◆   **6**

**Nation, City, and Public Transportation: A Case of
Latin American Hegemony**

Héctor D. Fernández L'Hoeste
Georgia State University

During his first period of government (2002–06), Colombian president
Álvaro Uribe Vélez centered much of his success on a policy called
seguridad democrática (democratic security). For the most part, the
Orwellian moniker describes a series of measures designed to recover the
government's control of crucial segments of the national highway network,
which, during the previous administration of Andrés Pastrana Arango, had
fallen by and large in the hands of guerrilla groups such as the Fuerzas
Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The measures centered
then—for the most part—on matters of space, reinstating the presence of a
national administration in the countryside, a sizeable job given Colombia's
total landmass, equivalent to slightly less than twice the size of Texas.[1] In
the urban sphere, represented by Colombia's capital, Bogotá (pop. 7.8
million), as well as other metropolitan areas, like Medellín (pop. 3.3 million)
and Cali (pop. 2.5 million), Uribe's measures have centered on the
strengthening of public institutions and a more active engagement of the
civilian population. Namely, Uribe has aggressively sought an increase in
the profile of the national government, granting it a significant role in the
elaboration of national identity.

Following ideas by Brazilian theorist Renato Ortiz, who problematizes
the construction of public space amid national and transnational spheres, this
text argues that one of Uribe's key programs, the implementation of bus
rapid transit (BRT) networks throughout the country, modeled on Bogotá's
celebrated public transportation system—better known as TransMilenio—is,
in fact, the urban face of *seguridad democrática*, proposing a common way
of urban displacement that will contribute to the homogenization of
Colombian identity, effectively diminishing the theoretical perception of
difference in terms of regional individuality, as well as to the
hegemonization of urban populations in a key percentage of the national
territory. To come to the point, within the Colombian context, as the

articulator of a relation between regional constructs of national identity (in plain terms, provincial ways of acting Colombian nationality) and the collective enactment of urban space (chiefly, a synonymity between city and country), the BRT paradigm contributes to the configuration of a less cosmopolitan, more regimented Latin American viewpoint.

Origin and Expansion of the Latin American Busway System

In Curitiba, Brazil (pop. 3.3 million), throughout the 1970s, the administration of mayor Jaime Lerner implemented a series of policies that affected the city's development in a radical fashion. Lerner's key interest was to create a city designed around people, not cars. Prominent among his measures was the creation of a BRT network, sustained on the extensive application of busways: that is, road lanes for the exclusive use of long, articulated buses with a capacity of up to 270 passengers. During the creation of the system, one of the first structures to go up was a bus station shaped like a glass tube, a transparent structure that would come to embody the transportation network's presence throughout the metro area and its integration to the fabric of neighboring communities, knitting together, almost literally, various social, cultural, and racial groups. From the start, visibility was a key consideration in the design of the network, with buses colored in lively schemes of red, green, silver, and orange. The fact that the stations were transparent structures played an important role in the visibility of people of different origins—classwise, genderwise, ethnically speaking— traveling together throughout the city. In a way, people—men and women of different races and social status—would be displayed as they moved through the system, in a fashion almost akin to large commercial window displays or aquariums. Thus, the incorporation of large transparent surfaces was a key feature of the design of the stations. In plain terms, the BRT system provided a physical space meant to serve as a bond between less favored social sectors—the dwellers of slums, the *favelados*—and other social segments, willing to reassert their presence as citizens of the capital of the Brazilian state of Paraná. In addition, the system contributed to the merging of ethnicities; like São Paulo, Curitiba's population includes groups of African, European, and Mestizo ancestry, as well as the descendants of numerous Japanese immigrants. Then again, the investment in visibility paid off handsomely. In due time, Curitiba was recognized and celebrated as a novel paradigm for urban development and social integration, and, for a city of its size, gained a formidable international reputation. However, with the eventual increase of the middle class and its embracement of cars, the system's ridership decreased throughout the 1990s. As time went by, the

need for more transportation alternatives became apparent. Nevertheless, to this day, the bus system—also known as the *sistema trinário*—embodies a source of pride for locals. Currently, the system includes forty five miles of busways, 2,160 buses, and 351 bus stations, with over a million daily users.[2]

In Bogotá, the busway system began operating many years later, in December 2000. Modeled on the network of Curitiba, the new network took the BRT layout to a previously untested scale, giving the Colombian capital an opportunity to address its significant transportation problems. After many years of discussion and research, during which repeated local administrations toyed around with the idea of a heavy-rail metro system—a solution involving considerable investment of funds—a pair of progressive municipal administrations during the late 1990s and early 2000s finally set Bogotá on the right track. In the end, despite the fact that some stations were not yet ready at the time of inauguration of the BRT network's first line and the reduced number of articulated buses available for its operation, the new transportation authority proved to be an astounding achievement. The capital city's inhabitants, avid for a dignified mode of transportation, embraced it enthusiastically.

In the coming years, as a result of its immediate acceptance, the BRT network will be expanded throughout the Colombian capital, in an effort to bring order to accelerated, unplanned growth. By late 2006, it had grown well into its second stage, comprising nine different, color-coordinated lines covering most of the city's grid. In addition, the network—given its larger scale—is being hailed as a potential paradigm of alternative modernity for cash-strapped administrations. In effect, the Colombian BRT model has served as inspiration for several Latin American countries, including Argentina (Posadas), Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, though influenced by Curitiba's Metrobus, São Paulo's Interligado, and Porto Alegre's EPTC), Costa Rica (San José), Ecuador (Quito's Ecovía and Guayaquil's Metrobús), Guatemala (Guatemala City), Nicaragua (Managua), Puerto Rico (San Juan), and Venezuela (Mérida and Barquisimeto), as well as for expanding Asian urban centers (Jakarta, Delhi, and Beijing), interested in affordable choices for their growing populations. In addition, in the coming years, Bogota's BRT network will also be replicated in a number of provincial capitals throughout Colombia, ranging in size between one and three million inhabitants. Thus, the impact of TransMilenio will be apparent at the national and transnational level, embodying a veritable example of the impact of globalization on urban identity. Whereas the evolution of the BRT scheme in other countries will be undoubtedly affected by local concerns, in Colombia, the far-reaching repercussions of the widespread adoption of the model have yet to be problematized. To make matters more intriguing, in an uncharacteristic gesture of generosity, the current national administration, led by Uribe, a political leader known for a conservative, parsimonious approach, a firm

grip on the national economy, and outspoken views regarding Colombia's societal turmoil, has promised generous economic backing.

In a recent text, Renato Ortiz points out how the notion of public space still holds a political meaning fundamentally linked to the rise of the modern state (72). Within this assessment, the state's authority holds sway upon a territorially determined community, in which overall "sovereignty" is legitimated by a consensus among individuals. This order, he observes, emerges historically from a contract among the people, following the emancipation of political action from spiritual values and religious motivation. Along the way, the process also gives way to the creation of a space for political action. Thus, he argues, it's hard to dissociate the public sphere from the notion of citizenship, especially in certain circumstances, when individual actions tend to go against the will of heads of state. To make things even more complicated, in Latin America, in particular, public space has been privatized acutely, so individual actions attain a more extensive connotation. As usual, Ortiz situates these observations in the context of globalization. To him, this is a process that redefines the nation-state almost in its entirety, with a far-reaching impact on culture, which, in turn, transforms our understanding of space. Its dynamics tend to revamp the relation between identity and physical space, and transcend local and national constructs. Thus, amid globalization, a key portion of power is no longer articulated from within the nation-state. Nevertheless, a residual complication lies in the fact that, as long as crucial categories like citizenship and civil society are defined in opposition to the modern state, this institution retains some response capability. To explain the nature of this potential response, Ortiz recalls Michel de Certeau's distinction between strategy (linked to institutions and structures of power) and tactic (linked to the generation of personal space in environments defined by strategies), and concludes that, in the context of a worldly modernity, provincial identities are addressed in strategic, not tactical, terms; that is, as actions emanating from a center, with a broad, enhanced perspective. I side with Ortiz's analysis and rely on it to make my argument. With these considerations in mind, I posit the case of BRT as a key example of how certain structures of power, concerned by the definition of an opposition between a whole and its parts, articulate, integrate, and subsume particularities. In short, urban transportation becomes an instrument of response. Within a transnational context, BRT exemplifies the consequences of embracing shifts in the urban paradigms of neighboring nations. Within the national context, though, BRT points towards a re-articulation of the city as a response of the state, seeking to re-invigorate itself via a strategy resulting from global exchange.

In terms of urban identity, the consistency with which the model is being supported by the national government has distinct implications. In a country like Colombia, plagued by inner conflict and lacking a strong project of nationhood, so typical of other Latin American states (e.g.,

Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico), BRT serves as an ideal vehicle for the enforcement of a new, cohesive idea of nation. That is, amidst the eagerness of regional administrations to address the transportation predicaments of rapidly growing provincial capitals, generally viewed as demanding costly solutions and substantial political commitment, the central government discovers an opportunity to restructure the urban identity of the country's eminent cities. In this sense, within Colombia, BRT plays a substantially different role from the one it plays in other Latin American nations, like Brazil or Mexico, where public transportation in urban areas implies a myriad of options, and does not necessarily involve an intense struggle between a whole and its parts. To put it briefly, the TransMilenio model becomes an instrument of central authority, sustaining a distinct idea of *colombianidad* (Colombianness) within the urban environment. Once implemented, the system will result in the popularization and embracement of a common exercise of national identity, born from the similar interaction of the citizenry and urban space, effectively mediated by the reproduction of an identical transportation arrangement throughout the country.

For this reason, this text introduces the case of mass transportation in the Colombian capital and argues that, upon the swift application of its formula to other corners of the country, it is being promoted as a mechanism of national hegemony, in order to support a specific version of Colombian identity, in accordance with the government's ideology and its personal understanding of the role of public space within the margins of an organized society. In plain terms, through the emulation of transportation from the capital and the subsequent reproduction of an experience contributing to a determined socio-spatial profile, the object is to empower a new regulatory spirit for the idea of nation, ratifying the validity of a specific version of the urban setting—modern, efficient, frugal—as a socio-cultural ideal. On the whole, transportation is used to legitimate the superiority of a concrete model of the Colombian city: the one of the capital district, home to the national government and theoretical center of the nation.

Within this framework, I can add, the success in the application of this scheme is irrelevant, since failure of implementation at the regional level also corroborates the superiority of a center anxious to consolidate its position of power. In the eyes of the central administration, if provincial capitals take advantage of this opportunity, they will end with a more dignified mode of transportation, albeit at the expense of some local identity, since they will emulate the capital and sacrifice some of the distinctiveness of their respective topographical layouts. On the other hand, if they fail to complete their corresponding projects according to programmed timelines, they will merely ratify their inferiority before the spirit of progress and modernity emanating from the capital. In this sense, a lack of adequate completion would authenticate the allegations of a longstanding matrix in Colombian historiography, within which, since the early days of

independence in the nineteenth century, the national capital has portrayed itself as socially, culturally, and politically superior. Regardless of the outcome, these two alternatives would legitimate the central administration's position before the nation, an event that, in the midst of negotiations with paramilitary and subversive groups, would enhance its sustenance of power. The main thing, I reiterate, is to uphold the idea of transportation as an opportunity for the consolidation of a particular version of identity throughout the country, never mind that much of it remains habitually overlooked by the central establishment.

At a more expansive, Latin American level, though, the development of BRT networks in neighboring countries contributes to the enhancement of a national image and supports the idea that Colombian ingenuity has much to contribute to the international transportation sector, despite the fact that, to this day, the country's transportation infrastructure remains well behind that of countries with similar populations and economies. Furthermore, in case of a failure in the implementation of BRT, national particularities will apply; in case of success, some credit will definitely follow. Regardless of the outcome, at the transnational level, perhaps the most significant consequence of the adoption of BRT emerges from a renewed sense of urban space, symbolized by the changing image of the Colombian capital, which, regardless of its specificity, is perceived as the center of a nation engulfed by violence and political strife. Thus, some other Latin Americans might argue in a misguided fashion that, if BRT has contributed to the blossoming of urban space and identity in a location like Bogotá, it must surely be able to renovate the urban environment of places in less dire circumstances.

Seguridad Democrática, Space, and Transportation

In the past years, the Uribe administration has gained ample popularity by promoting a heavy-handed approach in matters involving national security, relying most notably on the righteous ring of its rhetoric. At certain moments, there has been ample criticism of the executive branch's proximity to right-wing sectors, and some have even hinted at an alleged connection with paramilitary units. As stated previously, universal perception of its policies results from a package of measures that served, most visibly, to recover the population's ability to travel through highways besieged by different armed groups, highlighting the significance of rural space within the national imaginary. However, this viewpoint discounts the fact that travel in Colombian highways is an activity favored eminently by middle and upper-class sectors, as they are the proud owners of the largest proportion of automobiles in the country. In Colombia, despite sales of 200,000 units per year (a sizeable figure by Latin American standards), the

automobile remains out of reach to the vast majority of the population and, in recent times, its use has been influenced by measures seeking to ameliorate pollution and reliance on imported fuel. In Bogotá, *pico y placa* programs, based on the final digits of license plates, limit circulation during certain times of the day, as in Mexico City; proposals for higher taxation and inner-city tolls—like in Santiago, Chile—have become matter of heightened discussion. On the other hand, though they travel in buses, working-class sectors seem to be a less likely consideration of the government's effort for the recovery of "sovereignty" in the national roads. The strategies set forth by the government seek to put an end to violence in the countryside, where government presence is particularly scant, in order to stabilize the situation at a time when, with the coming into effect of a free trade agreement with the U.S. (originally set to start in January 2007), the swift circulation of goods is of utmost importance. Thus, from a sociogeographic viewpoint, a substantial portion of *seguridad democrática* is interpreted as the restoration of the rule of law within national space (amid this context, eminently viewed as rural).

Still, my conjecture is that there are urban equivalents for these strategies, propitiated mostly by the general improvement of conditions in the Colombian capital in terms of the recovery and re-organization of public space since the late 1990s. Antanas Mockus (1995–98, 2001–04), the son of Lithuanian immigrants and ex-president of the National University of Colombia, and Enrique Peñalosa (1998–2001), a Duke alumnus with graduate degrees in management and public administration from French universities, were the two men mainly responsible for a change in the quality of life of the Colombian capital. During their administrations, in a matter of a few years, the city saw its crime rate drop drastically; projects included the construction of over 100 nurseries for children under five, major improvements to over 150 school buildings, 50 new public schools, a large network of bike paths (over 190 miles of *ciclorrutas*), a state-of-the-art network with 14,000 computers for all public schools, a new public library system with three main large facilities and many smaller ones, and numerous projects for the rejuvenation of city squares and the recovery of public space. The city's new BRT was the centerpiece of this innovative approach to urban development, which attempted to raise Bogotá's profile among Latin American capitals. Nevertheless, one of the most substantial accomplishments of these two recent progressive mayors of Bogotá was the successful promotion within the capital city's population of the importance of public space. In this sense, what these administrations achieved was akin to convincing many that public space, previously interpreted as belonging to no one, was in fact the property of all, a veritable re-invention of the urban societal paradigm. To say it in a few words, *bogotanos* learned to see public space as an issue directly related to their quality of life. As a result, both administrations managed to put forward a large number of public initiatives,

concrete and theoretical, which impacted favorably on the standard of living of the city. Mockus's forte was his pedagogical bent, which managed to convince citizens of the possibility of viewing life in the city with different eyes, with a more conciliatory spirit. Peñalosa's strong suit was his managerial skill, which brought to fruition many concrete, tangible proposals. An exceptional point of support for this re-organization of city life was the implementation of the new mass transit system for Bogotá. The probable expansion of this system at a national level, though, seeking to replicate the capital's experience and the corresponding improvements in the levels of urban safety at a provincial level, given the recovery and re-establishment of public space, suggests the need for a deeper examination of the role of public transportation as a tool of social engineering and instrument of peace.[3]

According to Catalonian urban studies expert Jordi Borja, the greater access to public space, be it in terms of mobility or landscape, promotes greater societal tolerance and a more effective redistribution of economic resources.[4] To address general violence in a country, we gather, there are few things as competent as a heightened presence of the State in the urban setting—personified primarily, in this case, by the greater visibility of the transportation infrastructure—an action that would imply, in itself, the patent consolidation of central power in all smaller cities. In other words, to counteract violence (the presence of extraneous forces, such as subversive or criminal groups), it is impending to resort to violence (suggested by the robust presence of the State as the theoretical champion of an order, involving symbolic and explicit measures, notwithstanding its indifference towards widespread societal injustice). Echoing ideas by Walter Benjamin, violence is therefore inherent to the actual constitution of the State and its theoretical articulation of an order (Benjamin). This is a "socializing" violence, which represses in order to regulate, represses to create a certain notion of "organization" in society. In a place like Colombia, in which a weak governmental apparatus desperately tries to recover the viability of its executive capability, this form of violence may attain multiple faces; chiefly among them, that of a brand new mass transit system, celebrated as a masterly expression of autochthonous modernity.

Twenty years ago, if anyone had inquired about what particular aspects made a city Colombian—e.g., which elements empowered its *colombianidad*—the assortment of answers would have been remarkable, particularly if one were to consider that most of these judgments would have been—as they often appear—essentialist in nature. In Colombia, thanks to an extensive historiographic and political tradition, regional identities are interpreted in a quasi-deterministic fashion. Certainly, the national landscape, as well as the government's unwillingness to surpass its limits— by and large, thanks to the dismal condition of the national highway network, which will require considerable upgrading if it is to facilitate the

much awaited trade agreement—contributes to the fragmentation of Colombian identity. Despite the fact that close to eighty percent of the population lives in urban areas, little can be argued in terms of cultural or spatial uniformity. Colombian cities are well known for their distinctiveness and celebration of difference, though replicating the inflexibility of national constructs at the regional level. Generally speaking, cities like Barranquilla or Cartagena de Indias, located on the Caribbean, bear little in common with the metropolitan centers of the mountain region, like Cali, Medellín, and even the capital, marked by territorial insularity and local versions of Andean culture. In fact, at an intra-regional level, these two Caribbean cities do not even seem alike. Up until the 1940s, before national air travel matured, Andean cities lagged behind ports like Barranquilla, which, given its location by the mouth of the Magdalena river, did not demand substantial road connections to trade successfully. Barranquilla's maritime status also contributed to the arrival of groups of Arab, Asian, European, and Jewish descent, increasing its diversity significantly by Colombian standards. Later, with the advent of air transportation (as well as substantial public investment), both Medellín and Cali surpassed Barranquilla, yet maintained their inward-looking identities. Air travel stimulated economic growth, but Cali and Medellín never really embraced a cosmopolitan attitude, open to migration from other parts of the country or the world. In particular, Medellín is well known as a place where economic penetration by foreign companies is problematic, unless local connections exist. Cartagena, on the other hand, benefited from a tourism boom and heavy investment from the interior of the country, which perceived it as an ideal vacation spot. As a result, the culture of all these cities is remarkably different in nature: food, music, business activity, and even language vary widely from one place to another. In addition, despite the demographic changes of the last twenty years in Colombia (and the advent of globalization), regional differences have deepened, thanks largely to the absence of a strong project of nation. Colombian nationalism is, on the whole, the result of private efforts, with the government—until now—playing a distant second in the celebration of a national character. The fact that president Uribe comes from Antioquia, a region renowned for its fierce defense of local character, is particularly relevant to his attempts to heighten the profile of the State as an architect of identity.

From December 18, 2000, though, things began to change. On this date, giving end to the unprecedented development sponsored by the pair of progressive administrations, Bogotá inaugurated its new mass transit system. With little forethought and excessive self-importance, the system was baptized TransMilenio, with intermediate capitalization, suggesting technological modernity. Admittedly, Bogotá's system was celebrated as an improved version of the transportation infrastructure of Curitiba. As in Brazil, Bogotá's network of red articulated buses is assisted by a feeding

system, comprised of local bus routes that bring passengers closer to their final point of destination. In the Colombian case, though, these feeding buses are bright green. (Curitiba's feeding lines are orange; green is reserved for inter-neighborhood buses). As in Brazil, the bus stations were designed with vast surfaces of glass, though with a more pragmatic, angular design, so travelers could be observed as they circulated through the system and integrated themselves to the fabric of urban neighborhoods. Also, seeking to accommodate a larger customer base, the stations in Bogotá are larger in size. However, since Bogotá is a city high in the mountains (roughly, at 8,500 feet above sea level), its weather is very regular and class differences evident in the style of clothes are attenuated to an important extent. Racial difference, so apparent in Brazil, is also minimized, as the capital tends to be less diverse than other parts of the country. Still, the Colombian arrangement is larger in scale, since Bogotá's overall population more than duplicates that of Curitiba. Thus, the Colombian version represents a novelty, taking the busway model to a larger magnitude. In all, the scale of the system asserts that busways are viable solutions for large metropolitan areas. In addition, within weeks of the inauguration, the network gained considerable popularity—sustained principally by the lack of alternatives—thus establishing itself as the favorite form of public transportation in the metro area. Within months, small, bright red replicas of the network's buses, manufactured in China, were available in the streets of the city. For a Latin American capital with a penchant for things European, such as Bogotá, this pointed to a degree of synonymy with London's double-decked Routemaster. Quite clearly, a sentimental bond was established between the system and its inhabitants, signifying an important shift in the way users viewed themselves and their life amidst the urban environment.[5]

The quick success of the Colombian experience in transportation did not go unnoticed. The main reason for local, regional, and even national pride was the realization that the system involved an opening to modernity, i.e., a home-grown alternative to large, expensive networks, such as the Metro in Medellín, which emulated transportation means in rich nations and usually generated ample controversy, given their impact on public budgets. In fact, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the time of the planning and construction of the Metro system in Medellín, there was the habitual controversy about the costs of the project and its impact on national debt for two significant reasons: for one, the system was being built in a city that, though important, was not the capital, so investment was questioned on the basis of its relevance to national interests (thus condoning inter-peripheral tensions); and second, as proposed, the costs were so high, that they were generally viewed as a burden for the entire national population. Ultimately, Medellín's Metro was concluded in 1996, despite the great debate surrounding its cost of construction and operation. In the process, Colombia became a Latin American anomaly, with better transportation infrastructure

in one of its provincial centers than in the much larger national capital. Five years later, TransMilenio arguably demonstrated that it was not necessary to spend billions of dollars, as engineering consortia had claimed in the case of both cities, and drastically alter the fabric of a metropolitan center, to provide a dignified and efficient method of transportation to the citizens of poverty-stricken Latin American nations.

Curitiba's model was a renowned success, but the implementation of the busway at a larger scale sparked considerable skepticism. To many, it was a relief to see that, when taken to a greater dimension, the network actually worked, diminishing the time of travel within opposite ends of the metropolitan area, decreasing pollution thanks to a more agile circulation of vehicles, and, quite literally, awarding a fresh, more modern face to the city. In a sense, Bogotá's success contributed to BRT's urban mythology and encouraged its markedly Utopian streak. In a matter of years, as the city embarked in the subsequent phases of the system, the Colombian busway consolidated itself as one of the main alternatives for the transportation headaches of cash-strapped municipal administrations, many of which hesitated before the prospect of large international credits and prohibitively expensive modes of public transport. Transportation experts and urban development committees from all over the world traveled to Colombia to observe and study this busway. In fact, before long, the company in charge of TransMilenio—a mix of private and public entities—was advising other Latin American capitals.[6] As a matter of fact, the Bogotá experience paved the way for new systems in Santiago (Transantiago) and Mexico City (Metrobús), which implemented networks with Colombian assistance ("La troncal del sur"). In the case of Santiago, the relationship is tinged by potential exchange, as Bogotá considers the adoption of some features of Chile's capital (chiefly, the toll-supported highways ran by private conglomerates). In Mexico, given local highway and heavy-rail tradition, inhabitants were initially hesitant to accept the busway formula; lately, though, they seem to have warmed up to the new paradigm.

Moreover, in the years since its inception, the Colombian network has witnessed steady progress, fueling a collective effort to bring order to improvised, accelerated urban growth. In a sense, the bus rapid transit system tames the city in a very discernible way, since most of its infrastructure is at the ground level. It suggests new paths for urban development and generates public space at improbable locations, while simultaneously discouraging car use. To a great degree, this was a key consideration in its design for Bogotá, as, from the outset of its progressive inception; the object was to encourage alternative views on urban transportation. For Peñalosa, who oversaw its creation, TransMilenio was a key piece in a personal quest against car-oriented urban environments, part of a greater package of measures. In fact, according to a referendum held during his tenure, *bogotanos* agreed to ban all cars from the city during peak

hours by the year 2015. Other programs included the placement of bollards throughout town (to discourage parking on sidewalks) and banning the use of cars for an entire day. Since 2000, every first Thursday of February, the Colombian capital celebrates *el día sin carro* (the car-free day), during which only taxis and buses (TransMilenio as well as private lines) are allowed to operate, fostering increased reliance on the extensive network of bike lanes in the metro area. Thus, TransMilenio has become a cornerstone for the celebration of this event, since a growing portion of the public relies on it for a ride. By late 2005, the first segments of the second stage of the network came into service, suggesting an even greater face-lift for the city. By late April 2006, it was concluded, implying a global re-structuring of the system, with new color coding and nomenclature. In the end, the network's master plan involves eight stages, which will cover the entirety of Bogotá's metropolitan area.[7] Current estimates suggest that the system transports close to a million users on a daily basis, a number that by 2030, estimated date of the network's conclusion, is supposed to grow to three million daily users, covering eighty percent of the city's transportation demands.[8]

Given the system's palpable boom and its impact on the capital's self-esteem, the national government, concentrated in Bogotá and always eager to capture national attention, decided to embark on an ambitious plan of systems of rapid bus transit, modeled on TransMilenio and geared towards cities with more than 600,000 inhabitants. In Colombia, a country that in the course of a few decades has become the second largest Spanish-speaking population in the world, this is not a spur-of-the-moment decision. The number of cities within this population range is, even in a Latin American context, rather significant. According to plans, in a matter of ten years, the busway model will be duplicated in six of Colombia's main cities. In an unexpected move, the current national administration, so given to financial austerity and synergies in the context of public investment in social services, commits to financing a sizeable portion of the project—up to 1.8 trillion pesos (approximately 800 billion dollars)—comprising sixty to seventy percent of the funds per location.[9] In other words, the mega-project addresses the transportation needs of many municipalities and emerges as a coordinated effort between central and local administrations, but it represents, for the most part, an initiative of the central government. The list of favored cities includes Barranquilla (Transmetro), Cali (Metrocali), Cartagena de Indias (TRANSCaribe), Medellín (Metroplús, where bus rapid transit will operate as feeder of the Metro), Bucaramanga (Metrolínea), and Pereira (Megabús). The government argues that these cities (and some smaller ones, such as Soacha, a suburb of the capital) will favor from the lessons learned in Bogotá and share an improvement in their quality of life. On a practical basis, the designs and specifications of the new systems will be almost identical to TransMilenio, with minimal changes to address each setting's particular demands.[10] In the case of Cartagena, given its location as

a port on the Caribbean, six boats are included in the master plan, ferrying passengers from one end to another of the city's bay. On the whole, this is the one notable difference in the design of all these projects. To a certain extent, this measure grants distinctiveness to Cartagena, though the elements replicating the capital city's BRT network are plainly evident elsewhere. Hence, even in Cartagena or Barranquilla, the most dissimilar cities within the group of chosen metro areas, given their status as seaports, the resemblance to TransMilenio will be remarkable.[11] Consequently, to the eyes of the occasional visitor, a common characteristic of most Colombian cities will be their reliance on a bus rapid transit system, exceedingly alike in operation and design.

Few places of the world have seen an initiative condoning such homogeneity in terms of public transit—in fact, within the Latin American context, this is a remarkable novelty—awarding an identical public transportation scheme to more than twenty million people, close to half of the national population, within such a short period of time. Mexico insinuates a similar approach, but its systems, planned for Chihuahua, Monterrey, Querétaro, Torreón, and Aguascalientes (together with BRT in Mexico City and León, which is already in service), pose an impact on a smaller portion of the country. The product of a process that usually leads to distinct urban identity, public transportation typically involves a great variety of alternatives, given the need to adapt to the specific demands of each urban environment in order to guarantee effectiveness. Take, for example, the case of Medellín, where the local network of elevated cable cars (Metrocable), almost unique in Latin America, figures as an effective solution for transportation to neighborhoods surrounding the central valley, operating in close conjunction with the Metro system's railway network, which, in turn, will be assisted by Metroplús, the local variant of the busway. In all, Medellín's metropolitan mass transit will combine three different systems operating in close coordination as parts of a bigger arrangement. In contrast, aside from the case of Cartagena, the master plan pushed forward by the Colombian government pays little attention to the consideration of local specifics.

The practical and theoretical implications of this transportation policy are huge. One of the immediate consequences of the sponsoring of identical transportation systems for these cities is the annihilation of urban difference. Since there's little tolerance in the design parameters for the consideration of local demands—and, in some cases, there's even a request for similarity, as central superiority has already been internalized—difference as an engine of identity will become attenuated. Quite certainly, the ensuing construct of provincial identity will be a more homogenized, mainstream one, more attentive to the dictates of the national administration in terms of bodily circulation and displacement throughout urban areas. Thus, patterns of growth in this group of provincial capitals will begin to emulate trends from

the capital to a more acute degree. To sum up, as an exercise of urban identity, *colombianidad* will be less diverse, less varied, less open to independent, locally motivated patterns of behavior and action, particularly when it comes to the generation of new social and urban space.

In addition, it is important to contemplate the greater implications of this measure in terms of individuality. While urban distribution serves as a spatial paradigm, echoing Borja's arguments, citizen mobility contributes substantially to the interpretation of identity, given its effect on our way of perceiving and construing a personal experience of modernity, as we travel from one place to another. The way in which we travel through a place says much of how we internalize aspects of our surroundings in order to fabricate an identity. If this experience were to be regulated by a more narrow definition of mobility, dictated by inflexible considerations of nationality, the consequences of the homogenizing nature of this practice would not be hard to guess. In other words, in the future, even if Colombian cities remain as different as they are today, given geographical considerations, the circulation of its populations will be largely similar, validating a comparable way of moving around and making sense of urban space. Thus, a national notion of socio-spatial identity—an identical way of understanding the city as we move through it—will attain legitimacy, inspired in the capital's experience at the beginning of this century. If the busway systems are built according to initial specifications, which virtually replicate the setup of the capital, a good percentage of Colombians will learn to interact and make sense of the experience of living in the city in very similar ways. Thus, to live in a Colombian city will become, quite literally, a common experience shared by millions in an analogous, flattening manner, failing to take into consideration personal and municipal disparities. When these seven bus rapid transit systems (as well as others that will follow) are concluded successfully, a good part of Colombia's population will share a mode of transport that, though it will impact their standard of living, will also impose an urban experience in a simultaneous fashion throughout the national territory. This is not a particularly novel concept: to be Colombian will then imply use of the busway almost in the same way that U.S. identity implies use of a car or European identity involves use of a train. Nevertheless, the exercise of Colombian identity is tinged by political and social circumstances extremely different from these other latitudes. Thus, criticism of the cultural implications of public transportation policies should not be dismissed lightly.

Social space embodies power. Additionally, it is shaped by the cultural practices that usually regulate our daily life. Taken together, these practices, which reflect how we live, move, and work within society, result from relations of power between individual interests and collective priorities, which in turn address issues of identity. Thus, the embracement of BRT can be interpreted as the central government's way of enacting its power on the

populations of more distant urban centers, determining how many city dwellers will generate social space in the future and, consequently, favor particular forms of urban identity. On one hand, the disbursement of funds gives the government a tool for the negotiation of concessions from municipal administrations, thanks to a genuine tug of war. On the other, it consecrates the idea that the models developed, explored, and experimented at the heart of the nation are suitable for the resolution of conflicts in more distant corners of the country, a concept with a vast potential of application in other aspects of Colombian affairs. From this viewpoint, the busway appears increasingly as a central piece of the government's plans for the enactment of a "strong" project of nation, a strategy bent on the unification and hierarchization of the population, embracing the city as its nexus. As contemplated, BRT condones a hierarchical relationship between the national center and the periphery, and suggests that automotive diversity— best exemplified in multiple modes of public transportation—is negligible when it comes to mass transit solutions. In an equivalent fashion, one could conclude that political and cultural diversity, though appreciated nominally—of all places, in the Colombian constitution, one of the most theoretically progressive ones of Latin America—is, in practice, a non-issue. Thus, thanks to this limited mindset, provincial populations would appear eager to jump on the bandwagon and have their cities share some of the modernity of the capital.

To move through the city is one of the key ways of acting freedom in the context of a national construct; in fact, of any construct. As the incarnation of a strong Utopian desire—the idea that it is possible to organize urban space and contribute to its orderly growth through the relatively sensible investment of public funds—TransMilenio was developed as the ideal mediator for this practice of freedom, giving the citizenry—or rather, empowering its use of—a tool to materialize new, more efficient constructs of urban identity, based on the optimization of time and the attenuation of space. Thus, by arbitrating the relationship between the citizenry and urban space through the implementation of an identical scheme in key enclaves of the country, the central government is effectively limiting the inventive, unrestricted exercise of freedom. Otherwise, the government would be taking more into consideration the cultural and physical disparities prevalent in national territory and incorporating relevant measures to the design of the new BRT systems. This argument, we should add, goes beyond an exclusive connection between changes in subjectivity and material transformation of urban space. Urban space emerges largely from the interaction between ideas and practice, and not as the direct result of a shift in material conditions (the efforts by Le Corbusier are sad proof of this fact). Thus, it seems particularly obstinate to suggest that, just because a mode of transportation has proved financially viable and moderately successful in the center of a country, it should be adopted without hesitation all over the

national territory, in places where the exercise of national identity—and its corollary, urban idiosyncrasy—is remarkably different. In sum, this implementation is akin to the affirmation that what appears suitable to one type of Colombian identity should be suitable to all, a virtual negation of national and urban difference, and a straightjacket for individuality.

An additionally relevant consideration results from some of the theoretically benevolent features of the design of the busway. As mentioned previously, most of the infrastructure related to a busway system is located at a ground level. Moreover, stations are designed with great visibility in mind, hoping to contribute to the population's integration to the surrounding urban fabric. In a place like Colombia, where political instability has engendered violence for more than forty years, it's not hard to imagine why the central government, so close to law enforcement institutions—the national police (in Colombia, there's no municipal police) and armed forces—could see this as an added bonus. The open, angular bus stations from Bogotá, which include vast expanses of glass and can be easily monitored by low-tech security systems, are a constant in the design of the networks of the provincial capitals. Following terrorist attempts in March 2003, in which a bus was destroyed, and April 2006, in which two children and an adult died, various government agencies announced the installation of 60 cameras and emergency phones in the stations of the mass transit system. This substantial apparatus will eventually support Bogotá's already massive surveillance network, which, by the year 2014, should have approximately 2,000 cameras operating throughout the metro area.[12] In other words, aside from the theoretical implications of the reproduction of the system to other parts of the country, mostly pertaining to issues of identity, there are certain evident, concrete benefits from this widespread implementation of busways. As a result, given the experience with improved security conditions in the capital, which has resulted in a dramatic drop of its crime rate, the provincial BRTs would contribute to the articulation of comparable surveillance techniques on a regular basis, effectively replicating an Orwellian intent at the national level.

Response to the Indiscriminate Implementation of Busways

Then again, not everyone has been dazzled by the system's promise of modernity. If we consider TransMilenio as a communicative process, the audience's response has been quite adamant. The network has been the object of increased criticism. Some of its flaws are the continuous congestion in many stations, resulting from the diminished capacity of its vehicles (with a maximum of 150 passengers per unit, as opposed to the Brazilian units, capable of transporting 270 passengers each); the adoption

of diesel-powered units—instead of environmentally friendlier compressed natural gas—missing an opportunity to reduce pollutants in a city like Bogotá, with the third highest pollution index in Latin America; and, as a result of a delay in the disposal of obsolete vehicles, a displacement of the excess offer in transportation to other independently owned routes, generating greater traffic congestion in other corners of the metro area.[13] Likewise, just a few years after the inauguration of the first route, many concrete slabs on the road had to be replaced as the result of a failure in the foundations. Though the matter was resolved in an efficient fashion, in a negotiation involving foreign companies, local subcontractors, and the city's administration, the circumstance did affect the scheduling of service routes and caused discomfort among customers.

To this, we can add the habitual charges of social engineering. Most of the routes built thus far do not go through—in some cases, they even seem to avoid—well-off neighborhoods. Moreover, the BRT system is being increasingly portrayed in the light of class conflict, i.e., within the view that its main function is the displacement of the workforce—emanating from less affluent areas of the city—to support the lifestyle of the privileged; mainly, through its connection with the service sector.[14] Future routes include a line on Seventh Avenue, one of Bogotá's most fashionable thoroughfares, which would hint at some level of social integration in the mass transit system. Yet, disputes among members of the city council evince the growing awareness of a need for additional modes of transportation. In fact, Seventh Avenue— as well as Tenth Avenue and Twenty-Sixth Street, all parts of the programmed third phase—has been suggested as the ideal setting for a light-rail or streetcar network, a solution that would complement TransMilenio well and be more in touch with the city's historical tradition ("¿Volver al tranvía?"). After all, while providing an alternative to TransMilenio, light-rail or streetcar transportation would not be as costly as a full-blown heavy-rail system. Also, in the context of Seventh Avenue, with the limited space available at some of the northern intersections, streetcars or trams would occupy less space than a busway. It's important to consider that, up until the popular revolt following the assassination of political leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948, during which the city's downtown was virtually razed, Bogotá relied on streetcars as a main mode of mass transit. Until the 1970s, there was a marginally operational network of trolleybuses. To make things even worse, the fact that Curitiba, the city celebrated as a model of transportation efficiency, is considering the adoption of a metro system— quite possibly, an elevated monorail—also hints at the need for added flexibility in transportation alternatives.[15] Hence, it is understandable that increased reliance on a single mode of transit is being viewed as suspicious and risky.

Furthermore, by late April 2006, when the completed second stage of TransMilenio came into service, a transportation strike organized by

independent operators virtually paralyzed Bogotá. Though it gave some leverage to the city administration, TransMilenio was unable to compensate for the absence of many working bus routes. The coverage of its feeding network, though extensive, is still dismal in comparison to the broad grasp of the many independent bus lines operating throughout the city. To make things worse, the effect of the strike was compounded by the changes effected as the second stage went into service. The introduction of new color coding for all lines and the division of the entire system's grid into zones, conversions implemented with barely a week of notice, contributed to a sense of frustration in the customer base. Unlike other mass transit systems in the world, which assign a color to an entire line, the TransMilenio management decided to follow a rather complicated setup, dividing the network into neighborhood districts. Consequently, a single line, such as the one leading from Autopista Norte to El Tunal, which crosses the city from north to south, bears up to three different colors in its path (green, blue, and orange). To complicate the picture even further, the number of trips allowed per travel card was diminished abruptly, so users, accustomed to purchasing cards with up to fifty trips, discovered in the course of few days that only single-trip cards remained. And, though a greater frequency of routes were in operation, the number of transfers and the average time travel per route did not decrease, as promised by the network's management team. Together, this combination of factors contributed to a crisis of the system. Unlike the past, when the citizenry rushed to show its support of the network as the result of bomb threats, this time around, there were massive demonstrations and users blocked operation twice; customer displeasure was evident. Nevertheless, as the multiple aspects hindering adequate operation have gradually become apparent, the management has made efforts to address them. In the end, the situation worked to the benefit of the current municipal administration, led by Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004–07), an ex-union leader who, ironically, had to neutralize a strike led by labor movements that were paralyzing the city. Garzón confronted the independent operators tenaciously, a move that gained him some political support, even among upper-class sectors that do not usually cater to the concerns of the left. That being said, Garzón's position was also strengthened by the fact that Uribe, head of the national government, offered full support to his decisions. Thus, it becomes plain that, even within the capital city, the idea of TransMilenio has contributed to the consolidation of Uribe's political capital.

At the national level, the list of obstacles evident during the initial stage of implementation of the corresponding BRTs is even more comprehensive. The difference between carrying out contracts with the State in the capital, home of the national government, and in outlying provinces, where things acquire a peculiarly different tinge, has turned manifest.[16] A decidedly oppositional perspective has influenced the negotiation between parties, to insist in the portrayal of events as an interactive, communicative process. In

Cartagena de Indias, for example, the appointment of the management team for the project took up to eight months, and then, given differences with the board of directors of the project, it became necessary to find a replacement and reenergize the process. Next, there were discrepancies with the subcontractors regarding the final design of facilities, which resulted in the delay of the inauguration date for the system. Consequently, TransCaribe was not ready in time for what would have been an ideal debut: the celebration of the Central American and Caribbean Games, hosted by Cartagena in 2006. In Cali, a city once admired for its efficiency and civic spirit, there have been irregularities in the assignments of tasks, suggesting corruption at the local level, as well as protests pertaining to the cutting of trees (despite the immediate creation of a replacement program) and scandals related to changes in the guidelines for some bids. In Medellín and Bucaramanga, the corresponding monies, to be approved by local municipalities as part of their agreement with the State, were not processed as swiftly as initially guaranteed. In Barranquilla, there were delays in the approval of credits, resulting from the city's delicate financial situation, beleaguered by a continuous stream of monetary scandals, and inauguration of the system has been postponed until late 2007. In Pereira, the city with the most decided effort to finish the project on time, the deadline for the end of the construction phase went by with many of the facilities still unfinished, hurting sales in the downtown district and virtually paralyzing the economy in certain sectors of town. In the end, Megabús was inaugurated on August 21, 2006, to the considerable relief of an aggravated population. To make a long story short, despite government diligence and the unanticipated availability of large sums of money, the original hope of having six systems operating by the end of 2006 was not possible.

Nevertheless, these obstacles do not influence the contention that the consistency with which the BRT model is being sponsored by the national government bears serious implications in terms of negotiation of identity. Amid a country besieged by conflict, we would suggest that the BRT has become an ideal mechanism for the re-implementation of the normative idea of nation, of a vision of order fostered in a resolute fashion by the central establishment. To be precise, thanks to the eagerness of various provincial administrations to solve their transportation dilemmas, the central government has identified and taken advantage of an opportunity to recreate and influence the identity of Colombia's most prominent urban settings. In this way, the BRT has become a tool of hegemony, sustained as the primary form of conceiving and acting *colombianidad* in an urban location. All things considered, the idea of the bus rapid transit as the solution for transportation predicaments of the Colombian city has been co-opted. The Colombian busway may be an idea born under Peñalosa's guidance of the national capital, yet members of the current national government, who recognize in it an ideal mechanism for the interpellation of the masses, have

appropriated it systematically. To state it succinctly, the Uribe administration has transformed it into the urban face of the policy of democratic security. In a matter of ten years, with respect to urban mobility, half of the country will be very much alike. In the end, it will be a matter of waiting to see the public's reaction—how different cultural actors will respond to such an efficient, modern, and affordable alternative—in a country in which, until quite recently, one of the most tangible forms of modernity was the festive circulation through the city in a *chiva*, a multi-colored bus, similar to those out in the country, in a repeated simulacrum of the rural exodus of recent years and the ever-present conflict between national tradition and modernity. Identity is a matter of negotiation and is typically restive. In the coming years, we hope that, in one way or another, just like several Latin American capitals, the populations of the different provincial centers of Colombia will find a way to appropriate BRT and counteract its homogenizing disposition, granting it a distinctive character, more attentive to local particularities than to national conformity.

On February 22, 2007, the national government announced that it would include Cúcuta, a northeastern city neighboring Venezuela, in the BRT program. As in previous cases, the central administration will provide 70 per cent of the funds for the construction of a system similar to TransMilenio. In addition, government officials announced plans to assist nine more provincial capitals—Pasto, Villavicencio, Ibague, Manizales, Santa Marta, Armenia, Neiva, Montería, and Sincelejo—in the organization and integration of their urban transportation systems. According to the news release, the project will contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in these cities.[17]

Notes

1. See *World Factbook* data at< https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/Geos/co.html>.
2. Complete information on the system is available at an official website, located at <pr.gov.br/pmc/a_cidade/Solucoes/Transporte/index.html>.
3. "La onda Trans." *Cambio*. No. 617. April 25, 2005. According to Juan Ricardo Noero, Vice Secretary of Transportation, the official policy in terms of investment has been the following, expressing a concern for social inequality that is blatantly absent in other aspects of the national budget: "Es mucho más equitativo hacer inversiones de transporte público, y ésa es nuestra línea, que en puentes para vehículos particulares que sólo benefician a unos pocos" (This is our policy: to invest in public transportation is a lot more equitable than to spend in bridges for automobiles, which will only benefit a few).
4. "Es cuestión de justicia social." *Semana*. No. 1,163. August 16, 2006. For Jordi Borja, public space can become a factor of social re-distribution. The challenge is to expand the city of the upper and middle classes, and to give a more bourgeois disposition to working-class sectors, to enhance their quality. For more information

on his points of view, see Borja, Jordi and Zaida Muxi. *El espacio público: ciudad y ciudadanía*. Barcelona: Electa, 2003.

5.   "La receta de Transmilenio." *Cambio*. No. 400. February 19, 2001. During the first phase, the estimated cost of joint and private investment was approximately 650 billion pesos. Contamination decreased 30% and the average speed in the main thoroughfares climbed from 14 km/hour to 28 km/hour, freeing up to one hour daily for the leisure of customers. A later article titled "Sobre ruedas" (*Semana*. No. 998. June 18, 2001) emphasizes that, towards May 2001, the system already sold almost nine million tickets in a month, i.e., more than 7,000 million pesos in only a month.

6.   "¿Volver al tranvía?" *Semana*. No. 1,151. May 24, 2004. According to Walter Hook, executive director of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy of New York (ITDP), Bogotá's system moves 45,000 persons hour/direction. In Bogotá, the cost of construction for a kilometer of a main route is five million dollars; in Caracas, a kilometer for the Metro costs ninety million and, in México, forty-one million. With these data in mind, cities like Jakarta, Beijing, Cape Town, Dakar, Lima, and México City have seen Bogotá's experience as an inspiration. In light of this success, the national government commits funds for 70% of the costs for the BRT systems of Pereira, Medellín, Cartagena, and Cali. In Bogotá, close to 400 million dollars are reserved for the following phases of the system.

7.   "Infraestructura vial." *Cambio*. No. 527. August 4, 2003. The three first lines of TransMilenio cost 320 billions (Calle 13-Américas), 484 billion (Calle 92-Calle 10), and 488 billion (Avenida Suba), respectively.

8.   "Vía al desarrollo." *Semana*. No. 1,169. September 27, 2004. This article is the first one to mention that, towards 2020, the objective is to transport more than three million passengers without a metro (subway) system. A later article titled "Primera estación" (*Cambio*. No. 579. August 2, 2004), provides new estimates. According to *La economía de Transmilenio, un sistema de transporte masivo para Bogotá*, a study by Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Económico (CEDE) of the Universidad de los Andes, TransMilenio only transports 13% of the population, while close to six million people still depend on the traditional system. The main obstacles are the excessive number of buses in the streets and the cumbersome elimination of obsolete vehicles. Towards 2030 (in the beginning, the goal was to have the system finished by 2015), when the system covers up to 80% of the demand for transportation, the system will attain optimum efficiency.

9.   "A toda máquina." *Cambio*. No. 586. September 20, 2004, and document 3348 of the Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (Conpes). According to the Department of Transportation, the government has 1.8 trillion pesos available for these projects (Cali, Pereira, Medellín, Barranquilla, Cartagena, and Bucaramanga). In Cali, the estimated cost of the project is 345 million dollars, with 70% (241) of resources coming from the national government, and the remaining 30% (104) coming from the municipal government and private industry. In Pereira, the national government agreed to finance 70% of the 129 billion pesos that the project costs. In Bucaramanga, it will provide 161 billion and the local municipalities will provide 81 billion. (According to Metrolínea, the national government will cover 177 billion in 2003 pesos). In Cartagena, the government will finance 137 billion in infrastructure and the city district will invest 40 billions. In Medellín, the total cost of the project (Metroplús) is 240 billion pesos. In Barranquilla, according to document 3348 of the Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social ("Sistema integrado"), the Nation will contribute up to 124 billion pesos of 2002 (62.54%) while the city district will cover 74 billion pesos of 2002 (37.48%). In sum, the implementation of the busways at a national level implies an investment of millions of dollars. Since 2002, the

exchange rate for the Colombian peso has fluctuated between 2,200 to 2,400 pesos per dollar. In addition, it is important to consider that "billion" translates into Spanish as *millardo* (thousands of millions). The Spanish *billón* actually stands for a trillion.

10. Each BRT website includes more detailed and updated information. They are:
Transmetro in Barranquilla <http://www.transmetro.gov.co/>
Metrolínea in Bucaramanga <http://www.metrolinea-sa.com/>
MetroCali in Cali <http://www.metrocali.gov.co/>
TRANSCaribe in Cartagena de Indias <http://www.transcaribe.gov.co/>
Metroplús in Medellín <http://www.metroplus.gov.co/>
Megabús in Pereira <http://www.megabus.gov.co/megabus.html>.

11. "Les llegó el turno." *Semana*. No. 1,225. October 24, 2005. Cartagena's system includes a water route with six boats with a maximum capability of up to fifty passengers each. The first phase of TRANSCaribe, Cartagena's integrated transport system, will cost up to 17 billion pesos. In Barranquilla, the other coastal capital, the first phase will be even more expensive, given the city's greater size: 22 billion pesos.

12. For more information on this particular topic, see "Desde octubre, Bogotá tendrá para su seguridad un sistema de autovigilancia," <http://www.belt.es/Noticiasmdb/home2_noticias.asp?id=1076>, accessed on February 5, 2007.

13. "Mucho caos." *Semana*. No. 1,221. September 26, 2005. For every new TransMilenio bus going into service, a certain number of independently owned buses must be discarded. Conservative official estimates suggest that, by September 2005, there were between 3,500 and 6,000 buses operating illegally in Bogotá. Conventional transportation companies are demanding higher prices for the targeted vehicles, complicating the replacement process.

14. "Gané, porque la ciudadanía estuvo conmigo." *Semana*. No. 1,253. May 8, 2006. The article includes enlightening comments by Mayor Luis Eduardo Garzón.

15. A brief description of government plans is available at Curitiba's municipal website: <http://www.curitiba.pr.gov.br/pmc/a_cidade/Solucoes/Transporte/metro.html>.

16. "Trans-enredo." *Semana*. No. 1,237. January 16, 2006. Given a variety of delays, the seven BRTs will not start operating as planned, increasing frustration among their potential customer bases. The most appalling case has been that of TRANSCaribe (Cartagena de Indias). A high degree of tension exists between the central government and the provincial administration. It becomes evident that Colombian cities are not all prepared for change at the speed and scale of a process similar to Bogotá's.

17. "Incluyen a Cúcuta en planes de TransMilenio." *Portafolio*. February 23, 2007. Accessed on February 23, 2007 at< http://www.portafolio.com.co/>.

Works Cited

"A toda máquina." *Cambio*. No. 586. September 20, 2004.

Benjamin, Walter. *Para una crítica de la violencia, y otros ensayos: iluminaciones IV*. Madrid: Taurus Humanidades, 1991.

Borja, Jordi, and Zaida Muxi. *El espacio público: ciudad y ciudadanía*. Barcelona: Electa, 2003.

"Es cuestión de justicia social." *Semana*. No. 1,163. August 16, 2006.

"Gané, porque la ciudadanía estuvo conmigo." *Semana*. No. 1,253. May 8, 2006.

"Incluyen a Cúcuta en planes de TransMilenio." *Portafolio*. February 23, 2007.

"Infraestructura víal." *Cambio*. No. 527. August 4, 2003.

"Les llegó el turno." *Semana*. No. 1,225. October 24, 2005.

"Mucho caos." *Semana*. No. 1,221. September 26, 2005.

"La onda Trans." *Cambio*. No. 617. April 25, 2005.

Ortiz, Renato. *Mundialización: sabers y creencias*. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Gedisa, 2005.

"Primera estación." *Cambio*. No. 579. August 2, 2004.

"La receta de Transmilenio." *Cambio*. No. 400. February 19, 2001.

"Sistema integrado del servico público urbano de transporte masivo de pasajeros del distrito de Barranquilla y su area metropolitana-seguimiento." Documento CONPES 3348. Bogotá: Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2005.

"Sobre ruedas." *Semana*. No. 998. June 18, 2001.

"Trans-enredo." *Semana*. No. 1,237. January 16, 2006.

"La troncal del sur." *Cambio*. No. 603. January 17, 2005.

"Vía al desarrollo." *Semana*. No. 1,169. September 27, 2004.

"¿Volver al tranvía?" *Semana*. No. 1,151. May 24, 2004.