

## **Addressing Urban Fear and Violence in Bogotá (Colombia) through the Culture of Citizenship: Scope and Challenges of a Unique Approach**

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Widespread violence and rising crime rates are one of the most challenging governance problems of many Latin American cities. Bogotá, the largest and most populous city in Colombia, has 7,259,597 inhabitants (DANE 2009a). In 1995, Bogotá represented an extreme case of violence and insecurity in terms of numbers of homicides (3,657 per year), street robberies (13,027 per year), house robberies (1,301), bank assaults (382) and traffic accidents (Camacho, 1996: p. 5). Besides taking thousands of lives and producing thousands of handicapped people, this situation caused urban residents to live in an environment of fear, insecurity, and a permanent lack of confidence in their fellow citizens and in the city's institutions. Pérgolis (1993: 30) summarised the then prevalent imaginary among the city's residents with the following words: "Bogotá of fear. Unliveable Bogotá. City of street robberies, beggars, armed pedestrians, never-ending traffic jams, uncollected rubbish. Bogotá of panic, intolerance and hate". A decade later, dramatic changes had taken place regarding the relationship of the citizens to their city. Some authors have even spoken of a "revolution": residents are proud to live in Bogotá, they are willing to contribute to the city's finances, they are more inclined to respect traffic signals, their participation in development plans is steadily increasing (Rojas 2004). What is behind such a transformation? This paper addresses that question by examining the approaches to urban governance that have been implemented by the city's mayors since the early 1990s, when the mayors were first elected by popular vote. The paper focuses in particular in the 1995-2005 period when Mayor Antanas Mockus developed the "culture of citizenship" approach.

This paper postulates that the urban governance approaches implemented by Bogotá's mayors during the 1995-2005 period are unique, for four main reasons. First of all, they are formulated from a different perspective to the one prevalent in other cities of the continent, namely to prioritise social coexistence rather than economic profit. In recent years many Latin American cities have been increasingly planned and governed according to the principles of a cultural economy, which sees and uses culture and ethnicity as valuable marketing products. Thus, culture and ethnicity have become a means of creating a particular identity for the city in order to attract tourists and investors, thereby maximising economic outcomes. In contrast to this stands the approach of "cultura ciudadana", a term that has been translated as "culture of citizenship" (Rojas 2004) or "cultural agency" (Sommer 2006). This was conceived and implemented in the early 1990s by Antanas Mockus, when he was newly elected as Mayor of Bogotá. The idea was to mobilize urban residents to adopt a set of shared habits, actions and regulations that generate a sense of belonging and facilitate urban coexistence. Antanas Mockus saw the promotion of a "culture of citizenship" as the key to counteract social violence and insecurity. Secondly, and in contrast to other Latin American cities where the approach to tackling urban violence has often been repressive and defensive (i.e. creating gated communities and increasing the numbers of police and security guards), the mayors' in Bogotá have emphasized that reducing crime and violence is not just a matter of repression but of education and culture as well. Thus, culture is equated with non-violence. Thirdly, the approaches implemented in the city of Bogotá were imbedded in a political

process of decentralisation, dating back to the late 1980s, which made it possible to move away from patronage and clientelism and the general lack of citizen participation. Finally, the interventions of Bogotá's mayors during the period of study have been comprehensive, including reform of the police, establishment of legal, educational and cultural systems, and they have been implemented within the framework of multi-sectoral partnerships.

This article is structured in three parts. The first briefly introduces Colombia's process of decentralisation and describes the urban governance approaches that were implemented by Bogotá's Mayors during the 1995-2005 period. The second part reflects on the processes that have made Bogotá's transformation possible and discusses the long-term challenges of such approaches. Finally, the conclusions address the practical and theoretical lessons that can be drawn from the case of Bogotá with respect to the culture of citizenship.

### **1. Political decentralisation and urban governance approaches in Bogotá (1995-2005)**

Decentralisation processes started in Colombia in the 1980s in an effort to improve municipal finances and to devolve political power to local governments. An important characteristic of Colombia's decentralization process is that it was largely initiated as a response to the crisis of legitimacy of the national government and the traditional political parties (Rojas 2004; Angel, Lowden, and Thorp 2001). In 1986 a legislative act allowed municipalities to elect mayors. This was a significant step towards decentralisation, since the President had formerly designated mayors. The Constitutional reform of 1991 consolidated the decentralisation process: one of its main emphases was to strengthen the levels of participation of citizens in decision-making processes. According to Article 2, the State has a constitutional mandate to ensure citizen participation in decisions related to the economic, political, administrative, and cultural aspects of the nation. To that effect, with the change of the Constitution, the mayor of the city of Bogotá was to be elected by the citizens. Thus, since 1991, five Mayors have been democratically elected in the city of Bogotá: Jaime Castro (1992-1994), Antanas Mockus (1995-1997 and 2001-2003), Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2000), Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004-2007), Samuel Moreno Rojas (2008-2001). The election of Mayors by city residents represented a notable break with traditional politics, which previously had been characterised by patronage, *clientelismo* and *caudillismo*. Also, the previous designations of Bogotá's mayors were used by the political establishment to set up successors to the President of the Republic.

Bogotá's first democratically elected Mayor was Jaime Castro (1992-1994), who is considered by some as the "founding father" of Bogotá's transformation (Ardila Gómez 2003). Castro's main contribution to the city was to draft and enact a Charter for Bogotá, which modernized the city's tax code and created the instruments that allowed the city to markedly increase its revenues. The Charter also opened the door for civil society to participate in the city's decision-making processes. In 1995, Antanas Mockus, a mathematician (University of Burgundy, France), philosopher (National University of Colombia), and pedagogue, who had until then worked as rector of the National University, the country's largest University, was elected as Bogotá's mayor. The unique feature of his candidacy was that he did not belong to any political party. This represented a dramatic change in Colombia's political landscape, since Mockus was the first independent candidate to occupy one of Colombia's most important political jobs.

### 1.1. Mobilising a culture of citizenship

When Mockus took office in 1995 he was faced with the challenge of tackling the severe problems of urban violence described above. However, he had a clear philosophy of how to tackle such problems. A central element of his philosophy, partly inspired by his readings of well-known academics such as Jon Elster, Jürgen Habermas and Douglass North, is his firm belief that transforming the attitude of urban citizens towards their city was the key to the problem. Thus, he shaped the approach of “culture of citizenship” (“cultura ciudadana”), founded on the idea that urban violence is best combated by inducing citizens to be respectful of each other and thereby make peaceful interaction possible (Mockus 2001). Mobilising a culture of citizenship was considered to be a necessary first step before considering other measures, such as increasing the numbers of police officers and security guards, or improving urban infrastructure. Mockus argued that violence is rooted in a lack of shared values, in a lack of communication, and mutual fear. The result is an absence of respect for other people’s lives and disregard for the law. Acquisition of the values and attitudes of citizenship is central to his arguments. He argues that “individuals are not born as citizens but become one”. In his view, becoming a citizen implies being treated as a citizen, i.e. with respect, and learning to treat others as citizens (also in their relations with the State).

Overall, the culture of citizenship consists of a set of shared habits, actions and regulations that generate a sense of belonging and facilitate urban coexistence, and lead to the respect and recognition of civic rights and duties. For Mockus, the task of city administrators is to mobilise the process of a shared culture of citizenship. Losing the fear of each other and being less prone to violence takes place via intensified communication. Since the city is above all a territory of communication and interaction, the task of administrators becomes one of helping citizens lose their fear by communicating more intensively. This raises the question of how to change people’s behaviour and induce them to be more respectful of each other. In Mockus’ eye, being able to mobilise a culture of citizenship required first understanding the mechanisms that regulate people’s actions and behaviour in the public sphere. What are these mechanisms? Mockus’ answer is that three different types of systems regulate the behaviour of individuals: (a) self-regulation, (b) mutual regulation and (c) legal regulation, as seen in Table 1. Each one of these regulatory systems works on the basis of both “negative” and “positive” mechanisms. Negative mechanisms are generally associated with fear. For example, in the case of self-regulatory systems, individuals fear the guilt that they will experience when they behave in a way that is rejected by society. In the case of mutual regulatory systems, individuals fear social rejection and social shame. In the case of legal regulatory systems, individuals fear legal punishment. In contrast, positive systems are associated with personal satisfaction, i.e. the satisfaction of obeying one’s conscience (self-regulation systems), of obtaining social recognition (mutual regulation systems) and of obeying the law (legal regulation system). According to Mockus, the challenge of urban coexistence is the harmonisation of these three types of regulation. Urban violence arises when the connection between these three regulatory systems is absent (Mockus 2007).

**Table 1. The behaviour of individuals in the public sphere: Three types of regulatory systems**

Types of regulation	Negative mechanisms	Positive mechanisms
Self-regulation	Fear of guilt	Satisfaction of obeying one's conscience
Mutual regulation	Fear of social reject / shame	Social recognition
Legal regulation	Fear of legal punishment	Satisfaction of obeying the law

What is interesting about the “culture of citizenship” is that it goes beyond the commonly known concept of civic culture. Rojas (2004:293), for example, argues that civic culture is a narrow term, restricted to attitudes and orientations of individuals toward political phenomena. In this conceptualisation, attitudes and orientations are seen as given in some cultures. Thus, Almond and Verba (1963) conclude that civic culture has deep roots in the United Kingdom and United States, and that Mexico has almost no civic culture. Rojas (idem) values the culture of citizenship because it implies that culture is not something “pre-existent”, but that it results from a process of regulation between individuals.

How to mobilise a culture of citizenship in practice? As explained above, the approach of Mockus was to harmonise the three regulatory systems in Table 1. In order to promote the ideas that the well being of the collective is as important as that of the individual, and that people should voluntarily respect norms of coexistence, his administration developed a series of programmes and actions, which are described below.

*(a) Traffic mimes and behaviour cards: respect for others and collective well-being*

A large number of traffic violations, with the corresponding traffic accidents and rampant corruption among the traffic police, were a widespread problem in Bogotá. Rather than hiring more traffic officers, the Mockus administration hired “traffic mimes” (mostly young actors and students of the dramatic arts), whose task was not to hand out fines to traffic offenders but to motivate citizens to behave in a more civic way. Initially, 20 traffic mimes shadowed pedestrians who did not follow road-crossing rules. A pedestrian who ran across the road instead of using a nearby pedestrian crossing would be tracked by a mime who mocked his every move. Later on, more than 400 traffic mimes stood at major street intersections and admonished, with extravagant gestures, any bus or car drivers who ran red lights, who failed to stop at pedestrian crossings or parked on sidewalks. With time, many Bogotanos became terrified of being caught by a traffic mime because they did not want to experience social shame. In a further measure to tackle traffic violations, citizens were asked to put their social regulatory power to use with 350,000 “thumbs-up” and “thumbs-down” cards that the Mayor’s office distributed. The cards were to be displayed at the moment that a citizen approved or disapproved of another’s behaviour; it was a device that many people actively –and peacefully– used in the streets. The aim of these cards was a peaceful solution to law violations by invoking co-responsibility and self-regulation. Whereas the “thumbs-up” cards awarded social recognition, the “thumbs-down” card dispensed social shame.



*(b) Knights of the Zebra and road stars: social recognition and self-regulation*

Being robbed, abused or kidnapped by a taxi driver used to be a serious security issue in Bogotá. The Mayor asked city residents to call his office if they found an honest taxi driver and provide his/her contact details. The Mayor's office organised a meeting with these taxi drivers, who were named by the Mayor "Knights of the Zebra" (for zebra crossing) and awarded a windshield sticker. Clients gave preference to taxi drivers who had such a windshield sticker. The intended effect of the Knight of the Zebra measure was to raise consciousness among taxi drivers that taxi service is an instrument of collaboration between the drivers and their clients. A further measure adopted by the Mayor's office was to paint large yellow stars on the street spots where somebody had been killed in a road accident. By 1996, some five years later, 1500 such stars had been painted on Bogotá's streets. This measure clearly aimed at mobilising the self-regulatory system: fear of guilt every time one sees a star and also the satisfaction of obeying one's own conscience when driving carefully.

*(c) The Carrot Law and the Women's Night: protecting life and learning from women*

Mockus' office proclaimed the "Carrot Law", from the Colombian slang for someone who is "not cool", by demanding that every bar and entertainment locale close at 1 am, with the goal of diminishing drinking, violence and traffic accidents. Further, it proclaimed a "Women's Night" programme, which consisted of turning over the city's public spaces to its female residents. On specific Friday nights, women were encouraged to go out and take over the city's public spaces. Men were asked to voluntarily stay at home. Many women went out, flocking to free open-air concerts. They flooded into bars, pedestrian zones and streets to celebrate their night. When they saw a man staying at home or taking care of children they applauded. The idea of creating a Women's Night was based on statistical evidence that men are more likely than women to commit violence and that men are forty times more likely to be its victims. The Women's night was intended as an opportunity for city residents to see what can be learned from women's forms of social organisation and also to protect men from themselves. The programme results showed that violence on Women's Night was 40% lower than on ordinary Friday nights.

*(d) Struggle against police corruption, community policing and reduction of the number of guns*

In his struggle against corruption, Mockus' administration closed down the traffic police because many of its 2000 members were notoriously corrupt. Mayor Mockus reduced the corruption that involved in policing the transit system by transferring this task from the police under the Secretary of Transit and

Transport to the Metropolitan Police, who depend directly on the National Police. At the same time, a system of community policing was created. The aim was to bring the community and the police closer together through the creation of Schools of Civic Security and local security fronts (Camacho, 1999). The creation of the schools and the fronts responded to the civic ideal of promoting community organisation. Another further measure was the "Vaccine against violence". The Mayor's office mobilised city residents to protest against violence. They invented a "vaccine against violence", asking people to draw the faces of the people who had hurt them on balloons, and then purposefully burst the balloons by inserting pins. About 50,000 people participated in this campaign. A further campaign started in 1995 with the aim of reducing the number of guns in the street by promoting voluntary disarmament. Industry owners and the international community supported the campaign through embassies that donated gift bonuses to the citizens that voluntarily handed over their guns. The 2,538 guns that the City Hall collected were melted and the metal was used to produce spoons for children. The spoons bore the inscription "I was a gun". As it will be later explained in the following, these campaigns and measures contributed, along with the other programmes described above, to strengthening awareness of violence and to significantly reducing the number of homicides.

*(e) Fiscal discipline and reducing water consumption*

Another aspect of building a culture of citizenship is what the Administration termed "tributary culture". In 2002, 63,000 individuals, households and enterprises voluntarily paid 10% more taxes. The pedagogical objective was to link social policy and infrastructure development and maintenance to the taxes paid by citizens (Mockus 2004). Further, during a drought, Mockus appeared in a television commercial taking a shower and asking citizens to turn off the water as they soaped. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness about responsible use of water and how the individual can contribute to collective well-being. The campaign was followed by a 50% reduction in the use of drinking water.

*(f) Culture at the Park*

By the mid 1990s there were few public festivities taking place in Bogotá's public spaces, mainly because of the citizen's fear of criminality and urban violence. Public spaces, however, were seen by Mockus' Administration as key sites for the mobilisation of the culture of citizenship. Therefore, in 1995, the Institute for the Promotion of Culture and Tourism (IDCT) supported the initiative of a young group of Bogotanos to convene a rock festival involving several urban groups. The idea was to expand on the "Youth Music meetings" held at the city's Planetarium in 1992. Thus, the first "Rock at the Park" festival took place in 1995. This festival initiative eventually became a wider policy known as "La cultura al parque" (López Borbón 2001). Parks and squares were upgraded to allow free public concerts in a variety of musical genres, such as jazz, salsa, opera, reggae, rap and hip-hop. The festival takes place over three days at Bogotá's Simon Bolivar Park. The "Culture at the Park" policy allowed people of different socio-economic levels to congregate in spaces where they share a common musical or artistic interest.



(g) *Observatory of the culture of citizenship: supporting and monitoring policy formulation*

Mockus' Administration identified the necessity of having well-founded studies on Bogotá's urban violence problems, to support policy formulation and to monitor the progress of the culture of citizenship programmes. For that purpose, an "Observatory of the Culture of Citizenship" was created in 1996. At the core of the observatory was a small group of qualified professionals who worked in close cooperation with University academics. The observatory defined three priority research topics: violence and crime, quality of urban life and cultural supply and demand, which were jointly investigated by members of the observatory and of a variety of academic institutions. The Observatory carried out more than fifty studies on the three priority topics, it conducted several public opinion surveys on the Administration's actions and programmes, and it published a newsletter (*Boletín de violencia y delincuencia*) disseminating statistics on violence and criminality in Bogotá. This newsletter was the result of a conscious effort between several public institutions to create the city's first information system providing periodic and reliable information on issues of urban violence and criminality. This required cooperation between a network of government agencies, such as the Attorney General's office, police, forensic medicine, hospitals and public health institutions. The periodic publication of crime statistics, followed by institutional efforts to involve the business community, led to an active participation of the private sector in the solution to the problems. The Chamber of Commerce started conducting periodic surveys of crime perceptions that were made public. The well respected foundation *Fundación Corona* and the Chamber of Commerce periodically reviewed results of the Administration in areas such as education, finances and crime (*Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá*, 2003). Besides generating an information system, the Observatory also designed and applied a means to measure and thus quantify the effects of the culture of citizenship programmes.

Did the pedagogical efforts make a difference? Based on the information produced by the Observatory of the Culture of Citizenship, the Mayor's office undertook a study on the effects of the cultural of citizenship programmes, which was published by the Interamerican Development Bank (Mockus 2001). According to this study, before the beginning of the *cultura ciudadana* campaign the homicide rate was 80 per 100,000 inhabitants (i.e. about 3,500 people killed each year). Less than a decade later the rate had dropped to 22 per 100,000 inhabitants. Besides, a 20% reduction in the number of deaths caused by traffic accidents (from 25 to 20 per 100,000 inhabitants) was also achieved. The study showed that as a result of the campaign efforts, many drivers and pedestrians improved their civic behaviour, showed more respect for others, and became more obedient of traffic rules. For example, before the campaign only 26% of drivers and pedestrians respected conventional traffic signs. In 1996 this percentage rose

to 75%. The mimes programme to promote respect for citizens using zebra crossings was highly effective: citizens began asking others to use zebra crossings and by 1996, 76% of drivers and 73% of pedestrians were systematically respect and using such crossings. Overall, Bogotá's residents approved of the Administration's programmes, giving them a rating of 7 out of 10 points. Sixty-one percent said citizen education was the Administration's most important initiative and 96% considered that these programmes should continue (Secretaría de Gobierno 2002). Many of the measures towards reducing urban violence and promoting urban coexistence have been replicated in other cities of the country.



## 1.2 Building a shared image of the city: public space and public transport

Enrique Peñalosa, an economist (Duke University, U.K.) and public administrator (International Institute of Public Administration, Paris), and also a politically independent candidate, was elected Mayor in 1997. Public space and transport were the main priorities of his Administration. His approach to urban governance was based on the idea of an egalitarian city where all citizens enjoy equal access to public spaces, services, and facilities. Peñalosa believed that public spaces are one of the only environments where all citizens, regardless of income, can meet as equals: "Parks, plazas, pedestrian streets are essential for social justice. High quality sidewalks are a most basic element for a democratic city. It is frequent that images of high-rises and highways are used to portray the advance of a city. In fact, in urban terms "a city is more civilized when a child on a tricycle is able to move about with ease and safety" (Peñalosa, 2004). As he believed that the most essential roles of public spaces are to give citizens a sense of belonging and create a more socially integrated community, he promoted a city model giving priority to children and restricting the use of private cars in public spaces.

Peñalosa inherited the city in a good financial state from the former two administrations (Castro's and Mockus'), and also benefited from significant proceeds from the privatization of the City's Electrical Power Company. Thus, he was able to carry out massive investments in building sidewalks, bicycle pathways, pedestrian streets, greenways, parks and public libraries. Up until the mid-1990s, sidewalks were practically unusable in many parts of the city, mostly because cars would park right up against storefronts, making it impossible for pedestrians to walk along the sidewalks. Many storeowners saw the sidewalks as parking spaces for their businesses. Mockus' Administration had already spotted the problem and interpreted it as a lack of a sense of citizenship, and initiated a program to restore the

public character of sidewalks. This also became a main priority of Peñalosa's Administration, which installed thousands of physical barriers designed to stop cars from parking on the sidewalks. Storeowners reacted violently to the barriers and Mayor Peñalosa was almost impeached. The Defence of Public Space Office was created to recover space that had been illegally occupied, and space for pedestrians was substantially renovated through improvements in sidewalks, traffic signals, lighting, and the planting of trees. The joint efforts of Peñalosa's and Mockus Administrations bore fruit, as it is now common to see people strolling down sidewalks and using pedestrian crossings in an orderly fashion (Concha-Eastman, 2005).



Perhaps the best-known project of Peñalosa's Administration is the building of "Transmilenio", a modern bus network including fixed bus stops (a novelty to Bogotá) and road lanes designated exclusively for public transport. Modelled on the successful schemes in Quito, Ecuador and Curitiba, Brazil, it opened to the public in December 2000 and it now moves 1.4 million people daily (Hidalgo, 2008). Before Transmilenio, Bogotá's mass-transport system consisted of thousands of independently operated and uncoordinated buses that used all available lanes and stopped to pick up or let off passengers at any point they desired, even in the middle lanes of busy roads. Traffic chaos was the result. Private owners operated old buses that emitted huge amounts of exhaust gas, thus significantly polluting the air. The goal of the Transmilenio transit system was to provide a well-organized, efficient and more ecological means of public transport. New Transmilenio lines have been added gradually over the years, and today 9 lines run throughout the city, a length of 84 kilometres, linking with subway and bicycle paths. Overall the Transmilenio system has reduced commuting times by 32% (Hidalgo, 2008), and it is widely regarded as a vast improvement over Bogotá's previous public transit system.

Another of Mayor Peñalosa's priorities was to reduce the number of automobiles on the road and thereby reduce air pollution. The "pico y placa" program (*pico* refers to peak traffic hours and *placa* to license plate number), whereby private cars are prohibited from driving at rush hour on two days of the week, according to the last digit in their license plates. This scheme has considerably reduced congestion at peak times and lowered private automobile use (Montezuma 2005). In addition to this measure, the Peñalosa Administration invited Bogotá's residents to imagine how the city would be without cars. On February 29, 2000, Bogotá held its first (and the world's largest) Car-Free Day. It proved to be so popular that citizens voted in a citywide referendum to make it an annual event. In addition, Peñalosa convinced the City Council to increase the tax on gasoline. Half of the revenues generated by the increase were then invested in the Transmilenio bus system. Further activities by Peñalosa's Administration included the creation of the Urban Land Reform Institute, the building of more

than a hundred nurseries for children under 5, and the installation of computers in all public schools, including connections to the Internet and 3 large new libraries.



## 2. Scope and challenges of governance approaches in Bogotá (1995-2005)

What were the main achievements of the Mockus and Peñalosa Administrations? Besides the specific achievements described above, there are two main areas that can be considered especially innovative regarding urban governance in a Latin American context. First of all, the governance policies were based on the idea that tackling urban problems requires a comprehensive approach. Thus, reforms were carried out in the police, legal, educational and cultural systems. These programmes and reforms were conducted through intense inter-institutional cooperation and partnerships between several public agencies, thus insuring the effectiveness of their implementation. Secondly, and most importantly, changes were made to the political sphere. Owing to the fact that Mockus and Peñalosa did not represent any of the traditional parties, they were able to produce profound changes in the way of conducting politics in urban areas in Colombia: moving away from patronage and clientelismo and the virtual absence of citizen participation. By breaking the traditional clientelistic relationship that existed in Bogotá between the Mayor and the members of the City Council, they were able to introduce a model of urban governance based on citizen participation and to render processes of planning and decision-making more transparent. Also, they were able to choose the best-qualified professionals as members of their staff rather than appointing individuals for political reasons. This resulted in a more professional style of urban governance, which in turn reduced corruption, increased staff efficiency and improved surveillance of contracts awarded to the private sector.

Although at the end of the two Administrations much remained to be done regarding participatory governance, the following two Administrations of Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004-2007) and Samuel Moreno Rojas (2008-2011) were able to sustain and expand their predecessor's approaches. Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Bogotá is a large and complex city characterised by great socio-economic disparity among its residents. Although Bogotá is one of the largest industrial centres in Latin America, the unemployment rate reached an 11.3% in 2008 and 33% of the population (i.e.

1,265.84 individuals) were affected by underemployment (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá 2008). The National Department of Statistics (DANE 2009b) estimates that the income of a third of Bogotá's households is insufficient to cover their basic needs and that nearly two thirds of households earn barely enough to cover their basic needs. The World Bank estimates that Bogotá has over 1400 low-income *barrios* housing 22% of its population (Fainboim 2004). The population of the *barrios* continues to increase owing to the influx of people fleeing poverty and violence in rural areas of the country. According to the Foundation National Forum for Colombia (2006), in the period 1999-2005 more than 260,000 people migrated to Bogotá as a result of displacement, about 3.8% of the total population of Bogotá. The need to improve the lot of Bogotá's low-income population was the clear message that city residents conveyed when they elected the past two Mayors Luis Eduardo Garzón and Samuel Moreno. Moreno and Rojas had a clear agenda of addressing the social issues of poverty and social exclusion and have led many efforts over the past five years to improve the living conditions in Bogotá's most deprived areas. However, this understandable emphasis has meant that programmes to continue promoting a culture of citizenship have been somewhat neglected. Finally, it needs to be taken into account that the future of Bogotá depends not only on the policies of its mayors and on local dynamics but also on the general situation and political dynamics of a country affected by problems of fiscal crisis, economic recession, unemployment, organized crime and guerrilla and paramilitary warfare.

At this point it is worthwhile to reflect on the factors that made Bogotá's transformation possible. Clearly, any city is embedded in its national context and changes taking place at the local level may reflect wider changes. Thus, Bogotá's transformation was possible owing to a combination of national and local factors. At the national level, the process of decentralisation that took place in Colombia in the 1990's made it possible to elect candidates who were politically independent and thus introduce innovations in the way that cities were governed. Without this political development at the national level, local changes in Bogotá would not have been possible. However, it is interesting to note that, although politically independent mayors were elected in other Colombian cities, and many innovative measures implemented, the scope of local transformations was less than that achieved in Bogotá. This is for example the case of the city of Cali, where Rodrigo Guerrero was elected mayor in 1992. At the time, the city was in the midst of a wave of mafia-related violence. Guerrero, a Physician and Epidemiologist (Harvard University, USA) and also a university professor, argued that social disintegration was a main reason for the large murder rate. His DESEPAZ (Desarrollo, seguridad y paz) programme followed a public health approach aimed at reducing crime by controlling risk factors in the city. The programme was successful in reducing the number of murders in Cali, thus inspiring candidates who were then running for the position of mayors elsewhere, such as Antanas Mockus in Bogotá. Unfortunately, Cali's DESEPAZ programme was abandoned after Guerrero left office. Thus, although Cali and Bogotá had similar policies to counteract urban violence, Bogotá was able to maintain the policies for a longer period of time than Cali. Also, the reduction of murders observable in Bogotá was of a greater magnitude than reductions in Cali or other major capital cities (Guerrero, 2006). According to Mayor Guerrero himself (*idem*), the explanation for Cali's inability to maintain the policies over a longer period of time is due to the lack of political will of the municipal authorities. At this point it also needs to be recalled that the characteristics of Cali's and Bogotá's urban violence were very different. Whereas in Cali the problem of urban violence was to a large extent characterised by the violent activities of mafia cartel criminality, no such cartels existed in Bogotá, and violence was a social problem largely resulting

from the negative relationship of citizens to their city and to poverty. Possibly, Bogotá's type of violence was less challenging for city administrators to tackle than mafia organised violence.

Finally, another important factor in Bogotá's case is the continuity and complementarity that existed between the urban governance approaches of the three Administrations (Castro, Mockus and Peñalosa) that took place during the 1992-2003 period. Jaime Castro's Administration created the instruments that allowed the city to increase its revenues and open the door for civil society to participate in the city's decision-making processes. Mockus continued Castro's policies and educated the citizens to become more respectful of each other and to view culture as non-violence. Building on the fiscal savings of the two former Administrations and the education programmes led by Mockus, Peñalosa was able to move a step further and carry out significant investments in mass transportation, restricting private car use and improving public space. Clearly, long-term continuity is an essential factor in sustainable urban governance.

### **3. Conclusions**

The city of Bogotá has experienced a dramatic transformation in recent years regarding its quality of life and the relationship of the citizens to their city. Whereas in the 1990's residents viewed their city as a place characterised by panic, intolerance and hate, a decade later residents were proud to live in Bogotá, and they were more inclined to respect each other and participate in development plans. Quality of life has significantly improved as urban violence has decreased. An efficient public transportation system has been created and public space and cultural activities have been expanded.

Bogotá's transformation has important practical and theoretical lessons. At the practical level of implementation, several cities have tried to replicate Bogotá's model. This paper has argued that the urban governance approaches implemented by Bogotá's mayors during the 1995-2005 period are unique, for four main reasons. First of all, they are formulated from a perspective that prioritises social coexistence rather than economic profit. In contrast, other Latin American cities have been governed according to the principles of a cultural economy that see and use culture and ethnicity as valuable marketing products. Secondly, rather than tackling urban violence from a repressive perspective, the mayors' in Bogotá have emphasized that reducing crime and violence is also a matter of education and culture. Thirdly, the approaches implemented in the city of Bogotá were embedded in a political process of decentralisation, which made it possible to move away from clientelism and the general lack of citizen participation. Finally, the interventions of Bogotá's mayors during the period of study have been comprehensive, including reform of the police, establishment of legal, educational and cultural systems, and they have been implemented within the framework of multi-sectoral partnerships. In spite of its many successes, the city of Bogotá still faces many challenges particularly in the area of poverty and social exclusion. Thus, the election of the last two mayors in the past five years reflects a consensus regarding the importance of poverty. Evaluations of their programmes to combat poverty are urgently needed.

The case of Bogotá is also important at the theoretical level because it reveals issues that still need attention regarding the concepts of culture and citizenship. As Rojas (2004) argues, the concept of the culture of citizenship developed by Mockus has the value that it treats culture not as something "given",

but as something resulting from a process of regulation between individuals. What is also interesting about this concept is that it allows culture to be understood not as customs inherited from the past but as practices in the making. Further, it demonstrates that citizenship is a quality that needs to be learned. Such a pedagogical perspective allows us to expand current notions of social citizenship, which are confined around discussions on rights and political struggle (Marshall 1950, Yuval-Davies and Werbner 1999). Further theoretical reflections on issues of culture, citizenship and the city are a promising avenue for future research.

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