.

Even though they haven’t fully achieved their goals yet, Luisa says, “it has improved”. She explains that “there are kids that are satisfied in the bus, that’s what counts”. This depicts that their involvement provides small steps in contributing to the improvement, not only of the park as a physical entity, but as a meaningful place for society.



Figure 18. Moments of concentration in the park by reading the books of the 'bibliobus'. The plaza in front of the bibliobus extends its space becoming an open-air library. The open space invites to be interpreted as a plaza, a reading place whereby the wooden blocks can be used as chairs or side tables, rendering the space a playful place. The space is not only used by children, but increasingly also by adults. The place provides a spatial overview as it is elevated, which creates quietness as sounds from the streets below are filtered out. Birds are heard instead of not being confronted with exhaust fumes and noise of the circling cars below. As the space is close to treetops, the green ambiance is pleasant and the air is fresher. (Photos: author).



Another initiative that strives to enhance socio-cultural development in the neighbourhood, is the activities that are organised by cultural collective 'Pie de lana' (wool foot). A group of neighbourhood dwellers found this collective after doing a course for cultural management that Urbanística had offered. By appropriating different places in the neighbourhood where they organize cultural activities and invite neighbours to join, they 'load' them with new meaning. Through this work, they try to make public space (re)accessible. Manuel, one of the founders of the collective, explains that with the cultural group, they want to "contribute to recover the public spaces in the neighbourhoods nearby the Cerrito del Carmen". The name of the collective "refers to an identity of the neighbourhood" Manuel explains. This name derives from the mythical figure of 'pie de lana', who dedicated himself to "redistributing wealth from rich to poor inhabitants of the city. He lived in the vicinity of the Cerro del Carmen park, the same area where we work in". By referring to this figure in their name, they make it theirs, using the cultural identity of the neighbourhood. It discloses the aim of the collective, to make accessible the public space for the neighbourhood inhabitants through a range of activities. Manuel says, that being attached to the neighbourhood because of this "rich tradition" motivates him to be active in the process of revitalization.

One of the activities they organize, is a reading club they that takes place every Sunday afternoon on the plaza Miguel Angel Asturias. By putting a tent on the square, they temporarily mark an area on the plaza as theirs. There, a group of residents comes together to discuss a book by Miguel Angel Asturias, who happened to live in a house across the street, where the plaza is named after. Hence, the reading club is building forth on that what was given meaning to the plaza and street before. They re-establish the identity of place while enhancing relations among residents who take part.

Secondly, they have been organizing activities for families in the 'tanque San Jose', which was build and formerly used as a public laundry facility. By programming their activities there, they changed its meaning to "a kind of park", Manuel denotes. Hence, by turning the former public lavatory into a meeting place where socio-cultural activities are being organized, the collective has uploaded the meaning of the place. He explains: "the idea was that the space would be kept open so all neighbours could enter the place at any time". However, in practice it turned out different, as Manuel says: "we saw the need to close it with a lock, and to only open it when there would be an activity. Because if not, homeless people would enter". Hence, today the area is closed off by a key that Manuel administrates. It only opens during their activities, which restricts accessibility to "homeless people who use the tank as a sleeping room and as a public toilet. This makes that the amount of neighbours who visit the place would otherwise decrease". This shows that conflictive ownership of the area has led to restricted use, for which a governance measure is

used by Manuel to exclude undesired use.

Additionally, he expresses his desire for complementing governance strategies by public institutions to “solve the problem”. However, he says, so far they haven’t yet had an “effective answer”. Furthermore, as well as the neighbourhood committee, they also depend on financial support of sponsorships to operate. This appears to be difficult sometimes for them as well, Manuel says. Nevertheless, through their actions they strive to load the redesigned areas with vitality to “give them a bit more life”. They do this, as they try “to take fear away that neighbours might experience”. Sharing the observation of the neighbour committee members, Manuel notes that it takes an effort to get them to participate, which he ascribes to people being “apatic” and “indifferent”. However, he does think that the activities have contributed as people are now participating. He says: “neighbours come to reencounter so that they get to know new neighbours. This makes that there is more familiarity between those neighbours than before. Maybe they didn’t even know them before. Whereas now, they do identify them, now they know who they are and that they live there, while before they had no idea”. As such, according to Manuel the activities have served much “to create union between neighbours”. According to Manuel, the effect could still be improved however, if they would receive effective help of “those who are in charge of providing security to the neighbourhood”. All this, he indicates, is part of a process to reinvolve neighbours to participate.



Figure 19. Plaza Miguel Angel Asturias, appropriated by the cultural collective for their book club (Photo: author).



Figure 20. Tanque San Jose, a former public laundry facility appropriated by the cultural collective for their activities (Photos: author).

This spatial story presented the accounts of different members of neighbourhood groups that are active in the area, who focus on the creation of socio-cultural activities as incentives for social capital. The following story zooms in on the street surrounding the park, in which various activities are organized both by neighbourhood dwellers as well as by institutions, that temporarily change the ontology of the place.

4.3 Spatial Story 3

Appropriating the street: making place for pedestrians

The changing ontology of the street in the avenida Juan Chapin

In front of the park, outside the main entrance, the avenida Juan Chapin is occupied by a slowly passing flow of people. People are wearing yellow shirts, which make them clearly distinguishable as 'belonging together'. They are waving with flags and balloons, holding umbrellas for protecting themselves from the burning sun. The procession is cheerfully accompanied by loud music that sounds from a car slowly driving between the many participants. Observing the people and hearing the voices that guide the stream through a microphone, it becomes clear that the vibrant stream is heading towards the cathedral on the central plaza to adhere a religious celebration. The avenida is hereby used as a place for gathering from where the procession departs, as it is the common ground between all neighbourhood churches, one of the participants tells.

The practice of walking together, appropriating the street in a different way than in its conventional meaning as a place for cars to drive over, changes the socio-spatial ontology of the street. From a space to transit through in motorized vehicles it temporarily becomes a place for pedestrians and vehicles driven by foot. This change in speed and in use of the street also attracts people to sit on the curbs to pause, to rest on, and to observe the spectacle slowly passing by (see Figure). Hence, the religious parade creates a different sense of place as the social activity vitalizes the street. This intersubjective social practice of making a line of people that are heading towards the central square creates the procession as a form they collectively agreed upon. This physical movement and the distinctive use of the street allows them to re-confirm their shared beliefs. In this process, the street serves them as a 'facilitator'. The whole streetscape, the curbs, benches and driveway, all have their specific function making the procession happen (see Figure).

The walking on the street is interpreted by Chen (2010) as 'pedestrianization' of the street. Here, people 'break' with the conventional use, collectively experimenting with new use. These practices literally make place for the experience of the streetscape in a different way, which comprises a broad scope of activities.

This is reflected in the happening not only being a social affair, it also attracts informal economic activity. The area in front of the entrance to the park provides room for eye-catching 'actors' in the street parade: food stalls and sellers offering a range of products from cold drinks to meat



Figure 21. The material setting of the avenida Juan Chapin is being used and appropriated for social gatherings by practices of walking, sitting and observing the slowly passing parade on the curbs, chatting and watching the scene on a bench (Photos: author).

tortillas to *granizadas* (grinded ice with fruity toppings of flavoured syrup). All providing a snack 'on the go', during the moment the parade passes by. The same area is also used as a place where people accumulate for pausing, providing the sellers with many possible clients interested in a snack.

The stalls are mobile devices ranging from wheeled cars, (mostly hand shaped), to small open air restaurants of which some even with chairs. The 'restaurant' owner is selling his products under a big umbrella, which defines his appropriated shop space, temporarily creating his small open-air restaurant. A seller of coloured sugar bags carries a stick onto which the bags are attached, allowing him to walk along the procession. All of these are in some way revealing a temporary character. Ranging from mobile carts to open-air arrangement of some plastic chairs of which the seller also occupies one, all add-on to the already temporary activity that is happening in the street. Next to food, some products such as religious flags are also being sold. As such, each seller provisions the social happening of the religious parade in its own way with complementing products.



Figure 22. The procession stimulates different types of small add-on activities around the main entrance of the park (Photos: author).





Especially the place in front of the park entrance, where the park and the street meet, is a place where people sojourn, meet, wait for their food and eat together, take a rest. This point of overflow from park to street can be seen as a 'threshold', denoted by Stevens (2007: 73) as a "point where the boundary between inside and outside can be opened; [where the] space loosens up, and a wide range of perceptions, movements and social encounters become possible". Hence, the passage space is a 'natural' place for people to appropriate for this range of social practices. The spatial setting as a whole provides place for the people to re-establish themselves as a distinctive social group.

The practices of gathering and offering products together contribute to the construction of the distinctive sense of place of the streetscape as a temporary socio-cultural domain. The specific setting in which the people interact together, make place for this micro scale urban culture to 'pop up'. Through their collective appropriation, the space becomes a meaningful place.

A second moment in time when the Juan Chapin streetscape temporarily transforms into a religious pedestrian arena is during the annual *Semana Santa* (Easter), when *alfombras* (carpets) are being created on the street. Hereby the street space is used as a ground floor carrying these carpets, which are created by families living in the neighbourhood, as Luisa explains. The colourful carpets are made of flowers and coloured powders and serve as symbolic carriers for the religious procession to walk over and hence have an important role in the coming to being of the religious parade and the changing ontology of the place.

In the accounts of the residents, this happening was being referred to as a factor through which the identity of the neighbourhood is being brought alive. They see this outing of cultural identity as an aspect making them feel attached to their neighbourhood. This comes becomes apparent as Luisa explains that the making of the carpets is a family affair, emphasizing the liveliness character of the event: "I am happy that the processions pass by, the carpets have to be made and everyone is happy with everything they pass by selling as well".

Miguel also refers to the activities during *Semana Santa* to be of value for feeling attached to the neighbourhood. He explains: "as a neighbour, I like that the activities are being organized during Easter. I like that these activities are still there. I participate in them, and I even promote them and as such I prevent them from dying. Things like these help me to feel identified with the neighbourhood". This quote illustrates that during these practices the socio-cultural identity of the place is being re-established providing feelings of bonding with the place.

Another moment when the street changes its conventional meaning as a place for motorized vehicles to drive through is every Sunday morning



Figure 23. Traces of Semana Santa procession in the avenida Juan Chapin (Photo: author)

when the street is being closed off. This is done during the event '*pasos y pedales*' (steps and pedals) which explains the desired movement. During these mornings, avenida Juan Chapin could be seen as a temporary expansion of the park. The street 'adopts' activities that normally take place in the park, such as strolling around and playing soccer games. Hence, it is opening up to other users than the conventional ones who drive cars. The street becomes a place to stay and to play.

However, during interviews with various respondents it became clear that even though it still takes place, it doesn't function that well anymore. In comparison to other, more known streets in the city where the same event takes places during Sunday mornings, the Juan Chapin location is less successful in terms of fewer users. This is explained by Julio: "Maybe because of the same insecurity that definitely still exists here. Practically it could be said that inside the park there is not much insecurity anymore, but the vicinity surrounding the Cerro del Carmen isn't a place in which anyone comes with confidence to wander around. Because of that, the activity of *pasos y pedales* has better results in different zones as for example in zone 13, in the Reform avenue, which is a better protected area". Here he makes the distinction in perceived security

between the park and the surrounding street, arguing that improvement of the surrounding vicinity would improve the social activity during *pasos y pedales*.

Changing the existing meaning of the street as in this case the street becomes a soccer field, the meaning of place is actively re-constructed by the involvement of people. The material situation ‘facilitates’ the social action, hence re-constructing social reality. However, in practice it is not functioning due to feelings of insecurity as Julio explains. Even though the soccer competition still takes place as it is now organized informally between inhabitants as Miguel tells, Luisa says: “they do not close the street anymore”.

This spatial story showed that the temporary change of place has the potential to facilitate other users in the street. However, due to feelings of insecurity, this doesn’t always work out. The following spatial story will focus on the use of the park, which will be followed up by a discussion that links up the stories to each other.



Figure 24. Physical change of the street into soccer field facilitating the ‘pasos y pedales’ activity (Photo: author).

4.4 Spatial Story 4

Appropriating the park: outside, but inside The park as a greenscape facilitating collective health

Up above in the park quietness reigns. The rush of the streets below is left for what it is. Sounds of birds ascent between the trees. The soft temperature creates a tranquil morning. “We live in a country that once was called ‘eternal spring’”, that can be felt in the park, Maria says. She explicates: “I step inside, start walking, do my exercises, my respiration, I enjoy the birds. There is also a woodpecker, there are squirrels too, it’s an open paradise (..) which I feel is mine. I adore this park”. Even though the park has restrictive opening hours, she sees this as a necessary condition for it to be there “for them”, meaning the neighbours.

For Maria, the Cerro del Carmen park contributes to feeling fulfilled in her neighbourhood, “such as he who says he lives in zone fourteen” (a zone that is known as a richer area of the city). Living around the corner of the entrance at the north side of the park, she visits the park every day. “I like to go to the park to take up the early morning life energy. I take my dogs, I clean the waste, I respect the rules”. Her account shows that the park has an important place in her daily life, and functions as a source for feeling attached to the neighbourhood.

During her morning walks in the park, Maria meets up with Ana, a neighbour from the adjacent neighbourhood. They met in the park walking their dogs, and ever since, they visit the park to walk their dogs together. Even though Ana sees herself as a person who doesn’t go out, she does visit the park “from Monday to Sunday” to walk her dogs. It also “benefits” herself; “if you enter the park you feel the freshness and the clean environment”. This is in contrast to the street she lives in, as there she “senses the smog”. Hence, she emphasizes the imperative for more areas as these, as according to her they promote a sense of health, which could even support the security situation. She explains: “if there would be more places with trees, vegetation and flowers, I believe, as I consider Guatemala City a violent city, maybe the violence could be prevented more, because it works psychologically. The walking, to only just come here to walk, helps one. Physically, mentally and spiritually”.

The enclosedness of the park is physically experienced by the woman as they denote the difference between inside and outside. It marks a (subtle) transition in their perception of tranquillity going from one side of the fence to another as they enter the park. Maria rephrases: “it detoxes me from stress (...) the moment I step inside”, denoting the park as a comfort zone providing the conditions for the experience of tranquillity. The physical boundary thus resembles a behaviour change too, both for themselves as well as noting the possible advantage for the city if similar spaces would arise.

Other park visitors also use the park as a place for a refreshing start in the early morning. During the morning observations, it became evident that the park serves as a place for a sporting start of the day. It is used as a circuit of which the stairs function as aerobic steps and to run up and down. Active visitors run various 'laps' and then they leave again, letting the park behind for its next user. Hence, the park obtains additional meaning as a place to practice sports, providing a cool atmosphere between the trees, and a range of challenging places to practice jogging and aerobics.

The chart shows that during early mornings, a higher percentage of the total amount of visitors are sporting people. This shows that especially in early mornings the park is visited by people for sporting means. This can be related to the fact that in Guatemala, the whole year long the sun rises before 6, immediately providing pleasant temperatures. Hence, people take advantage of the early opening hours before working hours start.

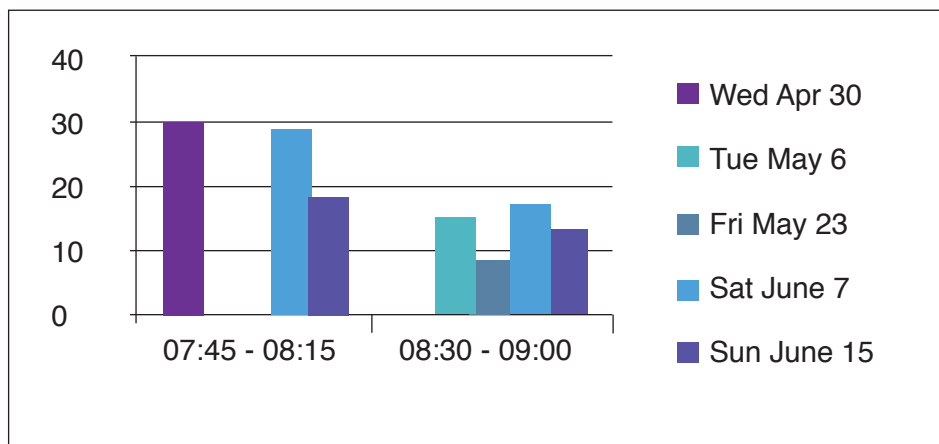


Table 1. Higher % of total visitors frequented the park in the early mornings for sporting purposes.

Another club of people, who take advantage of the morning in the park, is a club of elderly. Every Tuesday and Thursday they meet to practice Tai chi, the ancient practice of contemplative bodily movements intended to increment health and vitality, originating from China. Today they are with a group of eight women and one man, all “adultos mayores” (seniors). Having reached the retirement age, their day rhythm allows them to gather twice a week from nine to eleven in the morning, to meet each other and to practice Tai chi. Next to appropriating the plazita (small plaza) next to the main entrance for the class, half of the gathering time is used for “celebrations”, as one of the ladies of the group tells. She explains: “we always celebrate; we celebrate summer, we celebrate Semana Santa (Easter), we celebrate holidays; Dia del Cielo (Heaven Day), Dia del Arbol” (Tree day). Therefore, after class they unlock and put together tables and chairs that are stored next to the little *tienda* (small shop) that is located close to the main entrance of the park. All

bring something to eat, and as such, twice a week the small terrace turns into a pop-up celebration space for this group of elderly.

Since four years they now come to the Cerro del Carmen park to do their practice. Some come from the barrio (neighbourhood) surrounding the park, others join the group from “further away”, they say. They use the park as a central meeting point. This indicates that the park is not only used by neighbourhood residents, but that it is also attracting people who live in other parts of the city.



Figure 25. Members of the tai chi group gather on a small square in the park after class (Photo: author).

The array of undefined spaces in the park, such as the small plaza next to the main entrance, provides room for people to appropriate them for different activities, such as for the Tai chi classes in the morning. As such, the park is facilitating different uses of space. The small plaza next to the main entrance has an open character within the park, but is partially surrounded by the fence that surrounds the park. As well as being a separator, dividing two spaces from each other, the fence is also a creator of two different spaces, denoting one side of the space as ‘the

park' and the other side as 'the street'. Hence, the fence marks their ontological difference, which is confirmed by the amount of plants, trees and difference in pavement inside. This demarcation of difference is both restricting as well as enabling. The women who are part of the Tai chi club tell that it provides them a feeling of safety, being closed off as well as being watched over by the police guards that have their main base in a small 'garita' (guardhouse) near the exit, facing the small plaza. The ladies note, "the police cares for us, we are people who reached the "tercer edad" (third age), emphasising their age. The perception of being inside as well as being watched over creates a sense of safety for the elderly, enabling them to practice together. This can be seen as a precondition for the construction of this 'age-based network' (Phillips, 2002: 136).

The fence as a materialized physical border that encloses the park, works through in the experience of the place. It marks a border as a recognizable structure, which simultaneously provides an experiential structure for the Tai chi group. It creates space to feel safe and enclosed, which is enhanced by the perceived observing eye of the policemen. These conditions provide the framework for them to make the park their place. As well as the fence marks a different sense of place, their slow and contemplative practice also contributes to this. Their practice underlines the differing ontology of the park and the street, the park being a place to be, the outside streetscape being a place of faster flows of people in traffic movement.

4.5 Discussion

The spatial stories that preceded this section reflected accounts of various actors who are involved in a pallet of public spaces in the research area. This discussion will reveal how these spatial stories are mutually connected. This will be done in a comparative manner as in this way differences and common denominators between the accounts are revealed. Hereby will be focussed on the appropriations and uses of places in the process of revitalization. These socio-spatial practices of use are illustrative for the dimensions that occur in the coming to being of Guatemala City as a liveable city ('la ciudad para vivir'). The spatial stories depict the city from below, through the lived experience of the neighbourhood inhabitants.

As was shown in the accounts and neighbourhood maps of respondents in the first spatial story, the Cerro del Carmen park plays a major role in the experience of 'their' neighbourhood. It has a central place both in the minds of respondents as a point of reference as well as in their everyday lived space. It is seen as common ground providing them space for encounters both with their families as well as between neighbours. Hence, it facilitates the construction of kinship-based associations as well as it facilitates bonding between neighbours and neighbourhood-based groups, as was reflected in the name of the neighbours committee, as well as in their activities in the bibliobus as shown in spatial story 2. Furthermore, as was shown in spatial story 4, the age-based tai chi group and the neighbours who met by walking their dogs in the park are also examples that show that people use the park as a facilitator for constructing social capital. However, the mobility of people moving in and out of the neighbourhood as well as the perceived insecurity in the street and the following lack of trust among neighbours are factors that put this constructive process under pressure.

Hence, people search for secludedness in enclosed spaces, of which especially the home and the park are being indicated, as also came forward in the accounts of the tai-chi group and the dogwalkers in spatial story 4. The examples of the cultural group 'pie de lana' in spatial story 2 also demonstrated this search for enclosedness. Marking 'their' space on the plaza Miguel Angel Asturias by placing the temporal roof and closing off the former public laundry facility with a key that they administrate are both manifestations of searching secludedness for their practices. In the case of the park the fence already existed as well as is the case in the laundry facility, but there the cultural group claims ownership as they administrate the key. On the plaza Miguel Angel Asturias they create the 'borderline' themselves. Both are examples of people claiming their own space for making their place in public space. They do this by bordering practices, imaginatively and physically by appropriation the space. They differ in the way they take ownership, as in the case of the cultural collective they actively construct the borders themselves by means of

self-organization.

Furthermore, vicinity churches and shopping malls outside the research area are also indicated as places that provide conditions to feel secure. What these places have in common is that they provide a safe and comfortable 'realm of familiarity' (Madanipour, 2010: 10), and are accordingly indicated as places for the construction of social capital.

As opposed to the enclosed places, respondents indicate the open space of the streets surrounding the park as insecure. Especially certain alleys where pensions are located are places that they rather avoid to be in. This relates to the impeding of mutual trust, which seems to exist only between rooted neighbours that have known each other for a long time.

In response to the changing dynamics in the neighbourhood, people are creating their own neighbourhood structure, based on the experience of their lived space as was reflected in their neighbourhood maps. They appropriate places accordingly, as is reflected in avoiding 'insecure streets', reordering official names of neighbourhoods and taking ownership of the public spaces in various ways.

As was shown in spatial story 2, the accounts of the neighbours who participate in the neighbour groups introduced above demonstrate their practices through which they strive to improve social relations among neighbours as well as other residents who are interested in the area. They open up public spaces by reloading their social function. These neighbourhood-based groups are in itself a form of social capital. Through their voluntary action of investing time and effort for maintenance, attendance, organisation and the programming of activities with which they strive to activate participation, they reciprocally organise themselves. These bonding practices together with the places they operate in are available resources, which enable them to practice their activities with which they strive to enhance socio-cultural development.

Hence, these neighbour groups can be seen as catalysts for social development. By their involvement in the process of revitalizing the neighbourhood, various actions are taken to re-appropriate the public spaces available. As such, they load them with new meaning, building forth on the existing meanings that have come to being over time.

In spatial story 3, it became clear, that changing the ontology of the street from a domain that is dominated by motorized vehicles into a domain with room for pedestrians is another 'strategy' that allows people to appropriate the public space for practicing a variety of activities. This 'pedestrianization' (Chen, 2010: 73) of the space available increases its usability from only the sidewalks to the full streetscape. This also creates room for an expansion of the program of the street, turning parts of it into an extension of the park, creating possibilities for people to gather.

This changing ontology of place creates a different sense of place, from a place for motorized vehicles to a place for walking and vehicles driven by foot. In the 'pasos y pedales' example it changed from a place to transit through to place to be, to stay, temporarily rendering the street an extension of the park. Similarly, the bibliobus, the public laundry and reading club on plaza Miguel Angel Asturias can also be seen as examples of the changing ontology of place. These public spaces expand their function with new meaning from spaces to be to spaces to learn. What all these examples have in common is their temporal appropriation of space, during weekends and events. However, in the case of pasos y pedales, the frequency was perhaps too often which interfered with lack of trust while being in the street. After its start, it turned out that currently it doesn't function that well anymore. Devised by the social department of the municipality in the case of pasos y pedales, it is the inhabitants that make place with their different behaviour, as people 'decide' whether or not to participate on the basis of their experience of the place.

In the case of the religious parades, people do participate, making place for lively scenes, amplifying the diversity of uses. The avenida Juan Chapin, the space that normally gives access to the park, now itself becomes a park as more park-like behaviour of social gathering is practiced. Through social, cultural and religious practices people are making place for different use and behaviour. The conventional understanding of the street as a place for the fluidity of ongoing traffic finding its way through temporarily changes. Hence, people are re-loading the identity of the neighbourhood. This temporary change of the meaning of place by the appropriation of people, allows them to come together, to gather, to chat, to form a group, hence creating opportunity for the construction of social capital. The religious happenings reveal on a small scale the relation between the construction of social capital by socio-spatial practices and the (re-)establishment of place attachment. The street transformed into place for religious parades, which in turn were an incentive for attracting (informal) economic activity. This opened up the scope of possibilities for social interactions, providing opportunity for enhancing the bonding of the members of the group.

However, as was shown above, changing the ontology of the street doesn't always reach its desired effect of facilitating interaction. As in the case of pasos y pedales, the street in which the event takes place, temporarily 'adopts' characteristics of the park. However, the physical difference of the street being an open space remains. This could explain why people may feel less secure to take part in the different activities. They 'decide' whether or not to participate on the basis of their experience of the place. Being a recurring event taking place every weekend could also be a reason for its disfunctioning. This is different from the other two examples as they only happen incidentally. Furthermore, the nature of the events is different, as the two religious events also derive from

the cultural identity of the people in the neighbourhood. In those cases, the 'pedestrianization' of the area (Chen, 2010: 73) has as an effect the enhancing of cultural expressions, which are tying the inhabitants to the neighbourhood. Moreover, as was also seen in the examples in the park as the park is also mainly a pedestrian area, it creates possibilities for the re-enhancement of social bonds between family members as well as between neighbourhood members of the religious group. As pedestrians they can move slowly which creates time to chat.

As already became clear, spatial story 4 narrates the accounts of different agents in the placemaking process in the park, expressed in their everyday practices such as dog walking, running, and the practice of Tai chi. These accounts shed light on perceptions of the park and street as differing places divided from each other both physically and symbolically. People look for a place to be outside where they may enjoy the morning together, but they make a distinction between the park and the street in their ability of providing the conditions for that. The woman who meet in the park for walking their dogs, denote the restrictive conditions such as the opening hours and the rules in the park as preconditions for the well functioning of the park. Through these conditions they denote experiencing the park as a place for tranquillity and for a fresh start of the day, which they can temporarily make "their" place. Their appropriation thus allows for feelings of ownership, which enhances their attachment to the place. According to the elderly who practice Tai chi, the presence of the guards provides a feeling of safety, which in turn provides room for their actions. This relates to spatial story 1, in which the desire of elderly people for enclosed public spaces where they can feel safe was also illustrated.

These different accounts of people add layers of meaning to the park, rendering it a meaningful place. People do this by appropriating the park through different socio-spatial practices, which serve to facilitate their health. Hereby they create possibilities for the creation of social capital in different ways. However, in order to do this, they denote the restrictive conditions as needed for providing this place, in which they can be outside, while being inside.

This collection of spatial stories illustrates the constant negotiation between opening up and closing off public spaces, as people are looking for a safe environment to meet others. By the plurality of use of public spaces through practices of appropriation and claiming space, people are trying to revitalize the park and the surrounding streets. People are giving new meaning to these spaces by the mutual acknowledgement among groups of assigning space to themselves. Yet, these socio-spatial claims remain based on a normative understanding of 'appropriate' use. Through these social norms, users with conflictive interests are assigned by residents as 'undesired' groups.

As came to the foreground, the park is seen as an adequate place where these conflictive interests are now 'cleaned out'. However, the streetscape is still perceived as relatively insecure. It remains an ambiguous space, which is claimed by different users in time. Though there are residents that recognize that every user of the neighbourhood should have its space, the question remains whether the current distribution of spaces in time is tenable. This issue is aggravated by the increase of users of the spaces, as the population in the neighbourhood will increment in the (near) future. At the same time, the temporal dimension does seem to create possibilities for assigning space to different users in time, and hence for the construction of various forms of social capital. As was shown in spatial story 3, during temporary events the street is being appropriated by different neighbour groups, as was also the case in the example of the reading club under the temporal roof in spatial story 2. The temporality of use in the form of events and the coming together as a group could be factors that influence the experience of safety on the street in a positive way. Therefore, space should be created for negotiation and adaptation to each other.


However, as demonstrated in the examples above, in the process of appropriation of place, the members of neighbour groups do still experience difficulties that are restraining the construction of social capital, among neighbours as well as among family members. The quest for a firm financial backbone to facilitate activities is indicated as a point for improvement. Furthermore, the aforementioned conflicts of interest over space are also part of this process. In this fine-grained structure of claiming space to make place, neighbour groups are balancing between autonomy and dependency of governance institutions. Therefore, in the context of people's lack of trust in governance institutions as well as the constant confrontation with undesired groups, resident groups make an effort to organize themselves. Hereby they search for financial assets, which in turn are incentives for the construction of various forms of social capital. These practices can be seen as 'governance from below'. Through these practices, people render their lived space a place in and between seclusion and social embeddedness.

As shown in this chapter, each of these four spatial stories give insights in the dynamic process of the revitalization of the research area. This discussion provided insight in how these 'cases' are mutually connected.

I could have included more spatial stories which could have exposed more angles of the research area however. More specifically, I could have included a broader scope of 'actors', including voices of minority groups, economic actors, people who do not live in the area for a long time yet or of new residents who are about to move in. Each of these people could have shed light on the issues at stake in the area in their own way, and thereby they might have brought in new perspectives. Yet,

due to time restrictions I had to confine the collection of accounts to those presented. Even though this only provides a relatively small scope of stories, I do think that the given accounts have provided a comprehensive insight in the core issues at stake in terms of use and appropriation of space in the area, from which valuable (conceptual) insights can be gained.

In the next concluding chapter the empirical findings, which were elaborated in this chapter, will be connected to the theoretical framework that was elaborated in chapter 2. This will be done in order to fulfil the objective of this study and to answer the research questions that were posed in chapter 1.

The background image shows a hillside with a soccer field in the foreground, surrounded by dense, multi-story housing. A large, dark, textured pillar is visible on the right side of the frame. The sky is overcast.

5. Including the city from below

Conclusion



5.1 Conclusion

Through conducting the foregoing research I have sought to gain insight in the relation between urban revitalization processes and the experience of urban liveability 'from below' in Guatemala City, as was the objective of this study. I did this to understand better what liveability means for a city in the Latin American context. As was explained in the introduction of this study, Latin American cities are increasingly urbanizing. Hence, cities are in a process of transformation. Therefore, this study has taken an in-depth view on how places are being made, by engaging with urban inhabitants in the neighbourhood surrounding the Cerro del Carmen park in the historical centre of Guatemala City. I researched various locations through the accounts of these people as was presented in the empirical chapter. By doing this, I gained insight in the lived spaces of these residents that revealed how public spaces are being used.

As laid out in the theoretical framework, urban liveability is a broad concept. It came to the foreground that liveability is a process of constant fitting between the human and his or her environment (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003). To narrow down the concept, in this study I specifically zoomed in into the socio-spatial domain. Liveability has been defined as "the experience of the daily lived environment" (Leidelmeijer & van Kamp, 2003: 29), which 'guided' the chosen lens in this study; the 'soft city', as was referred to in chapter 2. I zoomed in on socio-spatial practices of different actors in lived space. I did this to understand how social capital comes to being in the neighbourhood, as well as how places are being made. The spatial stories that were presented in the empirical chapter above narrate the accounts of the urban inhabitants who participated in this study. All four spatial stories have shown different insights in the use of public spaces and the experience of social capital, which was a guiding indicator for urban liveability in this study. Through these different accounts, mutual relations were indicated in the discussion at the end of the chapter, that showed differences and similarities in patterns of use. These gave insight in how socio-spatial practices may (or may not) enhance the creation of social capital, who benefit, and who do not. Thus, how do socio-spatial practices make liveable place, or how do they restrict that. In this chapter I would like to explain the conceptual value of these empirical insights. All this together can form an answer to the main research question of this study as was posed in the first chapter:

How do urban revitalization processes in lived space in Guatemala City influence the experience of urban liveability according to the urban inhabitants in Guatemala City?

To be able to answer the main question of this research, it was made up of various dimensions that I will now discuss. In the first subquestion, the focus was on the position of residents in the placemaking process. During the study, by observing, interviewing and doing a neighbour-

hood-mapping workshop with local residents, I found out that residents have an important position in the placemaking process, as through their socio-spatial practices of use and appropriation, public spaces are loaded with (new) meaning. In this process, some residents are active agents who create incentives for the construction of social capital through their actions and engagement. These were people who were attached to their neighbourhood in terms of time living there, feeling a certain responsibility for their lived environment. Hence, if we look at the socio-spatial practices that are occurring in the different public spaces that were focussed on, it becomes clear that revitalization is happening not only in conceived space, but not less importantly, also in lived space. Urban revitalization, which in this study was conceptualized as placemaking, turns out to be a continuing process in which residents are giving meaning to places through a range of socio-spatial practices.

As came forward in the empirical findings, this process of giving meaning comes to being through use and appropriation of the different public spaces in a range of ways. Examples of use are for example socio-cultural events that are being organized by the neighbour groups, as well as neighbours' daily practices such as dogwalking and jogging. Through these practices, connections are being made and re-made between neighbours and others who are visiting the park. Hence, the neighbours attempt to make their neighbourhood "theirs". Through these practices, various forms of social capital are being constructed.

However, various places in the neighbourhood are indicated by respondents as insecure, due to the presence of groups that are indicated as 'undesired' or 'illegal'. This impedes the creation of trust and thus social capital among neighbours. Trust is lacking not only between neighbours but also towards governing institutions. In response to this, neighbour groups are claiming spaces by practices of appropriation through which they create ownership, such as locking off a public space with a key.

Through this range of socio-spatial practices, residents are in a process of 'constant fitting', of adapting themselves to their lived space to create a liveable place. Hereby, they try to enhance social capital, but conditions are needed to establish this. In this process they experience pressure because of perceived conflicting groups and 'trouble spots' (Reinders, 2013: 168). Through the different interests that are conflicting in the area, different groups are 'competing' for accessibility and appropriation in the amount of public space available. Thus, accessibility doesn't count for everyone.

The park has a social function which comes to being in the possibilities it provides for the (re)construction of social capital among families, neighbours, neighbourhood based groups and age-based groups. The Cerro del Carmen park is in this sense seen as a place that provides the conditions for this. Yet, due to its restrictions in accessibility that have come to being over time, it doesn't provide a place for everyone. The surrounding

streets are an open place, which remain perceived as relatively insecure as they don't restrict accessibility such as the park does. Residents of different neighbour groups try to cope with that through various practices of ownership and appropriation. Engagement of neighbours in the form of activities they organize enables them to influence this process of constant fitting, which empowers them to improve the fitting. These are signs of their own organizational capacity from the bottom up, through which they take shared responsibility for creating liveability. These practices can be conceptualized as 'governance from below'.

What furthermore seems to create possibilities in this landscape of conflicting interests is the temporal dimension. As the empirical findings showed, temporal claims to spaces provide space to various groups. It opens up possibilities for different groups to use space without bothering each other. Hence, temporality rather than permanent allocation in public spaces can be used as a 'tool' for flexible appropriation of spaces among different users. As was shown in the former chapter, space can as such be created for pedestrians, (for example) by creating car-free zones on a neighbourhood scale. This temporarily changes the ontological understanding of what a place can be, which creates room for assigning place to different groups; space for negotiation and adaptation to each other. The temporal dimension could therefore legitimize the assigned spaces to different groups. Further experiments with temporarily assigned spaces can show whether this does create a fair distribution of the urban space available.

Now, let us turn back from here to Henri Lefebvre's theory on the production of space (1991), which was explained in the theoretical framework. As already pointed out by Lefebvre, placemaking is a joint process of conceived and lived space and the spatial practices that are performed in lived space. Yet, on the basis of the empirical results, it can be stated that the production of space should be seen as a continuous process in which the lines between 'conceived space' and 'lived space' are increasingly being blurred. This is done as residents are loading the designed spaces with meaning in lived space through their socio-spatial practices and hence, they co-create them (this is also done as they are participating in the design phase, but this wasn't studied in detail in this thesis). Rather than the fixed boxes Lefebvre presented, a more fluid conception of how these conceptions of space interrelate seems to be fitting in this case. Lived space and conceived space as two abstract ways of creating space seem to increasingly interrelate. When Lefebvre created his ideas, during the modernist time of large-scale urban modernizations, master planning indeed reflected these 'worlds apart' of conceived and lived space. Yet, today it can be observed that they are increasingly merging into each other, as residents are also placemakers. We should see beyond this strict dualism. It appears to be more nuanced, as they consist of the same urban matter. Hence, Lefebvre's ideas

should be recalibrated to fit in today's context.

This process is only just beginning. Therefore, both 'worlds' should be able to connect more and as such inform each other, both about the design process as well as about what happens in lived space. From thinking in boxes, we should now shift towards crossing the borders of the boxes to create 'in between' spaces in which both 'worlds' can meet each other. Hereby the meaning of the planner changes from having the 'all seeing eye', to being co-creators and facilitators. The hard borders between the different ways of placemaking making them isolated from each other are now blurring. This reinterpretation of Lefebvres' theory creates a challenge to load this new space with meaning for future placemaking. In the recommendations that follow, I provide advice to give meaning to these spaces. What comes out of this reinterpretation of Lefebvre's production of space, is that placemaking is a joint process, as both have a 'stake' in process of urban revitalization.

The key is that this is recognized and that they can find each other when situations are experienced as unsure or (remaining) difficult. Hence, trust should be enhanced, not only between neighbours, but even so important, between neighbours and governing institutions. Hence, governance from above should recognize and incorporate governance from below in policy and practice. By applying Lefebvre's ideas to the current-day 'placemaking landscape', seeing spatial practices in lived space can be a means for informing both policy making and the urban design practice.

Placemaking is a process, not a final state. Tonkiss also denoted this as was referred to in the theoretical chapter, yet in the empirical research I deepened out this notion further on the basis of the spatial stories presented above. The spatial stories have shown how public spaces come to being in practice by digging deeper into the matter of placemaking. Only then, enhancement of social capital can be deepened out and better understood and ideally also be improved so it can obtain effective and durable meaning.

On the basis of these insights which discuss the dimensions that were set out in the subquestions can be stated that the understanding of what governance should entail, should be revised. Incorporating governance from below seems an adequate strategy through which conceived space and lived space can be integrated. Here I made an attempt to deepen out what placemaking entails. This can be done to overcome the gap between planned and lived space, which was pointed out in the theoretical framework. Governance from above should be connected to governance from below and other way around; governance from below should be able to connect to governance from above. As such, revitalization of the urban environment can be a catalyst for enhancing social capital construction, as support will be created among residents. However, neces-

cary measures should be taken to create place for all users, and to understand that it is a process. Albeit the population in the city is increasing, residents are valuable agents in the placemaking process, and hence have their stake in the coming to being of the liveable city. Hence, a new form of social capital is needed to open up possibilities to create new networks of trust between residents as well as the governance institutions.

Public space is a spatial mediator between different (private) territories; a space where different 'systems of use and appropriation' meet. However being spatial glue, it is not necessarily always social glue as was seen in the empirical findings. Yet, it does have the potential to be social glue. Therefore, policy measures are needed to integrate the perspective from below. Through this study I would like to show that to enhance liveability on the long term, the socio-spatial practice level should be taken into account in policymaking and the design practice. I want to make an argument for connectedness in placemaking processes instead of separation. It is therefore key to understand placemaking as a whole of idea to use, of designers and users, as people are incentives for liveliness and vitality. Making a place is a joint venture of different people. In the fine-grained structure of different spaces, place is in the making. Places are constantly being made and remade, by endowments of different meanings. In these meanings lay the potential for a liveable city.

Seeing the city from below allows for a detailed understanding of people's behaviour. It allows to see how people construct social capital in their everyday practices of appropriating urban spaces. A neighbourhood can therefore be seen as a living process, not as final product that may be master-planned. As such agency is given to inhabitants to create meaningful places. Connecting the concepts of social capital and placemaking thus reveals the joint venture of the coming to being of place, approaching it from an intersubjective viewpoint. It opens up possibilities to get a deeper understanding of the meaning of place in a certain locality by observing patterns of appropriation and use, as I did in this study. Seeing the city from below thus provides new possibilities to approach (the future of) the liveable city.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to enhance the potential of public spaces as socio-spatial 'mediators' that can facilitate the construction of social capital, a few recommendations will be suggested here. As came out of the foregoing conclusion, the temporary dimension is an important factor for this mediating process. Hence, policy makers as well as urbanists should see the importance and possibilities of temporal interventions. Therefore, experiments should be facilitated to see what temporalities work, why, and how. As such, there could be experimented more with the ontological change of place to increase usability and distribution of public spaces

among different user groups.

Furthermore, the need to stimulate and incorporate governance 'from below' was discussed. This can form an answer to what was referred to as needed in the introductory chapter, more participatory forms of urban design and governance. As such the process of 'constant fitting' can be facilitated, to collectively search for enhancing social capital as one dimension of urban liveability. Hence, people's everyday practices should be seen as potential that could form the basis for this, onto which policy can connect. On the road towards making a more liveable city government actors should recognize citizens as placemakers and use their strength. Hence, people's self-organizing capacity should be acknowledged, encouraged and facilitated, by giving them a more central place.

To initiate the incorporation of governance from below, a sensor group or platform can be set up in which different 'placemakers' are connected that are somehow tied to the area. This group should consist of residents and different bodies of the municipality to enhance communication between them, to facilitate more intensive collaboration as well as to increase reciprocal visibility. If the placemaking process is seen as a whole of conceived and socio-spatial practices in lived space, the municipality should stay engaged in lived space. The other way around, residents should also be connected to the municipality to sense necessities that arise that are needed to strengthen social capital. In the end, as has become clear in this thesis, revitalization is a joint process in which both design and appropriation are needed to make a liveable city. This placemakers group can be a place for mutual understanding between both governance bodies 'from above' and governance 'from below'. It can be a place both for action and reflection. Hence, adding to the types of social capital that were explained by Phillips (2002) in the theoretical framework, this group can explore a new form of social capital that is overarching and bonding both between neighbours, neighbours and municipal bodies as well as between different municipal bodies. This can thus also create a dialogue between (for example) the social department and the spatial department of the municipality to overcome the gap between disciplines. As such, attachment and engagement of people can be utilized in an improved way. Space is created in which people can inform and learn from each other reciprocally, and where people are empowered to engage. As such an open dialogue can be created in which difficulties concerning increased pressures on resources can be discussed, incorporating minority groups in the discourse.

Neighbour groups that already exist can be supported and hence, their sensing capacity is used in an improved way. Furthermore, to increase social capital in the neighbourhood, a social exchange bank or a community garden could be set up through the sensor group.

As this study has attempted to demonstrate, seeing the city from below

appears to be a useful way to look at the city to better understand how places come alive in lived space. It reveals the experiences of urban liveability as expressed by residents of the research area, who gave insights in their lived space.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

As liveability is a more extensive concept than only comprising the domain covered in this study, a follow-up study could be done to expand on researching other liveability domains. These could be studies that explore new pathways towards more sustainable urban landscapes both for the increase of population the city is facing, as well as the existing population. Hereby can be thought of questions such as: how can Guatemala City become energy independent in the future? How can the city deal with future food issues? How can the city serve the lower-income population with adequate housing? How may be dealt with waste that is produced in the city? Such questions can be starting points for further research on liveability in Latin American cities and more broadly, in cities all over the world.

Results that were presented here are limited to one domain in one locality. As each locality has its own specific dynamic, Guatemala City can serve as a case study. Yet, investigation in different emerging urban landscapes is needed. Therefore, the results from this study should not be copied into a different context without researching its own context. Even though it is important to operate context specifically, hopefully the results can be an incentive to guide further research and to draw attention to the importance of collaboration between different parties involved in the process of making place.

The perspective 'from below' as was presented in this study, could be guiding the search for ways how people can become more and more part of liveability questions. Hereby the 'circular city' may be guiding as a model that understands the city as an ecology that is being created from below. It can provide an integral understanding of the city combining insights on waste, ecology, and different population groups from a human scale. These can be starting points to further research on questions of responsibility; citizens already take shared responsibility in maintenance and ownership, but this could be deepened out further. What should hereby be taken into account, are questions concerning a just distribution of space in the urbanizing city. Seeing the city as an ecology in which everyone has its stake opens up possibilities to see the city as made up of cycles. As pointed out in the recommendations above, combining the perspective from below and above opens up a new way of understanding urban transitions: a change 'from within'.

In essence, liveability is an existential question about human life. However, as was referred to above, there are different scale levels that can be chosen to research this question. From the personal scale towards a

societal scale it deals with the question about how we can live. It is interesting to see, that the question of liveability thus 'cuts through' all these different scale levels, as it deals with our subjective consciousness, as well as we as subjective beings are inhabitants of a neighbourhood, an intersubjective entity. The neighbourhood we live in is part of a city, which is part of a societal system. When focussing on the transition towards a more liveable city, all these scale levels should be part of the analysis. Hence, the principle of seeing the city 'from within', as made up of cycles that are combinations of different scale levels where all actors have their stake, may be an inspiring notion to deepen out further.

5.4 Reflection

As the process of writing this thesis has now come to an end, reflecting on the process provides me with various insights about the issues I encountered along the way of writing. Liveability is a broad concept, which made the impressions of the urban landscape overwhelming in the beginning of the fieldwork. In the end I came back with an extensive data set, which made it challenging to narrow everything down into one comprehensive storyline. The data that have been collected through the methods described above, have been analyzed and in the end have been merged together into the spatial stories. However, this process took me quite some time, to find a form in which I could combine the outcomes of the different data sources into coherent accounts of urban liveability experiences, the spatial stories. In the end, the form of the spatial stories is a neat way to reflect intersubjective accounts of the relation between the urban revitalization process and the experiences of urban liveability.

As I also took time to reflect on the study as a whole as well as its meaning in conjunction to my background as a social designer, it has been quite an extensive process, which sometimes made it challenging to stay on the 'right track'. In appendix A I have set out this process reflection more in depth.

To come to a close, although I have invested extensive time for reflection, these efforts have brought me some deeper insights in the meaning of things. Therefore, I think that time to reflect is needed to grow, to construct a long-term vision and to come to a deeper understanding of what liveability means. Not only has it brought deeper understanding of the placemaking process, at the same time it has provided me a deeper understanding of the meaning of my own place in the academic landscape, for which I am very grateful.

This journey through spaces and places made me learn, see nuances, understand better the impact design makes on social life, and the potential it has to make a positive impact. But it also made me see more clearly the responsibilities we have as researchers and designers, and the importance of connecting theory and practice. After this journey in which I searched for the meaning of liveability, and what it means to live

Time to reflect is needed to grow, to construct a long-term vision and to come to a deeper understanding of what liveability means.

in an urbanizing environment, I now see the role of urban designers and geographers more clearly, and the possibilities that exist for making meaningful places. This process of writing this thesis has become part of an ongoing quest for quality of life, questioning how we can become more human and closer to nature, even in cities.

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Appendices

Appendix A Process reflection

Appendix B Interview guides

Appendix C Neighbourhood mapping workshop guidelines

Appendix D Overview of interviewees

Appendix E Fieldwork blog

Appendix A

Process reflection

How to operate: connecting disciplines

This process description reflects on my role as researcher and my place in the academic landscape, and how I have developed to understand this place. It reflects the search for meaning of my study career and what conclusions I have found along the way of writing this thesis.

Place is a central concept in this thesis. The process of writing this thesis has therefore also helped me to better understand my place as a researcher. It has simultaneously been a process of denoting my role as a scientist and practitioner. In my case, this is a hybrid role, as I stand with one foot in the field of human geography, and with the other one in the field of social design. As an outcome of this reflective process, I became able to see my desired role more clearly. This reflection was needed to see the similarities that can form a bridge between both disciplines. It was needed to learn and grow, both in knowledge and in consciousness. I denoted it as an experimental phase, which created space to reflect on my own position while writing and thinking about the thesis content.

During the whole process of doing the Master and writing the Master thesis, I took time to reflect about what science is, as a discipline, and the role of science in society. From this reflection, I can now see more clearly my role in the scientific landscape. As I have done my Bachelors degree at Design Academy Eindhoven, I have had the opportunity to observe science both from an 'outsider' position (with 'designer glasses' on), as well as from an 'insider' position (as a human geography student, learning about and 'doing' science). This former design education has informed the choices I made in the thesis process, for example with regards to the methods I used and the spatial story approach in the empirical part. I can now see the connection between both disciplines as during both studies I have been researching the connection between the human and his or her environment.

In June 2012 I obtained my Bachelor in Design with my graduation project 'Crossing Borders'. With this project, I won the Brains Award Liveability Prize. This prize was both an incentive for, and an underlining of my deep interest in liveability issues, and more in particular my interest in people's daily interactions with spatial situations, especially in urban domains. As a social designer I have great interest in the physical space that surrounds us, and in people's experience of their lived environment. This informed the content of this thesis, as it is interesting to research whether it is possible to change behavioural patterns by changing the environment. If that would be the case, then, in what way could a physi-

cal intervention improve the liveability of a place? Has liveability also to do with the social dimension, thus the use and appropriation of a place?

During the Master in human geography I became more familiar with socio-spatial concepts on a more abstract level. This has given me the opportunity to approach liveability from a theoretical point of view, which complements the design point of view. As a human geographer I now better understand different forms of space as theoretical concepts (for example Henri Lefebvre's abstraction of spatial practices, lived space and conceived space (1991), as well as it gave me the opportunity to increase my methodological skills. Through the process of writing this thesis I have thus deepened my knowledge about the placemaking process. Hence, for me both disciplines are complementary, and both could learn from each other. Science could inform the design practice and the design practice could communicate scientific outcomes.

Both disciplines have taught me to see relations, make connections, question established structures, breaking them down in elements and to re-assemble them in a different way. Hence, this thesis I also saw as a design project, which provided space for searching, giving meaning, and new understanding. Seeing the connection between both disciplines was rooted in a process of reflection in which I searched for understanding how both fields relate to each other, and what they can learn from each other. By now, I found ways how both can strengthen each other to create societal impact.

Reflecting on the process of thesis writing has helped me to see clearly how both are rooted in the same matter, their common ground; the interaction between people and place. I have come to the understanding that they can strengthen each other in the process of creating the city. In line with this reasoning, Ali Madanipour, professor of urban design at the University of Newcastle states: "to understand urban design we will need to understand the urban space and the processes that produce it" (Madanipour, 1996: viiii). Here, he denotes the inherent connection between urban design and urban theory. Observing the form and materiality of objects in urban space can for example tell us something about the coming to being of the (everyday) city, such as a fence that surrounds a park. The fence itself embodies questions of accessibility, and the nature of space; does it influence the 'publicness' of a space (Madanipour, 2010)? As it separates two places from each other, its physical presence is structuring the functioning of the city. This can tell us something about governance too. Who governs on the inside, who on the outside and why? Seeing the city from this perspective allows unravelling the complexity of the word liveability.

Interestingly, urban design is not a static issue. As I came to the conclusion in the final chapter, the nature of the urban design process is changing. The process of urban design is increasingly shifting towards

participatory approaches, in which already in the design phase urban inhabitants are taken into account. As such, the role of the urban designer is changing from being an 'expert' to being a process facilitator who makes sure that different voices are being heard (interestingly, this process of change is simultaneously taking place in different geographical contexts, as it is also at stake in the Dutch urban design practice). As such, it is important (for me) to denote this process, and to understand this changing dynamic in order to understand my own place. Therefore, understanding how both disciplines may need each other, how they can indeed be complementary, and how I can bring them closer together in a sense-making whole that is needed today is valuable. Hence, human geography could inform my design practice and my design practice could inform human geographical research that I will conduct in the future. In this way, I strive to make a meaningful contribution to questions concerning urban liveability.

Becoming able to understand the city in its full complexity is a difficult task, if not impossible. However, and this is how I like to think about the city, it is a vast space in which many things happen that together construct a society. Seeing the city from below makes me wonder what occurs behind the obvious, what occurs behind what the eye can see. It makes me wonder how things come to being; spatial structures, social encounters, lives that are being shaped in the midst of spaces, places and people. As I am working towards being both a designer and a geographer, seeing the city from below helps me to understand the complexity of cities.

Not only have I learnt about different processes that happen in our environment during the thesis writing process, I have also gained insights about how I see science. I have come to the understanding that (for me) science is a tool for interpreting, or sense making of complex wholes of parts. It is about denoting and guiding directions.

In the end, this process of thorough reflection has brought me valuable insights and understanding of my own path. I have experienced it as going 'off the beaten track', combining a more intuitively led Bachelor education with a more rationally led Master education, combining both parts of my brain. It has been a search and a challenge how I could connect these two in a meaningful way, that they could complement each other. In this way, I believe, my scientific practice is also becoming more engaged and thus meaningful. The process of discovery has been an experimental phase, which I greatly enjoyed.

Not only did I reflect on my position in the scientific landscape as a personal reflection, but also in relation to a larger societal context: how should we operate, what is a good 'modus operandi' to operate? What skills should we develop for responsible tasks like decision making and

leadership? During the master I have come to understand the complexity of issues that are at stake in society today in a more profound way. The mayor challenges we face that are in urgent need for transitions towards more sustainable ways of theorizing and practicing, raised questions about how I can be part of this (urban) transition in a way that combines both parts of my brain. I want to bring both parts together (as both have equal importance) in a mixture that makes sense to me. Out of this quest, I have made my own personal 'ideal modus operandi', for which both brain parts are needed to let me operate in my full capacity. Within this field of operation, I use both my head and hands, I think and I do, both from the heart.

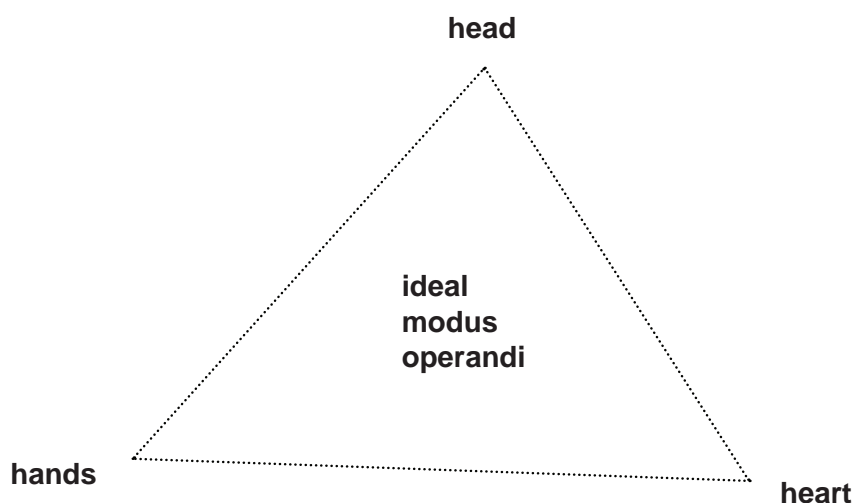


Figure 1. How to operate ideally.

Coming back to the understanding of science in the way I described above, then science is not about looking for 'certainty', or '(absolute) truth', but rather about the ability to direct and guide complexity. It is a tool for understanding, interpretation, giving direction, making sense of a whole of realities or responses. Scientists can thus take the role of process guiders, 'sense-makers' of complex questions, 'direction-guiders', 'together-bringers' of different stakeholders, etc.

Scientific education should be aware of this task, and the responsibility it has to prepare students for such roles. Therefore, universities could include more the 'personal scale' to make students feel (more) engaged. This is perhaps a 'soft' aspect of science, yet important to find meaningful answers to large societal problems. I see science as an open structure that has the ability to connect to society (so not as a closed system). As such, universities should take responsibility as a mentor for students to become meaningful in the world and see the importance of this role. During my time in university, I developed some concrete ideas

for how this could be done, which can be an extension of the regular curriculum, that I will hopefully develop further in the future.

Apart from including the personal ‘scale’, an inter-disciplinary approach is helpful as a means to connect to, and to take part in society. As I have just denoted, city making is such a practice in which collaboration between disciplines is encouraged. Tonkiss also takes inter-disciplinarily into consideration when it comes to city-making, as she states: “the mismatch between economic, political and everyday urban geographies means that cities cannot easily be secured in place: whether as objects of government, as economic systems, as units of analysis or as imaginative entities” (Tonkiss, 2013: 12) This requires “urbanists to cast their nets more widely” (Tonkiss, 2013: 12) she argues. This is in line with what Lefebvre denoted as he stated that “the nature of urban complexity makes interdisciplinary cooperation essential” (Lefebvre cited in Tonkiss, 2013: 12). Yet, today, design and science are (still) ‘speaking in different languages’: “the principal language of urban design – the drawing of (urban) forms in space – is at odds with the written and numerical languages employed extensively within the social sciences” (Biddulph cited in Tonkiss, 2013: 12-13). Hence, Tonkiss recognises the necessity to connect both fields as she states that urban design is inherently a “multi-disciplinary activity of shaping and managing urban environments ... at all scales of the socio-spatial continuum” (Tonkiss, 2013: 13). This fits my inter-disciplinary ambition. Therefore, it is necessary to look beyond disciplinary boundaries to communicate between both to approach societal issues such as urban design. Having completed a design education in combination with a master in human geography enables me to create an in-between language that can connect both disciplines. I thus see my role as a scientist as a ‘connector’ between ‘above’ and ‘below’, so between different groups of people or ‘stakeholders’, or between theory and practice. This I do by listening to different voices, and participating in both ‘worlds’, and as such I can gather insights of all ‘sides’, and then connect them. This is how I envision my ‘place’: to learn from different people and then to distil certain patterns and / or to indicate certain directions.

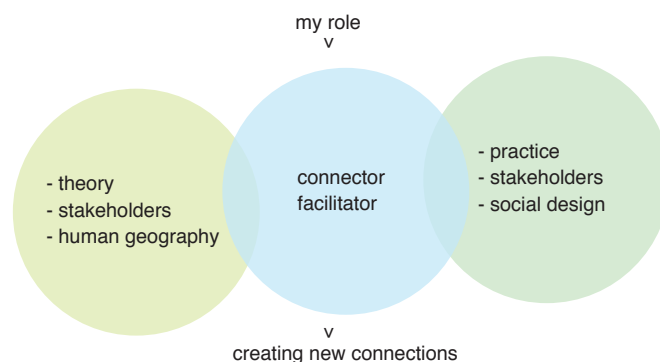


Figure 2. Outcome of a reflective process.

Something that has helped to see my direction more clearly, was the month-intensive yoga teacher training that I did in the middle of the process of writing this thesis, after I came back from doing my fieldwork in Guatemala City. I got to know about the possibility of doing this course during my stay in Guatemala. Back home in the Netherlands, I took the chance and did the course. Looking back to the course, I can see that it has been an important step in my life. My intrinsic motivation has become clearer by doing this training. Looking back to the course, I can now understand why I did it and what meaning it has in relation to the other aspects of my life. I became able to see the path or line I was already following but could not yet see clearly. Completing the yoga teacher training was the moment to start seeing clearly the direction I have to take in my life. After coming back from the course, I realized that I was already on this path but I had not yet been able to indicate it as such. To know now, gives meaning to the things I do, the steps I take. Now I know why I do the things that I do. During this yoga course, it became ever more clear that I have to develop a clear vision for my life, the red thread that weaves everything together. Everything I do should be in one way or the other a logic step in the line of consistency. To see the consistency and to see how somehow a design education, a yoga teacher training and an academic master fit perfectly together was a special moment. Closing the triangle, on which on each end one of these three takes place, I found my purpose in life (see figure). As both before starting my design education as well as this master, when bumping into the option of the yoga teacher training, intuitively I knew this was the path for me. I deeply believe that as long as I do what I love, it will be in line with my vision and it will lead me to the place(s) I have to be. This also means that for me there is no clear division between my professional and personal life, as all I do comes forth out of this same grounded idea.

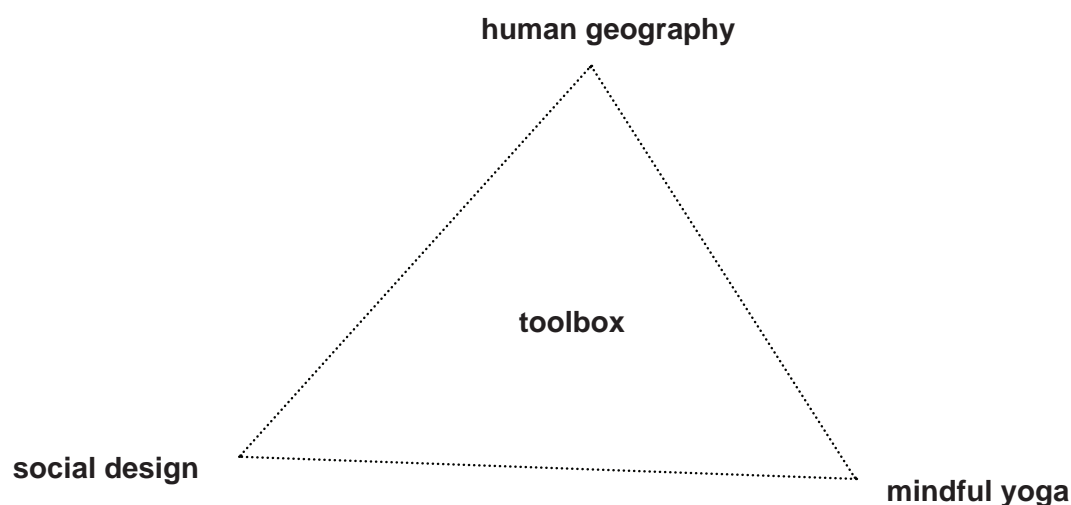


Figure 3. Toolbox for conscious living connecting human geography, social design, mindful yoga.

What has become (more) clear to me, thanks to the course, is my vision on my role in society and the ability that I have, to contribute to it. I am now able to see clearly the impact I want to make. To do this, I can use the 'tools' that I collected in my toolbox during the past years. Now I can see more clearly how it all comes together and how it all fits into one clear perspective and vision. Hereby the tools complement each other: now I am able to connect theory and practice. This reflects the role I see for myself, which I already explained above, to be(come) a connector.

Next to the yoga course, I did an extra internship at DRIFT, the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions in Rotterdam, in which I learned about societal transitions. This transition thinking has opened up a new perspective for me that yet has proven to be useful. The tools in the toolbox are all means with which I can (hopefully) contribute to the transition to a more sustainable way of living.

As this thesis is the final part with which I bring my study trajectory to a close, it has simultaneously served as a kick off to further discover the space between science and design. This thesis was a first exploration of this space, now I will start to search further.

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Appendix B

Interview guides

Interview guide neighbour / Guia de entrevista vecino

Name / Nombre:

.....

Place & Date / Lugar y fecha:

.....

Occupational Status / Estatus Ocupacional:

.....

Place of residence / Lugar de residencia:

.....

Introductory Questions / Preguntas Introductorias

1. For how long have you been living here? Have you always lived here? /
Cuánto tiempo lleva viviendo aquí? Siempre ha vivido aquí?
2. Why do you live here? How did you find this place? /
Porque vive aquí? Como encontro este lugar?
3. Does this place differ from where you lived before? If so, in what way? /
Este lugar, esta diferente a donde vivia antes? En cual manera?
4. How was it when you came to live here (house, neighbourhood)? /
Como era cuando se mudo aquí? (casa, barrio)
5. Do you rent, or own? /
Alquila, o esta usted el dueño de su casa?

Social Capital

6. Do you know many people here in the neighbourhood? /
Conosce a mucho gente aquí en el barrio?
7. How is the social contact with your neighbours (in the neighbourhood)?
Como esta la convivencia con los vecinos aquí en el barrio?
8. Are you part of any social group/club in the neighbourhood or in Cerro del Carmen? Or do you take part in any social / cultural activities (f.e. bibliobus)? Where do they take place? /
Esta usted parte de algun club o grupo social in este barrio o en el Cerro del Carmen? O comparte en alguna actividad social o cultural aquí? Donde llevan acabo?
9. Are there any places in the neighbourhood to gather socially? Do you go there? /
Hay lugares para convivir aquí en el barrio? Que usted usa?
10. Do you know what social / cultural activities take place in and around the park? /
Usted sabe cuales actividades llevan acabo dentro y alrededor del parque?

Meaning of Place, Place Attachment

11. What do you think of you neighbourhood, is it an adequate place to

live? Why? /

Como percibe usted su barrio, es un lugar adecuado para vivir? Por que?

12. Are there places that you like to go in the neighbourhood? Which places, and why? /
Hay lugares donde usted le gusta ir en este barrio? Cuales, y porque?
13. Are there places that you do not like to go in the neighbourhood? Which places, and why? /
Hay lugares donde usted no le gust air en este barrio? Cuales, y por que?
14. Have you noticed the cambios in the park and its surroundings? /
Ha sentido los cambios en el parque Cerro del Carmen y sus alrededores?
15. How do you perceive the Cerro del Carmen park? Has it improved, if so, in what way? /
Que percibe usted el parque Cerro del Carmen, ha mejorado? En cual manera?
16. Do you visit the park? How often, and what do you do there? /
Usted visite el parque Cerro del Carmen? Cuando, y que hace?
17. Do you remember how the park / neighbourhood was before? Did you visit the park before? /
Puede recordar como era el parque y el barrio antes? Ha visitado el parque antes?
18. Does the park influence your view on the neighbourhood? In what way? /
El parque, se influya su perception de este barrio? En cual manera?
19. Do you feel at home here? Why? /
Se siente en casa aqui? Porque?
20. Do you feel you belong here? Why? /
Se siente que pertenece aqui? Porque?
21. Can you identify with this neighbourhood? Why? /
Se puede identificar con este barrio? Porque?

Perception of urban liveability

22. What services do you use? Have you always had access? /
Cuales servicios usa usted? (agua, luz, basura) Siempre ha tenido acceso?
23. The changes in the park and in its surroundings, have they had any positive effect on your living situation? /
Los cambios en el parque y su alrededor, han afectado a usted en una manera positiva (han mejorado su situacion de vida)? (seguridad, actividades social cultural, espacio verde etc)
24. Are there also negative effects, according to you?
Hay tambien efectos negativos, segun usted?
25. Are you satisfied with living situation? house / what do you need / miss in the neighbourhood / park? (points for improvement) /
Como se siente con su estado de vivir actual? Hay algo que todavia falta en este barrio o en el parque, o que pudiera ser mejorado?
26. How do you feel about the security situacion here? Has it changes since the changes in the neighbourhood?
Como se siente la situacion de seguridad? Ha cambiado despues de los cambios en el parque y sus alrededores?
27. How do you feel here at night, are the streets illuminated?
Como se siente aqui en la noche, las calles son iluminadas?

28. Are there still problems in the neighbourhood? Have they changed, improved? /
 Todavía hay problemas en el barrio según usted? (han cambiado, mejorado?)
29. Are you planning to stay here? Why?
 Piensa usted en quedarse aquí? O quisiera ir a otro lado?

Any questions or remarks that you would like to share?

Algunas preguntas o puntos adicionales que usted desea mencionar?

Do you know any neighbours that I could interview?

Conoce algún vecino que pudiera entrevistar?

Interview cultural actors / Entrevista actores culturales

Name / Nombre:

.....

Place & Date / Lugar y fecha:

.....

M – F

Place of Residence / Lugar de vivienda:

.....

Occupational Status / Estatus Ocupacional:

.....

Questions / Preguntas

Introductory Questions / Preguntas Introductorias

1. For how long is the cultural group running? /
 Por cuánto tiempo ya tienen su grupo cultural?
2. Why did you start the cultural group? /
 Porque iniciaron el grupo cultural?
3. Can you tell me a bit about your group, (its origin, mission, name)? /
 Me puede explicar un poco sobre su grupo? Que hacen, (su origen, como lo han empezado, nombre, mission)?
4. What activities have you initiated, or are you organizing?
 Cuales actividades han iniciados o llevan acabo?
 - Who take part? Quienes participan?
 - When do they take place? Cuando llevan acabo?
 - Where do they take place? Donde llevan acabo?
5. Did you feel a necessity to start you cultural group? /
 Sentian una necesidad de iniciar su grupo cultural?

Participation Process

6. How did you become acquainted with the urban revitalization project? /
 Como llego a conocer el proyecto de la revitalización urbana?

7. How where you involved in the project? /
Como involucraron a usted en el proyecto?
8. What was done to set up the group / how did the process go? /
Que fue hecho para iniciar el grupo / Como fue el proceso de iniciarse?
9. What did you learn from the project? /
Que ha aprendido del proyecto?
10. What could have been done better in the process of the project? /
Segun usted, que pudiera ser mejorado en el proceso del proyecto?

Social capital

11. Did you get to know more neighbours because of your cultural group? /
Ha conocido mas gente del barrio por su grupo cultural?
12. How is the social contact with your neighbours? /
Como esta la convivencia con los vecinos aqui en el barrio?
13. Are there any places in the neighbourhood to gather socially? Do you go there? /
Hay lugares para convivir aqui en el barrio? Que usted usa?
14. Apart from your cultural group, are there any other (social) activities that you attend in the neighbourhood? /
Aparte de su grupo cultural, hay mas actividades (sociales) en que usted participe en su barrio?

Meaning of Place and place attachment

15. What do you think of this neighbourhood, is it an adequate place for your group? Why? /
Como se percibe este barrio? Es un buen lugar para su grupo? Por que?
16. How would you characterize this neighbourhood? /
Como puede caracterizar su barrio?
17. What are the positive / negative aspects of this neighbourhood? /
Que son los aspectos positivos / negativos de vivir en su barrio?
18. According to you, what effect/impact has your group on the neighbourhood?
Segun usted, que efecto o impacto tiene su grupo al barrio?
19. How do you perceive the Cerro del Carmen park? Do you use the park with your group?
Como percibe usted el parque Cerro del Carmen? Ha mejorado? Usted usa el parque con su grupo?
20. Have you noticed the cambios in the park and its surroundings? /
Ha sentido los cambios en el parque Cerro del Carmen y sus alrededores?
21. Do you visit the park? How often, and what do you do there? /
Usted visite el parque Cerro del Carmen? Cuando, y que hace?
22. Do you remember how the park / neighbourhood was before? Did you visit the park before? /
Puede recordar como era el parque y el barrio antes? Ha visitado el parque antes?
23. Does the park influence your view on the neighbourhood? In what way? /
El parque, se influya su perception de este barrio? En cual manera?
24. Do you feel at home here? Why? /

- Se siente en casa aqui? Porque?
25. Do you feel you belong here? Why? /
Se siente que pertenece aqui? Porque?
26. Can you identify with this neighbourhood? Why? /
Se puede identificar con este barrio? Porque?

Perception on urban liveability

27. How was the cultural situation before in the neighbourhood?
Como era la situacion cultural antes en el barrio?
28. Has the cultural situation changed since you initiated your group, how is the current cultural situation?
Como ha cambiado la situacion cultural, como es ahora?
29. How do you feel in the neighbourhood? How is the security situation?
Como se siente en el barrio? Como se siente la situacion de seguridad?
30. Has the security situation changed in the neighbourhood since the urban revitalization project was implemented? In what way? /
Ha cambiado la situacion de seguridad en el barrio desde el proyecto fue implementado? En cual manera?
31. The changes in the park and in its surroundings, have they had any positive effect on your living situation? /
Los cambios en el parque y su alrededor, han afectado a usted en una manera positiva (han mejorado su situacion de vida)?
(seguridad, actividades social cultural, espacio verde etc)
32. Are there still problematic situations in the neighbourhood that could be improved? /
Todavia hay situaciones que pudieran ser mejorado en el barrio?
33. Has the neighbourhood improved because of the project? In what way? /
Ha mejorado el barrio por el proyecto? En cual manera?
34. Are you planning to stay in the neighbourhood? Why?
Piensa usted en quedarse en el barrio? Porque?

Any additional comments or questions?

Algun comentario o preguntas additional?

Do you know any neighbours that I could interview?

Conosce usted vecinos que pudiera entrevistar?

Interview guide - Urban planners

Name / Nombre:

.....

Place & Date / Lugar y fecha:

.....

Function in the workshop / Función en el taller

.....

Questions / Preguntas

Introductory Questions / Preguntas Introductorias

1. What are the main characteristics of Guatemala City? /
Cuales son las características principales de la Ciudad de Guatemala?
2. Can you explain what you mean with 'the city to live in'? /
Me pueden explicar que significa 'La ciudad para vivir'?
3. Why was the urban revitalization project started? /
Porque iniciaron el proyecto de revitalización urbano?
4. Why is the project called Renueva tu Barrio? /
Porque el proyecto se llama Renueva tu Barrio?
5. How do Cerro del Carmen and Renueva tu Barrio relate to each other? /
Como se relaciona Cerro del Carmen a Renueva tu Barrio?
6. Why did you choose Cerro del Carmen as project location? /
Porque seleccionaron el Cerro del Carmen y los barrios aledaños como ubicación para el proyecto?
7. For how long has the project been running? /
Por cuanto tiempo ha estado funcionando el proyecto?
8. What are the goals / objectives of the urban revitalization project? /
Cuales son los objetivos del proyecto de la revitalización urbano Cerro del Carmen / Renueva tu Barrio?
9. What do you mean with 'revitalización urbana'? /
Que quiere decir 'revitalización urbana'?
10. Can you indicate what the different aspects of the urban revitalization project are? /
Me podrían indicar cuales son los diferentes aspectos del proyecto de la revitalización urbana?

Participation process / Proceso de participación del vecino

11. Can you indicate how you involve the neighbours in the project? /
Me pueden indicar como involucran ustedes los vecinos en el proyecto urbano?
12. Could there be improvements in the participation process? /
Podrían indicar mejoramientos para el proceso de participación del vecino?
13. Did you take 'gender' into consideration in the project? /
Han tomado en consideración en el proyecto el tema de género? Y si, en cual manera?
14. More in general, how do you perceive civil participation in the urban revitalization process? /
Mas en general, como perciben la participación civil en el proceso de la revitalización urbana?
15. Does this project differ from other urban revitalization projects? If so, why, or how? /
Es este proyecto de revitalización urbana diferente de otros iniciativas en la ciudad, y si, en cual manera?

Urban liveability / Habitabilidad urbana

16. How do you perceive the liveability in Guatemala City? /
Como perciben la habitabilidad urbana en la Ciudad de Guatemala?

17. How was the situation in the neighbourhood before you started with the project? /
Como era la situacion con respecto a la habitabilidad urbana en el area de intervencion antes que empezaron el proyecto?
18. What changes with respect to urban liveability have you observed in the area of intervention during the urban revitalization process? /
Cuales cambios han visto / han observado durante el proceso de la revitalizacion urbana acerca de la habitabilidad urbana en el area del intervencion?
19. How is the present situation with respect to urban liveability in the area of the project? /
Como es la situacion de la habitabilidad urbana actual en los barrios del proyecto?
20. How do you regard the new developments that are currently taking place around Cerro del Carmen? /
Como ven el desarrollo actual en el barrio alrededor del Cerro del Carmen? (me refiero por ejemplo al edificio que estan constuyendo ahora al lado del parque)
21. What would you like to accomplish more with the urban revitalization project? /
Que desean lograr mas en el futuro con el proyecto?
22. Do you have any additional comment or questions? /
Tienen alguna pregunta o comentario additional?

Appendix C

Neighbourhood mapping workshop guidelines

MANUAL FOR DRAWING A MAP OF YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD MANUAL PARA DIBUJAR MAPA DE SU BARRIO

Please, draw a map of your neighbourhood. I would like to know how you see your neighbourhood. Imagine guiding someone who doesn't know your neighbourhood.

Por favor, dibuje una mapa de su barrio. Me gustaria conocer como usted percive su barrio. Imagina guiar alguin que no conoce su barrio.

In your map, could you indicate:

En su mapa, puede indicar:

1. Where you live (your house)?
Dónde usted vive (su casa)?
2. Who you live with?
Quienes viven donde usted vive?
3. When you leave your house, where do you go, or what places do you visit? (Draw where you go, and the route you take to get to that place) Cuando sale de su casa, donde va, o cual(es) lugar(es) visita? (Dibuja donde va, y la ruta que toma para llegar al lugar)
4. Where you work (Draw the place and the route you take to get to the place)
Donde usted trabaja (Dibuja el lugar y la ruta que toma para llegar)
5. Where you do your groceries (Draw where you go, and the route you take to get there)
Donde usted hace sus compras (Dibuja donde va, y la ruta que toma para llegar)
6. Your favourite place(s) in your neighbourhood
Su lugar(es) favorit(es) de su barrio
7. Places for conviviality you use in your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) de convivencia que usted usa en su barrio
8. Place(s) where you like to go in your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) donde usted le gusta ir en su barrio
9. Place(s) where you do not like to go in your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) donde usted no le gusta ir en su barrio
10. Secure place(s) in your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) seguros en su barrio
11. Insecure place(s) in your neighbourhood
Lugares(es) inseguros de su barrio
12. Place(s) where social or cultural activities take place where you go to or participate in
Lugar(es) donde llevan a cabo actividades sociales o culturales don de usted va o participa
13. Place(s) where social or cultural groups are located where you are part of
Lugar(es) donde llevan a cabo grupos sociales o culturales en donde usted participa
14. Where is the Cerro del Carmen park in relation to your house?
Donde esta el parque Cerro del Carmen, en relacion a su casa?
15. Changes in and around the Cerro del Carmen park. Could you draw

what has changed?

Cambios dentro y alrededor del parque Cerro del Carmen. Puede dibujar que ha cambiado?

16. Place(s) where your (grand)children play
Lugar(es) donde juegan sus niños y/o nietos
17. Describe your neighbourhood in a few words.
Describir su barrio en unas palabras?
18. Important place(s) in your neighbourhood.
Lugar(es) importantes para usted en su barrio
19. Place(s) that you find characteristic for your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) que son característicos en su barrio, según usted
20. Daily routes you take in your neighbourhood
Rutas diarias que usted toma en su barrio
21. Place(s) where you regularly go in your neighbourhood
Lugar(es) donde usted viene regularmente en su barrio
22. What place(s) lack in your neighbourhood? Where could they be?
¿Qué (tipo de) lugar falta en su barrio? ¿Dónde podría ser?
23. Are there places in your neighbourhood you frequently visited before, but now not anymore?
¿Hay lugares donde usted venía mucho antes, pero ahora ya no en su barrio?
24. Could you write your name in your map?
¿Puede escribir su nombre en su mapa?

Thank you very much!

MUCHAS GRACIAS!

Appendix D

Overview of interviewees

Name	Function	Date
Onice A.	architect	07-04-2014
Ingrid de la V.	architect	07-04-2014
Carolina A.	park management	10-04-2014
Vera	shop owner	10-04-2014
Luis	inhabitant	10-04-2014
Miguel	inhabitant	23-04-2014
Luisa	inhabitant	25-04-2014
Manuel	inhabitant	29-04-2014
Ronald	park visitor	30-04-2014
Celia	park visitor	30-04-2014
Teresa	park management	30-04-2014
Maria	inhabitant	06-05-2014
Elena	inhabitant	06-05-2014
Lea	inhabitant	15-05-2014
Maria C.	inhabitant	15-05-2014
Marco	inhabitant	22-05-2014
Julio Estrada	urban planner	23-05-2014
Ana	inhabitant	23-05-2014
Julio	inhabitant	27-05-2014
Carmen	new inhabitant	28-05-2014

This overview reflects the people who were interviewed during the fieldwork, both formally and informally.

Appendix E

Fieldwork blog

Tastes of Place

Stories of the city from below

The blog 'Tastes of Place – stories of the city from below' was created together with Isis Boot, during the process of writing this thesis. It was created to serve both as inspiration for the writing process as well as as an incentive for me to actively engage in seeing the city from below during my fieldwork in Guatemala City.

As can be read on the website, the blog tastes of Place presents itself as a virtual stage for stories about real people, tastes and places around the globe. We perceive the urban landscape from below, from the micro-geographies of people's experience. The aim of Tastes of Place is to become a growing network of locally infiltrated editors and photographers while dealing with the true primary values in life: food, social interaction and shelter. These values are translated in our key-perspectives: tastes, people and places. The basic principle is that in each story these three key-perspectives are linked to each other. However the emphasis and interpretation will vary and depend on the subject and the author".

Tastes of Place is an initiative of Anne van Strien and Isis Boot (Eds.) and was first launched in spring 2014.

www.tastesofplace.com





About the author

Who is involved in making the city? How does the city come to being? The process of place-making in the urban landscape is the framework of my research interests, as these questions illustrate. As a researcher I am interested in transitions in urban developments towards more participatory forms of urban design and development. I look for ways how people are experiencing and behaving in their environment, with an eye on both European as well as Latin American urban landscapes.

Combining human geographical research with my background as a social designer, I connect insights from both disciplines which form the basis of my research practice. Building forth on these connections, I try to make sense of urban transitions towards more sustainable forms of living.

www.annevanstrien.nl

