Social Mobility and Aspirations:
Young Colombians in Cartagena
Navigating Opportunities, Spaces and Futures

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Abstract of Thesis:

The role of young people's aspirations to achieve upward social mobility, social mobility being defined as people's upward or downward movement in relation to others within the same society with respect to status or social class (Gough, 2008, Azevedo and Bouiilon, 2010), has been of increasing interest in international development. Especially for young people of disadvantaged social backgrounds, high aspirations are perceived as the main driver for future enhanced social conditions (Appadurai, 2004). With a particular focus on educational and occupational aspirations, young people are encouraged to aim for higher education and higher occupational outcomes to achieve upward social mobility (Kintrea et al., 2015). However this discourse shifts the responsibility of achieving upward social mobility and for being successful adults in the future, on to young people themselves, promoting social mobility as an individualised obligation (Brown, 2011, Spohrer, 2011). Yet social mobility and corresponding aspirations are not attained independently of young people's social context. In order to enhance their social mobility they need to acquire the necessary social and cultural capitals and have access to adequate opportunities within their social and physical environment to navigate themselves towards their aspirations. Informed by ethnographic and participatory fieldwork, this thesis explores young Colombians' (age 15-22) aspirations for social mobility in Cartagena and adds to the critique of the increasingly powerful discourse about the need to enhance disadvantaged young people's aspirations in order to achieve upward social mobility (cf. Kintrea et al., 2015). Cartagena is described as a city of many realities, made up of 'rich' and 'poor' neighbourhoods, offering unequal opportunities to its residents. This stratification is one legacy of a long history of slavery and colonialism. I present young Cartagenians' aspirations and what they perceive as drivers and constraints of social mobility. Drawing upon the concepts of habitus, and social and cultural capital, I analyse the importance of how young Cartagenians' sense of belonging to poorer neighbourhoods influences their opportunities to achieve upward social mobility. This research contributes to the knowledge of young people's attempts to formulate aspirations and navigate their way towards these within a post-colonial setting in the global South from a qualitative research

perspective. It explores the intersecting relationships between aspirations, belonging, spatial and social mobility, and opportunity structures accessible to young Cartageneros.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Conceptual Framework

1   Introduction

This research is about the aspirations and social mobility of young Colombians living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Cartagena, a city marked by its colonial past and related social structures, including social and economic inequality. Focusing on young people from two disadvantaged neighbourhoods in this city I discuss their aspirations for possible future selves and how they negotiate their desired futures within a social environment of uncertainties and restricted opportunities.

The social context of the young people is a key element when analysing their aspirations. Therefore my research is not solely focused on the articulated aspirations of the young people, but rather on what influences their formation and attainment. Places and spaces, opportunity structures within them, and how young people's feelings as to where they belong impact on their choices negotiating their desired futures are at the core of this research. Aspirations and the navigational strategies to achieve them draw from experiences and influences within the young people's social context, shaping how they imagine future pathways to upward social mobility. Depending on how young people's social environments change and what opportunities open up for them during their life course a variety of possible pathways may open up for young people, and they may pursue more than one future trajectory at the same time. In contrast to a recent neoliberal discourse about the aspirations of young people from lower social backgrounds that claims that young people do not aim high enough to create upward social mobility (by, for example, not aiming for higher education (see Sellar et al., 2011, Kintrea et al., 2015)), this research is concerned with the development and the process of navigational strategies towards achieving aspirations. The aspirations I examine are embedded in a complex range of influences and are connected as much to the past and the present of the young people as to their desired futures. These influences create an aspirational map of possible pathways to accomplish upward social mobility (Appadurai, 2004). While most perspectives also position the development of aspirations as based on young people's social context (e.g. MacLeod, 2009, Bok, 2010, Del Franco, 2010, Brown, 2011, Davidson, 2011, Kintrea et al., 2015), my research argues that living in places and spaces that may

restrict them in achieving their aspirations does not necessarily mean they lack high aspirations. Yet having high aspirations and creating strategies to achieve them depends on various factors such as individual effort, an internal feeling of belonging to different spaces and places, including ease of associating with people across social classes, and the opportunities given to realise them. Aspirations may also go beyond educational and occupational interests to understandings of "a good life". I have been able throughout my fieldwork to talk to young people of two particular neighbourhoods in Cartagena. I hung out with them in their homes, neighbourhoods and other important places, with their friends and families and spent a lot of time talking with them about everyday experiences. Their biographies provide insights into how and why they think and act in certain ways, their attachment to place, as well as how they are restricted in acquiring resources to attain their desired futures.

I developed this interest in researching young Cartagenians' aspirations while working on my Masters thesis, in which I examined the aspirations of young people in Cartagena in a disadvantaged neighbourhood that does not feature in this study. In this research I started exploring the aspirations of Cartagenians aged between 12 and 16. In particular, I was interested in how young people from poor social backgrounds develop aspirations and create strategies to achieve them. While literature about aspirations indicates that a lack of aspirations, or low aspirations, perpetuate people's social conditions (e.g. Bernard et al., 2011, Dalton et al., 2015), my Master's thesis suggested that social reproduction is rather the result of children's difficulties and challenges in planning actions to achieve aspirations. This conclusion prompted new questions concerning what influences young Cartagenians' ability to achieve aspirations. Certainly age is one factor, a 12 year old may not have yet thought much about his or her future in a detailed, planned way. However, my Master's thesis study recommended that rather than focusing merely on aspirations, there is a need to obtain detailed information on how to assist young people to develop the skills necessary to achieve their aspirations, and on the social, economic and political structures that might prevent their achievement. My study concluded that aspirations are contextualised. Having aspirations was identified as a trigger to alter one's social condition but focusing on whether children have aspirations is not enough. Research on aspirations

must be complemented with an analysis of the internal and external constraints, and possible opportunities, which affect the likelihood that young people will be able to achieve their aspirations.

This research is concerned with the aspirations of young people in Cartagena, Colombia who live in two disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Pozón and La Popa, and who are in a different age range (15-22) to those young people in my Master's study. It aims at exploring how young people articulate their aspirations and what influences the young people as they try to attain them. My objective is not to simply examine the aspirations themselves, but rather to contribute to debates around aspirations and social mobility in youth studies by taking the social context of the young people in the study into account; the places and spaces they move in, where they develop their thinking and acting (habitus) and how they are enabled or constrained in current opportunity structures are all important. Consequently in this research I ask the following question, one that guided me during the research process, from fieldwork through to the analysis of my data:

How do young Cartagenians articulate their aspirations and how do they navigate their way to possible futures from the opportunity structures, spaces and places of their lives?

The overarching question for my research has been focused on aspirations and influences on their attainment from the beginning. However, other questions developed throughout the research process, in particular during fieldwork and analysis as, for example, the influence of contextual issues became clearer, and called for closer examination. Hence I developed the following sub-questions.

1.	What are the aspirations of young Cartagenians in terms of a 'good life'?

2.	How do they try to navigate towards possible futures?

3.	What role does the 'local' or neighbourhood play in shaping aspirations and navigational processes?

4.	How do wider social, historical and political structures affect the sorts of opportunity structures available?

While I started my research with sub-questions 1 and 2, which developed from my Master's thesis, sub-questions 3 and 4 were articulated in retrospect, as I analysed my data during and after fieldwork. I discuss sub-question 1 mostly in Chapter 4, which is concerned with the young people's understanding of a good life and their individual aspirations, while sub-question 2 is an overall question that is analysed in all parts of the thesis. Chapter 5, a discussion of the young people's sense of belonging, does not answer one particular sub-question but relates to some extent to all the sub-questions.. Sub-question 3 is explored in Chapter 6, where I examine the influence of the young people's neighbourhoods. The topic of opportunity structures is assessed in chapter 7.

I continue this chapter with a vignette of a typical start to my fieldwork day to provide a contextual introduction. In the following sections I discuss some important theoretical considerations for my research that situate aspirations as more than goals for the future independent of the social context. I begin with the concept of aspirations and the recent literature on aspirations with regard to social mobility. I then embed aspirations and their attainment into a wider framework of Bourdieusian theory, this being the analytical approach I use throughout this thesis. I also examine the importance of geographical mobility to social mobility and how this mobility can act as a resource itself. Finally I present an overview of the thesis structure. While I outline the basic theoretical framework in this introductory chapter I employ closely related concepts and develop the theoretical framework in more detail throughout the thesis. The analysis in the thesis is iterative; every chapter links to certain concepts, developing the theoretical framework in combination with my empirical data

2   A Typical Start to a Fieldwork Day

I am now three months into my stay in Cartagena and on my way to the neighbourhood Pozón. This is one of the neighbourhoods where I work with a group of young people. Pozón is far out of the city centre and the journey takes me an hour by bus. It is October and still very hot. I leave the bus and walk to the NGO where I am supposed to meet Maja, an 18-year-old girl, for an interview. The street is busy, a lot of people are walking up and

down and buses and motorbikes pass by. It is noisy. I see Maja on the opposite side of the street on a bicycle with Santiago, a boy of the group I work with, and her boyfriend at that time. She jumps off the bike and runs towards me, apologising that she is late. Santiago and Maja discuss for a short while where we should go to do the interview, as it is too noisy at the street. We decide to go to Santiago's house. Santiago lives in a "complicated"[1] part of the neighbourhood. It is a poor and marginalised area, known for its youth gangs and social problems. Children are on the streets and some of them yell "Mona, Mona" at me, which means blond girl. Santiago's house is made of bricks and its foundation is half a meter higher than the ground to keep water out of the house when it rains. Santiago explains to me that they did not always live in a house of bricks. His parents came to Cartagena and started with a house built of discarded waste material. In that time they did not have enough food and were very poor. He says they are still poor but now the house is in better condition and they have enough food. He explains that sometimes when gangs are fighting just down the street they cannot move freely. At the moment though it is quiet.

Maja moved recently from this part of the neighbourhood because water was entering her family's house and destroying their belongings each rainy season. They were also living in a street where gangs fight regularly and it was dangerous to stay; now she feels safer. In the current house she has her own room. Her father works in different offices doing random jobs and her mother is a cleaning lady on Saturdays in private homes in richer parts of the city. Her brother also works and adds to the income of the household but they still do not have enough money to buy a house or save much. Maja is worried that there won't be enough money to pay for her studies and, even if it is enough, she feels guilty that it is used for her when she knows her mother would like to save money for other things.

We sit outside of Santiago's house on the type of terrace all houses have in Cartagena, and I start the interview with Maja. I ask her what her aspirations are and she answers:

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[1] The young people use the term complicated to indicate that this part of the neighbourhood consist of different problems such as gang activities and crime

"At the moment I want to finish my studies in occupational health, find employment, do some practical work like an internship and then find employment in a company. Later then I want to study social communication (media and communication studies) but I am not sure when I can do that. I want to go to Bogotá to study because here are not so many opportunities to study social communication. I want to work for a television channel… I also want to live one day in one of the apartments close to the beach, alone. I mean I am used to my family but I want to experiment to live alone. Buying my own things, I want to get independent, and to be responsible."

The story of Maja and Santiago provides an example of young people's spaces and places and some of the social structures within them, as well as suggesting how place and space are important influences over young people's aspirations and their attainment. For example, Santiago explains the danger of gangs fighting next to his house as a constraint on his geographical mobility. Maja's aspirations are to be independent, not being a burden for her parents and living in a safer place. She also fears not being able to study what she desires. These aspirations illustrate how Maja draws from her experience and the influences of the spaces and places in her social context to imagine future pathways to upward social mobility. Further, Maja is pursuing two different strategies, one aimed at Bogotá and one at Cartagena. Depending on how her social environment changes, as well and what opportunities open up for her, she may only pursue one of these aspirations, or even create new ones. The aspirations I examine in the thesis are embedded in a complex range of influences and are connected as much to the past and the present of young people like Santiago and Maja as to their desired future.

3   Social Mobility and the Concept of Aspirations

Appadurai (2004) argues aspirations can be powerful triggers to alter poor people's social conditions. However, the capacity to aspire - understood as the ability to develop and create strategies to achieve aspirations - and opportunities to navigate oneself towards their attainment is unevenly distributed between rich and poor people. Recent country policies, such as in the UK and Australia, are based on a similar logic and assume that

raising aspirations of students from poor backgrounds leads to higher socio-economic outcomes (Bok, 2010, Brown, 2011, Sellar et al., 2011), creating a link between aspirations and upward social mobility.

Social mobility is understood as people's upward or downward movement in terms of status or class position within the same society's hierarchy and in relation to others within this hierarchy (Gough, 2008, Azevedo and Bouiilon, 2010). From a sociological viewpoint social mobility is concerned with indicators of movements between social classes, occupational groups and opportunities available for advancement, while the economic angle is focused on quantitative measures such as changes in income (Azevedo and Bouiilon, 2010). The sociological concept of social mobility includes a focus on opportunity structures and power relations within a society's hierarchy, where power is distributed unequally between higher and lower social classes. Individuals that occupy a higher rank in the society's hierarchy wield more power than those below them. They do so usually because they have more resources, in the form of economic resources, but also in the form of social and cultural capital. Accordingly the economic approach to social mobility is still relevant to the sociological one, as resources are linked to positions of power; economic capital can provide greater opportunities such as being able to pay for better education, one of the identified main drivers of social mobility (Torche, 2010).

The rationale behind policies of raising educational and occupational aspirations is that if young people aim for higher education and related employment opportunities, they will move upwards in the society's hierarchy and become self-reliant, productive and independent citizens (cf. Brown, 2011, Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011, Allen and Hollingworth, 2013, Brown, 2013a, Gale and Parker, 2015). Aspirations are then understood as goals and ambitions to achieve certain educational and occupational outcomes in the future, guiding the choices young people make on their pathways to realising their desired futures (Quaglia and Cobb, 1996, Furlong and Biggart, 1999, Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

Nonetheless, this notion of aspirations has been criticised as those following a neoliberal approach shifting the responsibility to achieve upward social mobility and become successful adults in the future on to young people themselves, and promoting social

mobility as an individualised obligation (Spohrer, 2011, Brown, 2013a). Young people are responsible for making choices that maximise their opportunities, regardless of the opportunity structures and the influences of the spaces and places they move in in everyday life (Brown, 2011, Sellar et al., 2011, Brown, 2013b). Yet aspirations are not developed independently from the spatial and structural influences that emerge from young people's social environment, and their access to resources necessary to achieve desired futures. A focus on young people's individual educational and occupational aspirations and choices to create upward social mobility ignores these influences, and leads to the conclusion that a lack of aspiration is the reason for low or downward social mobility.

Additionally, while social mobility is often defined in terms of status, social class changes and economic resource enhancement, it can go beyond these definitions. Achieving a good life that is perceived as better than the current one is also a form of social mobility. The factors that facilitate social mobility are context specific and always subjectively defined. Social mobility is then a concept that defines a positive change in an individual's life towards a subjective definition of what produces a good life. It can consist of a stable family or a safe place to live but not necessarily produce any change in status, social class, wealth or economic capital. In fact, it may even negatively affect one's economic situation or position in a society's hierarchy. For example, Perlman (2006: 161) describes in her study of people from favela neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro that the change of neighbourhood can shift the status of an individual in society through moving away from the stigma and danger in those favelas (cf. Maja's statement about her desired future in a different, much safer area in Cartagena), but can also reduce the individuals' economic resources and the possibility to access social support networks. Social mobility then is not just measured in the amount of economic capital a person has, it is rather a concept that needs to be defined individually. Aspirations for social mobility may not necessarily involve educational and occupational considerations, and be rather aspirations for a safe place to live or in terms of maintaining and/or developing good relationships with the community.

A neoliberal approach to aspirations ignores these kinds of aspirations and the idea that aspirations are articulated in what Appadurai (2004: 67) calls the 'thick of social life',

shaped by a complex range of influences including cognition, family and peer influences, influences from wider society and the media, as well as the place young people live in. What young people perceive as a good life to achieve in the future can go beyond educational and occupational aspirations such as a desire for improved social and economic status, and having a comfortable life, and emotionally secure, stable family (Bok, 2010, Brown, 2011, Sellar et al., 2011, Kintrea et al., 2015). Aspirations are embedded in cultural, social, historical and political contexts, with their norms, behaviours, and beliefs. Successful navigation of upward social mobility is dependent on the experiences and knowledge young people gain in the past and present and the resources they are able to acquire to realise in the future. Aspirations are place-based and need to be embedded in young people's opportunity structures, where access to necessary resources is unevenly distributed and young people from lower socio-economic background are disadvantaged (Bok, 2010, Kenway and Hickey-Moody, 2011).

4   Developing and Navigating Aspirations: A Bourdieusian Lens

According to Appadurai (2004) people with higher socio-economic backgrounds are better trained to navigate themselves towards attaining their aspirations because the routes and networks they draw from, experienced in the past and projected into the future, are better developed. Studying young peoples' aspirations and understandings of a good life provides insights into how they experience and perceive their past and present lives. It suggests the opportunities available to them to create their desired futures, while simultaneously suggesting how they go about acting to achieve these futures and how they deal with constraints (Crivello, 2011).

Returning to Maja's aspirations, the influence of her social context is visible in her articulation of her possible future self. She aspires to a professional job that takes her to a different city to study. She desires to live in an apartment in a rich part of the city where it is safe, not noisy and where she can be independent. That also means she needs to be independent in financial terms and will not be a burden to her parents anymore. Having experienced living in a dangerous neighbourhood that is noisy and poor, her social

environment provides some information for how she developed these aspirations. Still, while Maja does not suffer from a lack of aspirations, she may be disadvantaged in her navigational capacity to achieve them. She may be limited in the extent to which she can develop a plan, negotiate her social environment and move in certain directions to acquire skills, knowledge and resources that will enable her to actually achieve her desired future. For example, plans to obtain economic capital to move to Bogotá, paying tuition fees at University or being able to afford an apartment in a richer area of Cartagena.

In this respect Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capitals are useful to outline how aspirations are linked to the embodiment of structures and the acquisition of capitals valued and necessary to navigate one towards the attainment of aspirations.

Bourdieu defines habitus as:

> "[…] a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action (Bourdieu, 2005: 43)."

Habitus is a set of subconscious, internalised structures that generate behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and tastes and determine how to think and act in certain ways that are appropriate to a person's social class. These internalised 'dispositions' are acquired through a process of socialisation from early childhood and structured by family, friends, classmates and other people in a person's social, cultural and political context (Thompson, 1991, Kramsch, 2008). The habitus includes the influences of external structures and agency in generating strategies towards individual 'interests', or in this research, aspirations. These strategies reflect what seems appropriate or possible for individuals in their social, cultural and political context (Swartz, 1997: 100). How individuals perceive their future possibilities and future selves is defined by both their position in the social hierarchical order and their acquired power in this social order (Swartz, 1997).

Through a Bourdieusian lens, social order exists in fields. Fields are the arenas of struggle, social spaces where individuals strategically try to maximise their position of power. Fields and habitus are always in interrelation with each other. Bourdieu uses the metaphor of a

game when explaining how habitus and fields are interrelated. A field can be compared to a game with rules and laws specific to it. To play the game, individuals have to be endowed with the habitus that provides one with the knowledge and recognition of the field, *the feel for the game* (Bourdieu, 1993: 72). For Maja, who wants to move to Bogotá and study at a University there, being from a lower socioeconomic neighbourhood may be disadvantageous in terms of her habitus. For example, she may not have the habitus to enter the field of academia while young people from richer neighbourhoods have developed the necessary habitus through their social environment and higher socioeconomic background. Thus entering fields, an important part of young people's navigation towards achieving desired future selves, may be challenging not just for economic reasons but also because the young people do not have the necessary habitus to play the game in a field like academia (cf. Bok, 2010). However, this should not be interpreted as meaning that the young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are not able to develop a feel for a game outside their own immediate social context. By entering different social contexts and acquiring resources to adapt one's social position, young people are able to learn to play the game.

An individual's position in the social order and in particular fields is influenced through acquired capitals. Bourdieu divides capitals into economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (I explore these distinctions below). They are extensions of the power on which people draw to maintain and enhance their position in the social order and in particular fields. They are resources that function as a 'social relation of power' and become objects of struggle (Swartz, 1997: 73-74, Grenfell, 2008).

Economic capital refers to economic resources. Social capital is acquired through social interactions and networks, such as the family and community in a neighbourhood or University (Hart, 2012). Symbolic capital is a form of power manifested in legitimate demands of recognition, obedience or service from others, and can maintain an individual in a superior position through its inheritance (Swartz, 1997). Cultural capital is the acquisition of non-economic capitals valued by the field's habitus and covers a wide variety of resources including verbal facility, aesthetic preferences, information about school systems, social class attributes, and education, a driver to achieve upward social mobility

and a good life. It becomes a power resource (Swartz, 1997: 75-76) providing advantage and status (Grenfell, 2008, MacLeod, 2009).

Brown (2011: 13) argues that it is through habitus that young people adjust their aspirations and that some choices are perceived as too costly to take actions towards realising them. However, drawing on the aspirations the young people express in my research I do not believe that this is necessarily the case. The young people of my study express in general high aspirations, in particular in terms of educational and occupational aspirations, and rather than adjusting their aspirations I believe that the influence of habitus and capitals affects instead the attainment of aspirations and the behaviour they believe will lead to upward social mobility. Additionally Davidson (2011) argues that aspirations are as much an expression of perceived possible future selves with the intention to work towards them as of fears and perceived limitations in relation to them. Thus rather than aspirations being perceived as costly, it is the choice of actions necessary towards achieving them that may be perceived as too risky or costly or as just not achievable, because of the uneven distribution of capitals available (Bok, 2010, Sellar et al., 2011, Gale and Parker, 2015). Young people from higher socio-economic backgrounds in contrast may have more opportunities to access resources and develop skills necessary to achieve 'high' aspirations. They actually had a better starting point or what Bok (2010) describes as a better script that guides them in their actions and choices valued by society and provides them with greater life chances.

Subsequently, while the navigational capacity to achieve aspirations may differ between young people of different social classes, aspirations to high outcomes may be more evenly distributed. For example in my Master's thesis all young people had high aspirations and desired to enter University, even though this was not a requirement for all desired jobs.

On the other hand, the neoliberal discourse of aspirations dictates young people, in the UK and Australia in particular, they should aspire to higher education and different outcomes than previous generations. This phenomenon is linked to doxa. Bourdieu explains that doxa are beliefs and assumptions which are not questioned and they are perceived as a taken-for granted truth in society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, Bourdieu, 2010 (1984)). These perspectives, beliefs and assumptions are circulated through discourse and practice

in everyday life and in terms of aspirations and understandings of a good life they are what young people think they should aspire to. Higher education and professional employment are communicated as key factors for upward social mobility and therefore worth aspiring to. Maja wanted to study social communication, Santiago aspired to study medicine, and other young people in my research think about engineering studies. These all lead to professional occupations and one may think they are aspirations that are 'uncommon' or 'out of reach' for young people from poor areas. But through the doxic discourse of the value of higher education and professional jobs young people from lower socio-economic background aspire to outcomes that are also valued by youth from higher socio-economic backgrounds. As a consequence young people from lower social classes believe they have the same chances as young people from higher social classes through the meritocratic belief that hard work is the key to achieving their aspirations (Zipin et al., 2013). The young people in my Master's study told me regularly that attaining their aspirations depended on hard work.

In this respect Zipin et al. (2013) developed a conceptual framework of aspirations that includes three aspects: habitus, doxa and agency. Habituated aspirations are influenced by one's habitus and are thus unconscious, developed through internalised structures. Doxic aspirations are aspirations dictated by society's discourse such as the need to achieve a University degree to be successful in the future. And emergent aspirations are influenced by one's agency and informed by new meanings, values and practices (Gale and Parker, 2015). While habitus, doxa and agency are indeed important aspects to consider when looking at aspirations, only in a few cases it is it possible to ascribe certain aspirations to one of these forms, with doxic aspirations being probably the only form of aspiration that can be clearly distinguished. In terms of habituated and agency related aspirations I do not distinguish between them in this thesis. In my opinion every habituated aspiration is also linked to agency and vice versa. Understanding habitus as internalised dispositions guiding our acting and thinking, it is always influencing any of our actions, only, just the degree of agency involved may be different. But calling aspirations merely habituated or emergent would however strip the young people of their agency and ignore the habitus influence. Zipin et al. (2013) write in their framework that habituated, emergent and doxic

aspirations are helpful to think about as single concepts, but that the three aspects are also linked to each other.

Consequently habitus, capitals and field have an important influence on aspirations and even more on their attainment. While aspirations themselves may not necessarily be lower when young people are from lower social classes, the access to resources and capitals to achieve aspirations and thus upward social mobility is unevenly distributed. This brings the discussion of aspirations to a focus on place, place-based aspiration development and mobilities within places. The next section will discuss this issue further with a focus on the relationship between access to resources, place and mobility.

5   Mobility as a Resource for Aspiration Attainment

The focus on aspirations in relation to social mobility prompts questions about how young people are actually able to navigate themselves towards achieving aspirations. In my research I investigate this aspect in a social context where the young people of my study live in disadvantaged areas where the necessary resources for achieving aspirations, such as access to quality education, may be difficult to obtain. This positions them at a different starting point to young people who have greater access to resources and who they must compete with.

Kintrea et al. (2015) argue that aspirations are shaped through multiple influences such as family, cognition, media, and wider society, but also through place and over time. Places and young people's movements within them have an influence on aspirations and their attainment. Places and spaces such as the neighbourhood, educational facilities or the family space provide young people with a positive feeling of belonging, as they obtain skills and knowledge of them. But different places provide different life chances. Allen and Hollingworth (2013) argue that place is an influencing force in developing aspirations and it creates a feeling of belonging to it. Yet to what extent can belonging to a place hinder aspirations and their attainment? Having a place-based habitus that does not correspond with the habitus required to enter other places and spaces could act as a limitation on social mobility (Kintrea et al., 2015).

I now want to briefly explain how I understand the concepts of place and space. When employing concepts of place and space, it is important to identify explicitly what kind of space/place one refers to. Low (2009), for example, uses both terms interchangeably and is not concerned with a dichotomy of space/place. Her focus is rather on how space/place is produced or reproduced. However, her research is related to physical places and their meanings to people within them. Castree (2009) on the other hand proposes three concepts of place of which at least one I would understand also as space rather than place. He however does not mention space at all. First he defines place as the physical location, a specific point on earth's surface. This is the definition from classical geography, how the scientific study of the natural phenomena of earth, understands space/place. The second concept of place is what Castree calls a 'sense of place', a physical location to which people relate to and develop subjective feelings for. Thus an understanding of space/place as part of an individual's or group's identity where space/place is given a certain meaning. This would be linked to the concept of belonging to a place. Third, a place as locale is a setting and scale for people's daily interactions and actions (ibid, 2009: 155). Castree's third definition of place is describing how people relate to each other and is about their practices within places. This relational concept of place could also be understood as a part of the concept of space, which I will describe below.

Thrift (2009) admits that the notion of place "[…] is anything but fully understood (ibid, 2009: 91)." There does not exist one definition of either term, space or place. Human geographers and sociologists use the terms to refer to the same thing. However, even though space and place developed multiple, and interchangeable, meanings, I believe they refer to different things. That means, when employing those terms it is necessary to distinguish them and explain what they mean in the context they are used in.

Similar to Harvey, I understand the term 'place' as a bounded physical place, a geographical locality that is unique and distinguished from other places through its conjunction of natural environment, of built environment, cultures and peoples etc. (Castree, 2009: 184). Place is perceived as something related to physical and material settings. It cannot be disconnected from these tangible aspects, for example, the setting of a house, a neighbourhood, a city, a street, a beach etc. Thus places are perceived as

something more 'real' than spaces (Thrift, 2009). This does not mean places consist of just physical and material elements. Places are given meanings by the people who participate, live, move or have any action within them or in relation to them. For example, the house someone grew up in is not just a physical setting, it is further related to experiences, feelings and memories. People develop an attachment to places through these experiences, feelings and memories (cf. Castree, 2009). Relph (1976) explains that places are not experienced simply in terms of their location or appearance. But they are the places where people experience meaningful events that contribute to their character and their identity. Consequently they are the meaningful physical and material, or in my terms, tangible settings that influence a person's dispositions. These dispositions, in turn, form a system of long-lasting structures of perception, conception and action (Bourdieu, 2005) and can influence how a person thinks and acts and how they perceive themselves in the present and envisages themselves in the future.

Regarding the term space, I want to clarify first that I won't distinguish between the terms 'space' and 'social space'. This research is concerned with the influence on aspirations of what is understood in social science as social space, therefore both terms, space and social space, refer to the exact same thing (as I already excluded place as the tangible element) and I use them interchangeably. I argued that place in my understanding is something tangible such as a geographical location. In contrast space is something which is difficult to materialise and rather intangible. Space is a concept, which consists of the relationships that people have and create within their spaces to each other or to their places. Thus space is always relational. Massey (2009) states that the concept of space is not just a product and one has to include more dimensions. Space is a dimension of multiplicity, and always in the process of being made and produced through the establishment of relations or their refusal. It is social and if there is a relation there needs to be at least one person to do the relating. These interrelations exist in the sphere of daily life, and up to a global level in, for example, national and international political relations. Spaces coexist simultaneously and are always under construction. Space is a product of relations that in turn are embedded in social practices, which have to be carried out. Space is never finalised but

shaped through these relations. Consequently social spaces are also constantly connected to the future (Massey, 2005: 9, 2009) and not just a product of the present.

Space and place intertwine and interact with each other constantly and create through these interrelations social structures, certain human actions and behaviours. For example, an office is a place, however it is simultaneously a working space. On the other hand spaces can exist beyond places, for example, the University is a place and an academic, intellectual, thinking space. However, this space is not bound to the University and can exist at home, at other Universities and other places in general.

In relation to aspirations, places enable young people to acquire the necessary capitals to achieve upward social mobility. For example, Langevang and Gough (2009) studied young people's physical mobility with regard to material and social survival in Accra, Ghana. They explored how the everyday movement of young people within places affects their social mobility, movement understood as a navigational strategy towards the achievement of aspirations. Living in a volatile environment the young people of their study act with agency, making everyday choices in their mobility, travelling to different parts of the city to acquire social and economic capital.

To acquire social and cultural capital, and to eventually convert them into economic capital through using acquired educational degrees for employment opportunities, young people need to be mobile and travel to different places and spaces apart from their immediate environment. This creates an additional focus in the study of aspirations, which is mobility. That is mobility in the sense of young people's physical movement through time, place and space, but also in terms of social mobility as a result of physical mobility.

This makes spatial mobility, mobility within places and spaces, a resource in itself. It becomes an additional form of capital that enhances access to economic, social and cultural capital, and thus social mobility to achieve aspirations (Kaufmann et al., 2004). Mobility is an interesting resource and shapes young people's habitus through their movement through the places and spaces of everyday lives. It suggests the importance of looking at young people's routes (rather than their roots) (Massey, 1998) when analysing aspirations and their attainment strategies. Mobility is, as with other capitals, a resource

that is unequally distributed. Physical mobility does not subsequently lead to social mobility, as illustrated by Gough (2008) in a study of young people in Lusaka, Zambia. She examines young Zambians' trajectories and their negotiation of possible future opportunities within their places and spaces. Although the young people engage in daily and residential mobility, trying to enhance their social mobility, opportunities are scarce and most of them are not able to acquire the necessary capitals. They move on a daily basis searching for job opportunities or residentially for family and educational reasons, however, high transportation costs and few educational and occupational opportunities make them socially immobile, even as they are always in motion physically.

Young people are often then in circumstances where they need to employ what Vigh (2006) calls social navigation. Vigh defines the concept of social navigation as:

> "Attentiveness to the way in which agents seek to draw and actualise their life trajectories in order to increase their social possibilities and life chances in a shifting and volatile social environment' (Vigh, 2006: 11)."

In other words young people develop desired future selves with an awareness of the need to adjust their aspirations and strategies to changes in their social environment. Young people's mobilities between the places and spaces of their everyday lives are significant influences in the development of their navigational capacity, in which they acquire capitals, skills and resources enabling them to react and adjust to constraints and possibilities within their different places and spaces (Vigh, 2006, Langevang and Gough, 2009, Kintrea et al., 2015). Places and spaces are settings in which social and economic forces enable or constrain life chances. Belonging to a disadvantaged place or neighbourhood affects young people's opportunities for social mobility in particular (van Ham et al., 2012, Kintrea et al., 2015).

In summary, aspirations and their attainment are, in contrast to the neoliberal discourse, not solely the responsibility of the individual but rather a product of one's own abilities, acquired capitals, attitudes and behaviour, which are influenced by multiple contextual factors such as opportunities, changing physical mobility, and place attachment. That means that the ability to develop the 'right' aspirations and navigate oneself towards them

successfully is unequally distributed, linked to young people's places and spaces and position in their society's hierarchy. I present stories like the ones of Maja and Santiago throughout my thesis to illustrate the young Cartagenians' negotiation of life chances. The theme of acquiring resources but also being attached to place through habitus will come up again and I will link these individual influences to the wider opportunity structures in the young people's social context.

6   Structure of the Thesis

Following this introduction, in chapter 2 I illustrate the contextual background for my research. This chapter serves to locate the study in the Cartagenian context. It describes the physical location of the study and the two neighbourhoods I selected as field sites. It discusses the history of the city Cartagena and Colombia as a whole and links this history with the life of people in contemporary Cartagena.

In chapter 3 I present my methodology. The chapter explains the rationale behind my qualitative ethnographic approach in which I combined traditional methods, such as interviews, observations, 'hanging out' with young people and group interviews, with more participatory methods. These latter methods included participatory filming and photographing, creating maps and group activities around issues that emerged during fieldwork. Further I describe the process and selection criteria for the research location and for the recruitment of participants and conclude describing the ethical issues that need to be considered in relation to my research.

Chapter 4 is the first of my four empirical chapters. It picks up on the discussion of the neoliberal aspirations-upward social mobility discourse in this introduction and explores what the young people of my study perceive as a good life and as social mobility. Instead of focusing only on occupational and educational outcomes I am interested in what things need to be achieved to reach a good life in the future, in the eyes of the young people I spent time with. The chapter discusses how young people believe they achieve a good life, their perceived drivers of social mobility but also what the restrictive factors that hinder them to successfully achieve upward social mobility are. There is an exploration of the

young people's individual aspirations in particular and how these are connected to their understanding of a good life.

Chapter 5 is an exploration of how aspirations are place related in terms of how a feeling of belonging is influencing their development and attainment. A feeling of belonging is closely related to habitus and creates place attachment and behaviour patterns that are place based. Belonging is further linked to a feeling of exclusion and being labelled because of belonging to a place, while belonging to a place is also positively related to being known and being safe. Thus belonging and a feeling of belonging have a wide range of influences on aspirations that are examined in this chapter.

In chapter 6 I continue to explore place-based influences on aspirations, focusing on how neighbourhood and spatial mobility influences the attainment of aspirations. This chapter picks up on mobility related to aspirations and how mobility within and between places, as well as the place itself provides young people with the possibility to acquire required capitals for upward social mobility.

Chapter 7 expands on the mobility theme with a focus on social mobility in relation to opportunity structures in Cartagena. It develops the concept of social navigation in more detail, presenting the social context of the young people of my study and how they need to adjust to the changing opportunities available to them at different moments. It discusses the negotiations of the young people within their social context and opportunity structures to develop strategies and plans to successfully achieve upward social mobility, where they demonstrate that they need to adjust their plans according to opportunities available.

Chapter 8 provides an overall conclusion to the thesis, highlighting the contributions it makes to wider debates within youth studies and to work on aspirations and social mobility. It also reflects on the limitations of my study and concludes with some suggestions for possible future research.

Chapter 2: Cartagena de Indias: Contextual Background

"Ustedes los blancos se ponen rojos con el sol, amarillos cuando están enfermos, verdes del susto, y morados cuando están muertos.? Cómo será que a nosotros nos dicen que somos la gente de color?[2]" (Moriño, 1999:7 cited in Cunin, 2003)

1   Cartagena de Indias: Tourist Paradise?

Cartagena was the first city in Colombia to gain independence from the Spanish, who had colonised the city and the rest of the country in the 16th century. Cartagena received many internal refugees during the most violent periods of the drug conflict in Colombia and today many people still move to Cartagena in search of a better life. It is a culturally important city, hosting the prestigious national beauty contest every year during the Independence Day celebrations. At the same time it is one of the most unequal and poor cities in Colombia with around 57 percent of young people living in poverty and 28 percent of those young people living in extreme poverty (Moreno and González, 2011). It is a city of many colours and sounds; a city of diverse natural environments, ethnicities, buildings, neighbourhoods and cultures, socioeconomic classes and statuses. It is a city of proud Cartagenians who love their city irrespective of their social class, ethnicity or gender. Consequently I struggled when I first wanted to describe the city from an outsider's perspective and illustrate the differences between areas within the city in terms of wealth levels. Cartagena is usually described as a beautiful colonial city and a tourist paradise without any acknowledgment of the high poverty rates among its citizens, most of them of African descent. I decided to start with a simple Google Internet search for 'Cartagena de Indias, Colombia'.

When I searched for Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, three distinct ideas or sets of images stood out in the search results. The first was that Cartagena is the main tourist city in

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.[2] 'You the white people turn red in the sun, yellow when you are ill, green when scared, and purple when you are dead. How come that you tell us we are people of colour?' (own translation).

Colombia. Most of the pages that came up as results in Google were about the tourist sector or were travel websites with colourful, beautiful pictures of the colonial centre and the sea. Of course pages such as 'Wikipedia' appeared but in general the tourist sector was predominant in the results. Secondly, when I looked at the images that came up in the search results, I saw only the historical colonial centre and Bocagrande, a neighbourhood with apartment buildings and hotels. Both are very rich, developed parts of the city. The historical walled inner city centre is composed of colourful Spanish colonial buildings, Bocagrande is often referred to as the Miami of Colombia. This is interesting in so far as these two areas of the city are the most touristic and most visited parts of the city, but they occupy only a small area in comparison to the rest of the city. The city centre and Bocagrande are the wealthiest areas of the city and their inhabitants are of high socioeconomic status. They are also the most accessible places in terms of safety and transport, while other neighbourhoods are poorer and less well established or developed. Below is a map (see map 1) of Cartagena with its central and peripheral neighbourhoods, marked with the city centre and Bocagrande.

Picture 1 – View Bocagrande[3]

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[3] Source: //www.cartagenacaribe.com/hoteles/hotel.htm

Map 1 - Cartagena de Indias[4]

Picture 2 – Historical Colonial Centre Cartagena[5]

Picture 3 - Historical Colonial Centre Cartagena[6]

[5] Source: http://www.traveler.es/viajes/fotos/galerias/cartagena-de-indias/56/image/4531
[6] Source: http://travel.aarp.org/destinations/colombia/cartagena/

A third interesting aspect in the results of the Internet search was how the city itself was presented as a tourist paradise in the Caribbean part of Colombia, with luxury beaches and hotels. The city hopes to be perceived as a modern, cosmopolitan, safe, beautiful, and romantic place. The tourists pictured in the image results were usually white or mestizo people (the name for a racially mixed person usually between indigenous and white descent), while black people were pictured as fishermen or street vendors. Good examples of the latter were images of the black Palenqueras[7], women with colourful traditional clothes, who sell fruits in the streets. Black people were in this way romanticised in the searched images as part of the exotic experience of visiting Cartagena. However, Afro-Colombians make up the majority of people living in Cartagena, although not in the tourist areas. The illustration of the city in the Google search did not capture this fact.

Picture 4 - Palenqueras in the Historical Colonial Centre Cartagena[8]

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[7] Palenque is the name for a town of former slaves that freed themselves during colonial times. The village called Palenque de San Basilio is located close to Cartagena and is assumed to be the first free African town in South America. Many people in Cartagena are direct descendants of the village's inhabitants preserve their African traditions and language.

[8] Source: http://opentravel.com/Cartagena-Colombia-Bolivar-Vacations-Guide

While these results were not entirely surprising to me I still expected some different information about Cartagena within the first few pages of the Internet search. Contemporary Colombia is located in the north of South America and borders Panama in the north, Venezuela in the north and east and Ecuador, Peru and Brazil in the south (see map 2). Today it is mostly known for drug production and a history of drug wars which have created the second-largest internally displaced population (IDP) in the world (Carrillo, 2009). A significant number of these internally displaced people live in Cartagena (Moreno and González, 2011). Cartagena ranks sixth in Colombia in the ranking of cities receiving internal refugees. These people come to the city to try to create a new and better life away from the conflict and poverty of rural areas (Goyenche González, 2007). Colombia is also the fourth largest south American country, with large amounts of natural resources and a significant oil and mining industry (OECD, 2015). Cartagena has one of the country's most significant oil refineries in its industrial area (CEDEC, 2013).

Colombia's population today consists of about 48 million people (OECD, 2015), 75 percent of them living in urban areas (The World Factbook, 2013). It is an ethnically diverse country due to its colonial history. According to the National Statistics Department (DANE), 25 percent of the population, or 10.5 million people, are Afro-Colombians, mostly the descendants of slaves (Minority Rights Group International, 2008, United Nations, 2011). However, these numbers have been questioned due to perceived irregularities in the census; Afro-Colombians may not self-identify as 'Afro', (Rodríguez Garavito and Mosquera, 2010) and so the number of Afro-Colombians may be much higher. Other ethnic groups are Mestizos (58 percent), Whites (20 percent), and mixed Black-Amerindian and Amerindian (1–3 percent) (The World Factbook, 2013). I describe ethnic differences between these groups in more detail in the section 'Colombia a multi-ethnic country'. Afro-Colombians live in every major city, and the states with the largest Afro-Colombian populations are Chocó (80 percent), Magdalena (72 percent), Bolivar (66 percent), and Sucre (65 percent), and the Archipelago of San Andres and Providencia (56 percent) (DANE, 2010).

Map 2 - Map of South America[9]

Cartagena de Indias is located in the state of Bolivar. The map below (see map 3) displays the regions with their respective densities of Afro-Colombian population. People of African descent are the part of Colombia's population that is most affected by inequality. The map of high-density Afro-Colombian population areas overlaps almost completely with areas of poverty in Colombia (United Nations, 2011). Cartagena, as one of the major colonial cities in Colombia is also one of the cities with the highest Afro-Colombian population and it struggles with extreme poverty rates, racism and inequalities, the results of colonial socio-economic structures that persist into the present (Moreno and González, 2011). This is important information with regards to my study, as my young participants live in Afro-Colombian areas of Cartagena and the majority of them are of African descent. The young people of my study are affected and challenged by these unequal and discriminatory colonial structures.
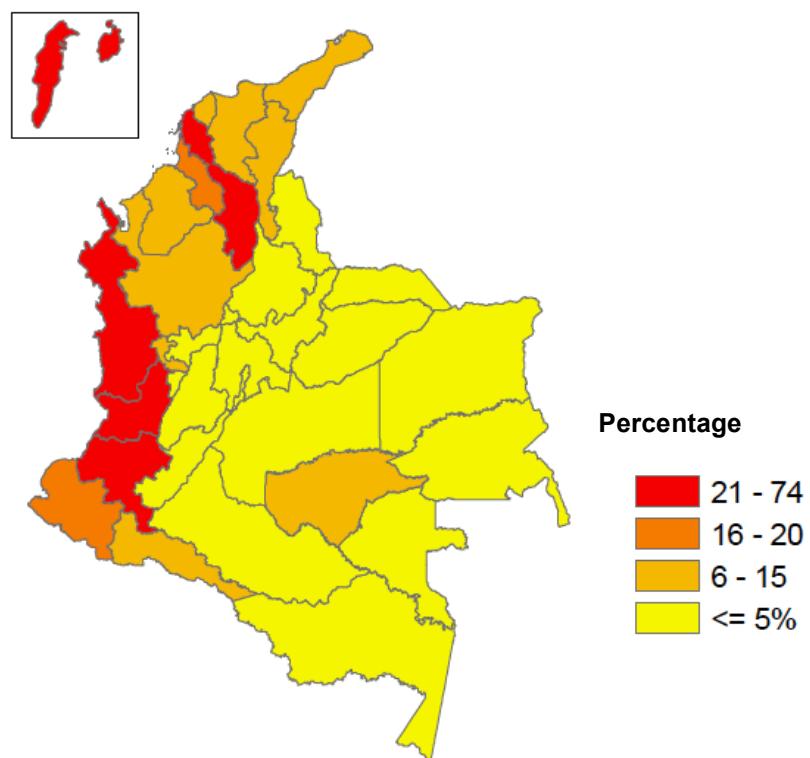
Map 3 - Afro-Colombian Population in Colombia[10]

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[10] Source: DANE CENSO GENERAL 2005. 2006. *Poblacion Indigena y Afrocolombiana*.

The absence of these facets of life in the city, and Colombia as whole, in the Internet search results for Cartagena is an example of how presentations of the city ignore its social-structural problems, historical inequalities and the exclusion of Afro-Colombian people in the city. In Cartagena people of African descent still suffer from exploitation and unequal treatment and contemporary social structures reinforce these inequalities. These structural, historical and political influences are of high importance to my research into young people's aspirations for social mobility and into how young people's development and attainment is influenced by social spaces and places.

In this chapter I scrutinise how historical structures are still persistent in the Cartagena of today, and how they influence the political, economic and social environment of young people living in the city. I start with a contextual overview of Cartagena followed by a brief historical section. I continue with a discussion about the concepts of race and ethnicity and how these are understood in Colombia in comparison to other regions in the world. I exemplify how social structures are reinforcing inequalities that intersect with ethnicity, social class and gender using the example of the beauty queen pageants in Cartagena that take place every year as part of the Independence Day celebrations. Finally I describe my two fieldwork neighbourhoods and end the chapter with some concluding remarks.

2   Cartagena de Indias: Contextual Background

Cartagena, founded in 1533, is the capital of the state of Bolivar in the Colombian Caribbean. The tourist industry, followed by the industrial sector, in particular the oil industry and the activities at the port, are the main economic sectors in Cartagena (Pérez Fuentes et al., 2012).

The city is one of the most unequal cities in the country in terms of income ranges and living standards. It is possible to speak of two Cartagenas. One which is wealthy, with its historical colonial inner city and its high apartment buildings and hotels along the sea in Bocagrande, and one which is outside of these wealthy areas, poor and rarely visited by tourists. The latter consists of neighbourhoods called 'barrios populares', different residential areas ranging from poor suburbs to very poor 'illegal' settlements where people

build their houses out of waste materials (Bolaño Navarro et al., 2009). Residents' income sources in the barrios populares of the city are mostly derived from work in the informal sector. The majority of the population is of African descent.

According to the 2005 census and its estimates for 2010, the city of Cartagena has a population of approximately 944,250 inhabitants of which 18 percent are aged between 14 and 28 years, equally distributed in terms of gender (De la Hoz et al., 2013, DANE, 2015a).

Cartagena is divided in three areas, so called 'Localidades' (see Map 4) that include 178 barrios. Localidad 1: Historíca y del Caribe Norte (355.943 habitants); Localidad 2: De la Virgen y Turística (319.436 habitants); Localidad 3: Industrial de la Bahia (237.295 habitants) (DANE, 2005a).[11] Every 'Localidad' is administered by its own local mayor's office, although an overall mayor's office, that of the city mayor, directs all three local offices. The three Localidades are divided into 15 urban commune areas and 12 rural commune areas.[12] Only one of those commune areas consists of 'barrios' occupied by higher income households, while eight of the commune areas are classified as extremely poor. Because of this Cartagena is called a tripartite city: The city of tourism; the industrial city; and the city of misery, one of growing inequality and contradiction (Giammaría León, 2011: 171).

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[11] The difference between the total population of Cartagena in 2010 and the three Localidades can be explained by the fact that new barrios have changed from illegal and unofficial status to legal barrios within the 5 years between the two respective surveys.
[12] 15 Unidades comuneras de Gobierno Urbanas y 12 Unidades Comuneras de Gobierno Rurales
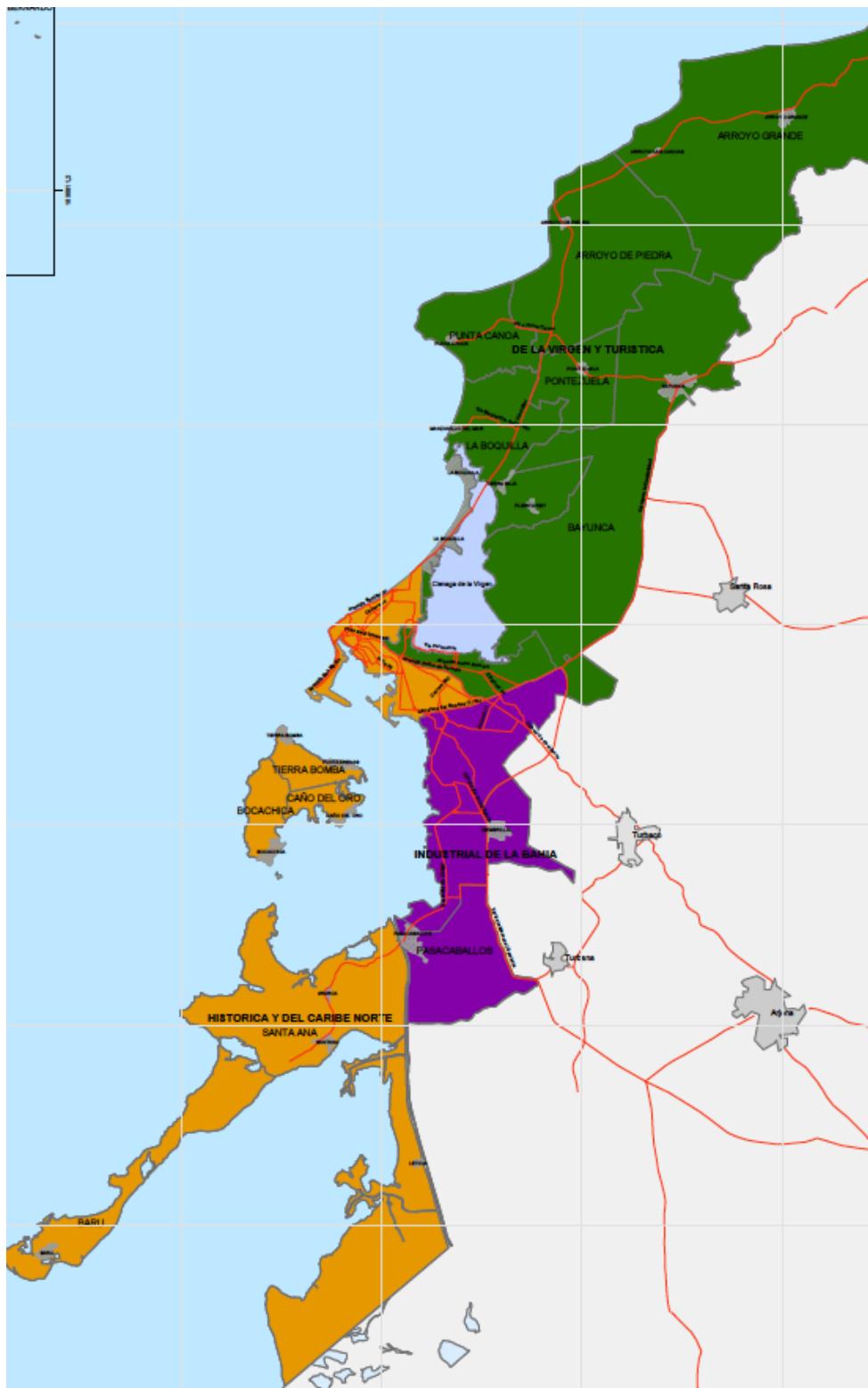
Map 4 – Areas of Cartagena de Indias[13]

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[13] Source: http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/pdf/descargas/division_politica/localidades/Localidades.pdf

Picture 5 - Cartagena, a City of Many Realities (Picture taken by author)

Today the historic centre has been privatised and the land of former residents has been converted into hotels, spas and shops. This contributed to the perception of the city's majority Afro-Colombian population. Although a city where the majority of the population is Afro-Colombian, Cartagenians of darker skin colour are perceived as criminals or as 'dangerous' in the central areas, where residents are predominantly white (Bolaño Navarro et al., 2009). Away from the walls and the skyline of Bocagrande exists what residents of the barrios call the 'real' Cartagena, the one that is rarely visited by tourists (Bolaño Navarro et al., 2009).[14] According to Bolaño Navarro et al. (2009) Cartagenians of the barrios populares state that if people really want to get to know Cartagena they have to visit parts of the city outside the walls of the old city, to barrios around 'La Popa', 'Olaya' and 'El Pozón'. These places have substantial problems with drug trafficking and crime. Bolaño Navarro et al. (2009: 100-102) argue that these neighbourhoods provide evidence that even though people there live in disadvantaged conditions, their everyday lives are also marked by hospitality and kindness.

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[14] The description of Cartagena and its 'real' city areas as well as a city of many realities has been also present during my scoping trip in 2013, where people I talked to explained to me that Cartagena has many realities ('Cartagena tiene muchas realidades').

Households in Colombia are divided into stratified districts called 'estratos socioeconómicos'. They are categorised from one to six, category one households being the poorest and six the wealthiest households. The 'estratos' define how much people pay for gas, water and electricity bills; people from lower 'estratos' pay less. Households in the historical centre and Bocagrande are classified as estratos four to six, while neighbourhoods outside these wealthy areas consist usually of 'estratos' one or two.[15] Thus the stratifications of the households in the city mirror its social stratifications (Cunin, 2003). The majority of Cartagena's households are classified as 'estratos' one and two (CEDEC, 2013). Eight percent of houses in barrios of 'estratos' one or two are built of wood and waste materials and seven percent of houses have dirt floors. However, the majority of barrios are connected to electricity services (99%), a gas service through a pipe system (88%), an aqueduct water system (95%) and a sewerage system (84%) (Pérez Fuentes et al., 2012).
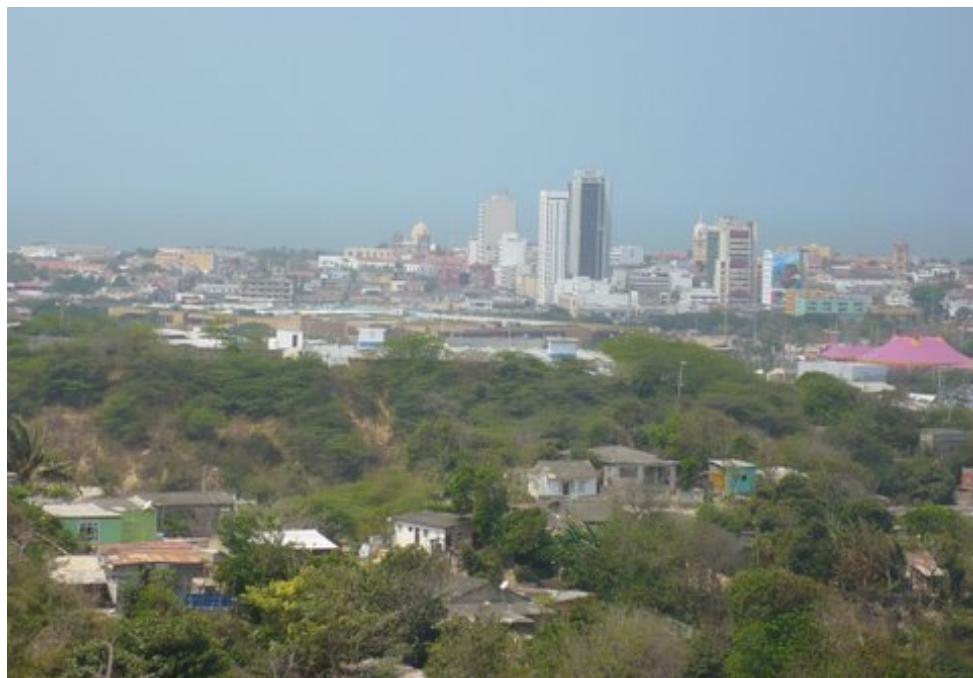
Picture 6 – Cartagena (Picture taken by author)

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[15] For a map of the estratos in Cartagena see http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/

Cartagena is a particularly interesting context in which to study how young people's social spaces and places influence their aspirations and how they pursue them. The social and physical arrangements of the city mean that young people are able to observe a different, far richer and wealthier social context on their doorstep. As I wrote above, the structure of the social contexts the young people live in and see can be explained with reference to history. I present in the next section a brief overview of Cartagena's history. As Cartagena is a post-colonial city and because the majority of its inhabitants are Afro-Colombians, below I explain in more detail how the concepts of race and ethnicity are understood and constructed in Colombia. I include an example of the beauty pageants that take place in the city every year to exemplify how colonial structures reproduce race discrimination, and to show how race intersects with other characteristics such as class and gender, to reproduce the broader social-structural inequalities that affect the young people in my study.

3   Cartagena de Indias: Colonial and Post-Colonial History

Spanish explored Colombia, at that time called New Granada, through the 16th century, eventually claiming all of it as a colony. The Spanish started to exploit it as a source of gold, other minerals and some agricultural products, as well as a consumer of imported manufactured goods (CountryWatch, 2015). Cartagena served as one of the main ports for the export and import of materials between South America and Spain, as well as one of the main ports for the import of slaves. Spain needed slaves to work in its South American mines as the indigenous population had diminished very fast under the hard working conditions (Wade, 2010, CountryWatch, 2015). By the end of the 18th century, the indigenous population had been reduced from three to four million people to just 130,000 people. Today there are an estimated 1,392,000 (3,4 percent of the population) indigenous people living in Colombia (DANE, 2005b). The Spanish economic system was extractive and exploitative, relying on the cheap labour of slaves. Because of its importance as a centre of trade, Cartagena grew into the most dominant city in the Caribbean region of Colombia. In the 17th century it consisted of 10,000 inhabitants, growing in the 18th century up to 12,000 inhabitants. It was attacked many times, which led to the building of the city walls

and the fortification of the port in the 17th century (Safford and Palacios, 2002). Cartagena was however disconnected from the Magdalenian River, the main transport route for goods and materials inside Colombia and, even at its peak, the city's economy was weaker than those of other colonies in the Caribbean outside Colombia. During the 18th century many mestizos and black people were engaged in trade and commerce in the city, and not restricted to work in the mines or in other hard or menial occupations (Helg, 1999, Safford and Palacios, 2002). Some of the free blacks and mestizos prospered economically but nonetheless never achieved white elite status as their African or indigenous descent prohibited them entering certain high status professions, such as the church or positions in the colonial bureaucracy and army (Helg, 1999).

It was not only mestizos and black people that were subordinated in the Spanish regime, creoles, those who are of Spanish descent but born in the colonies, did not have the same status as Spanish born people who were usually preferred for government office and for similar high status positions. Growing divisions between the colony and Spain led to independence movements forming in New Granada (Safford and Palacios, 2002). The decline of Spain as a world power hastened the break with her colonies, including New Granada. Cartagena was the first city in Colombia that achieved independence from the Spanish crown. On the 11th November 1811, radicals, mostly free black people (either born free, self-purchased or escaped), launched a coup led by the lancers of Getsemaní, a group of revolutionary blacks. The coup started in today's Plaza de Trinidad in front of the church of Getsemaní. The revolutionaries demanded independence from Spain and equal rights for all free citizens regardless of class (Helg, 1999)[16]. Although Cartagena achieved independence from the Spanish crown, and the 11th November is commemorated as Independence Day in the city, slavery was not abolished until 1851 (Wade, 2002) and a class hierarchy, with professions corresponding to skin colour, remained. Manual and unskilled labour was mostly done by black people and not whites; skilled occupations were done by mulattos and mestizos and a few whites, and positions in the church and the state bureaucracy were occupied solely by whites (Helg, 1999). Blackness remained identified

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[16] These were the two main demands. For further explanation in detail about the demands cf. Helg,1999.

with slave status and social classes have continued to be divided along racial lines to the present time (Wade, 2002).

3.1 Colombia: a Multi-ethnic Nation

Today Colombia is a multi-ethnic country. This is due to its colonial history, in which Cartagena played a big part as the main slave port (Wade, 1993, Mosquera Rosero-Labbé et al., 2009, Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2010, Wade, 2010). Colombia, seeking to achieve the status of a modern state according to European norms, and being afraid of Africans gaining political empowerment, intended to create a mestizo[17] nation in the 19th century. Being 'Modern' at that time was equated with white European appearance and a European lifestyle. Thus the non-white population was the focus of intermarriages with more white people so that their offspring would be of lighter skin colour. As a result of this *mestizaje* or *blanqueamento (whitening)* Colombia has become a multi-ethnic nation, in which many people cannot just be characterised as white (blanco) or black (negro). There exist a variety of terms that characterise people of different skin colours and of different cultures (Wade, 1993, Wade, 2009, Mosquera Rosero-Labbé et al., 2010, Wade, 2010). The word mestizo does not refer to simply any mixed race person but to the offspring of indigenous and white people in particular. Offspring of black and white people are labelled mulatto and those of indigenous and black people zambo. Another term is cimarron, used to characterise rebel slaves who freed themselves and created their own towns and villages, often called palenque. In some regions in Colombia people still refer to being cirmarron with pride.[18] In Cartagena the majority of African-descended people are characterised as mulatto. The term Afro-Colombian on the other hand is less specific and is a term referring to people of African descent in general. It is also a term that is perceived as being politically correct, although the term negro and 'lo negro' are frequently used in Colombian academia as well (Mosquera Rosero-Labbé et al., 2010).

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[17] Mestizo is a term for people of mixed descent, in general descendants from European and Amerindian people.
[18] There exist a group of 'cimarrones' in Santa Marta

Most Afro-Colombians in Cartagena do not actually use terms like mulatto, mestizo or zambo, but rather call themselves moreno (which means literally 'brown'). People also define themselves according to their social status, as 'mas claro'[19] or 'mas oscuro'[20]. Thus a taxi driver may say he is 'mas claro' because driving tourists is associated with this status, while someone who sells fruits in the street defines him or herself as 'mas oscuro', as the perception in Cartagenian society is that those people are more black, of lower status. Both might be of the same skin colour, but it is not the skin colour they really describe, rather their status in the social hierarchy of Cartagena (Cunin, 2003). These perceptions are linked to the concept of race in Colombia, which is a structural principle of social relations, culture and politics, embedded in socio-historical context. The term negro has been changed to Afro-Colombian to ethnicise people of African descent into an ethnic group rather than a race (Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2010). While some people replace the word race with ethnicity, there still exist racially based identities, social structures, inequalities, and exclusion, even though their legitimacy is often strongly questioned. The idea of race can be understood as a subjective social construction produced through people's actions and used to create social distinctions (Winant, 2006, Knowles, 2010). Societies tend to give characteristics such as differences in appearance racial significance and categorise people into racial groups. These categorisations relate to differing social attitudes and behaviours towards each group. Persons who are perceived as belonging to certain races may have less access to certain resources, lower incomes, less political power and experience discrimination, as it is the case for many people in Cartagena. Racial perceptions are always embedded in historical contexts (White, 2002) and the definition of the characteristics necessary to belong to this one 'race' differ by society and its socio-historical background. For example the US follows a simple dualism where somebody is perceived as black without any distinction of how mixed their blood may be. In Latin America the situation is far more complex because of the different constructions of ethnic mixtures (Cunin, 2003, Wade, 2010).

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[19] Of whiter skin colour
[20] Of darker skin colour

When distinguishing race from ethnicity, Blank et al. (2004) and Wade (2010), state that ethnicity includes cultural factors such as religion, language and nationality. People can be ethnically similar but may differ in racial characteristics, for example two individuals might be perceived as white or as black but have the same ethnic backgrounds. The same is valid in reverse, two individuals can have the same ethnic background but different skin colours and thus be perceived as belonging to different 'races', such as Afro-Colombians or Mestizos in Colombia.

In this research I follow the Colombian literature and use racial terms such as white and black. In Colombia race is understood in reference to the intersection of race, ethnicity and culture (Ng'weno, 2007, Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2010). The term negro therefore defines not just skin colour, but rather references a history of Afro-Colombian culture, inequality, discrimination, and contemporary socioeconomic problems as well. Race and ethnicity are socio-historical constructions and racism is based on excluding people who conform to these constructions (Mosquera Rosero-Labbé, 2010). Even though skin colour is of importance in Cartagenian society, social class intersects with skin colour. Today young Afro-Colombians suffer the consequences of the historically rooted structures connected to racism. Colonially reinforced structures are not discriminating against young people solely because of their skin colour, but discriminate on the basis of the broader social construction of being Afro, an intersection of race, social class, the music they listen to, and the way they dress and speak. Afro young people experience the consequences of this discrimination in their everyday lives.

The intersections of race, class, and cultural style form structural constraints for the young people of my study. In order to explain how these structural inequalities are reproduced in everyday Cartagenian life, I provide an example of the way skin colour and socio-economic background intersect in the yearly beauty queen contest that takes place in Cartagena every November during the city's Independence Day celebrations.

4   Beauty Queens and What They Tell Us About the Intersecting Characteristics that Reproduce Inequalities

During my fieldwork in Cartagena I had the opportunity to observe national and city based beauty pageants. Every year in November during the Independence Day celebrations, Cartagena hosts a national beauty pageant to elect a Miss Colombia to participate in the international Miss Universe pageant. Almost at the same time Cartagenians elect a popular beauty queen, from the barrios populares. The local beauty pageant events and the national contest represent social structures in Cartagena, some of which exclude the majority of its population. In the following sections I describe both beauty pageants and discuss how they reproduce inequalities in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, class and socioeconomic background. As I have described, these have their roots in Cartagena's history and colonial social structures. These structures influence the aspirations of the young people in my study, and what it is possible for them to attain. Looking at the beauty pageants allows me to picture how the structures function. The section also serves as an example to refer back to in the empirical sections of the thesis where I deal with the young peoples' aspirations and the different structures that influence them.

Colombia's national beauty queen pageant takes place in the historical centre of Cartagena and in Bocagrande. The national and local media covers almost all the events related to the pageant, starting with the preparation for the contest weeks before the crowning of the queen. Every participant at the national pageant represents her Colombian state, in Spanish *departamento*. However, while they represent their state officially, they do not represent the women of their state culturally or in their appearance. The appearance of those who participate closely matches international beauty standards, the contestants mostly having 90-60-90 hourglass figures, heights of about 1.80m, white skin, straight hair and Caucasian facial features. The average Colombian woman is by contrast 1.65m tall, 60kg in weight, of mixed skin colour, with curly hair (Rutter-Jensen et al., 2005). Thus the national beauty queen does not represent Colombia's women but a picture of how a woman ought be to in order to be perceived as beautiful; a surreal picture of female beauty only a few in Colombia can achieve. While this is the case for most countries, in Colombia the beauty queens are also expected to follow certain rules to be able to

participate in the beauty pageant. These include not changing their residential address to another state in the country, and to remain unmarried (they are allowed to have a male partner though). It has been argued that the latter stipulation is designed to make the contest more appealing to Colombia's male heterosexual population, by playing to their sexual fantasies (Rutter-Jensen et al., 2005: 12). Plastic surgery is accepted and the majority of beauty queens change their bodies according to the expectations of the audience. They get nose jobs, different sizes of breast implant and have fat removal surgeries. Stereotypical gender ideals are thus reinforced through the pageant. A beautiful woman is not expected to be intelligent, economically independent or politically involved (Rutter-Jensen et al., 2005) but, according to the stereotypes of a machismo society, is expected to stay in the house, faithfully dependent on the macho man who is, in contrast allowed on the streets to provide for the family while perhaps also having at least one other sexual partner (Cunin, 2003, Cunin, 2006, Quevedo-Gómez et al., 2011). These are extreme gender stereotypes, and how they are lived out is also linked to socioeconomic status, social class and race and ethnicity. Women of higher socioeconomic status who are usually white have more opportunities to achieve independence for example.

Therefore, while the national beauty pageant reproduces unequal gender roles, it is also related to other intersecting categories of identity in Cartagena. The national beauty pageant is an event only accessible - both in terms of women participating in it as well as those attending events related to it - for higher social classes. The preparation and participation of a beauty queen in the contest has been estimated to cost around 40 million pesos (£ 8900) in courses, clothes, and travel costs. Further, the beauty pageant is financed and held through private families, companies and organisations that create a business around it (Rutter-Jensen et al., 2005: 12). Events are private and held in exclusive hotels with entry costs that are not affordable for the majority of the Cartagenian population, which is only able to follow the prestigious event through the media. This despite the fact that for most Cartagenians it is one of the most important events of the year, at one of the most important dates for their city.

As well as following the national beauty queen pageant, Cartagenians elect their own popular beauty queen. This process starts months before crowning, with the so-called

'gozons', events that take place in the barrios populares and where the single barrios and Localidades celebrate the beauty queen that represents the barrio. These events are outside of the rich areas of Cartagena, in the mostly Afro-Colombian, poorer areas of the city; the participants are not from rich, prestigious families and do not match the international beauty standards of the women in the national competition. That written, in my experience the women that represent the barrios populares are still chosen to try to match these beauty standards as much as possible and therefore represent a mix of an international beauty standard and 'Cartagenian Beauty'. For example young women chosen for the queen popular are often those with whiter skin. Thus there exist two beauty contests in Cartagena at almost the same time, one for the rich population that represents Colombia internationally, and one that is for the poor population and represents the 'real' Cartagena.[21]

Picture 7 - National Beauty Queens 2013[22]

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[21] A short documentary of the New York Times presents the conflict of both beauty pageants here: http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/1248069392058/rival-pageants-divide-colombia.html
[22] http://www.eluniversal.com.co/reinado/2013/nacional/noticias/hoy-llegan-las-reinas-cartagena-116

Picture 8 - Beauty Queens Barrios Populares 2013[23]

Cunin (2003: 187-189) explores the two beauty pageants and describes them as a time of celebration in Cartagena, one celebrating the most beautiful woman of Cartagena and the other the most beautiful woman of the country. The beauty pageant of the barrios populares creates solidarity within the neighbourhoods and every barrio shows commitment and support for their queen. The popular queens are able to represent their barrio and discuss the social, economic and political problems that occur within it, such as the absence of good infrastructure and quality education.

In terms of socioeconomic status and background, the national beauty queens are from rich families and enjoy high living standards and good education, mostly at private Universities in the country, while the Cartagenian queens are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, from barrios populares where the majority of people cannot afford a private University. And while the national beauty pageant committee reaffirms every year that no racism exists in the beauty contests, the national queens are mostly of whiter skin colour and the Cartagenian queens of African descent. Only one Afro-Colombian beauty queen from the state Choco has been elected, in 2001, as Miss Colombia. This happened a year

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[23] http://www.eluniversal.com.co/reinado/2013/independencia/noticias

after the contest suffered a scandal that claimed participants of black colour were excluded and discriminated against (Cunin, 2003).

In terms of financing the participation, clothes, preparation and travel costs for the pageant, the popular queens are sponsored by the council of Cartagena, which covers the costs of events and their organisation, while the queens also fundraise money for their personal expenses, such as clothes and make-up, in their own barrios. In contrast, the national queens are sponsored by international and national beauty product and fashion brands, and other sponsors cover their travel, food and hotel costs. National queens are even given funding for plastic surgery (Cunin, 2003: 194).

Both beauty queen pageants ostensibly take place in the same city, but in reality they take place in two different Cartagenas. Both contests occupy different spaces and places in the city and present two different faces of Cartagenian society (Cunin, 2003: 197). This brings me back to the discussion of the life of two Cartagenas, one that is for tourists and the rich, and one for the majority of residents. One plays out in the urban, modern, and rich parts of the city, and the other in the poor residential areas. This binary situation reflects the historical divide between dominant, rich white people and poor, and dominated Afro-Colombians.

Observing these events during my fieldwork I asked some of my participants about the paradox the two beauty queen pageants present, stating that I was surprised by them.

"Why do you have beauty queen pageants during Independence Day celebrations? And why do you have two beauty queen pageants?"

James: "The two beauty queen pageants present the diet of the poor and the party of the rich! What has the beauty queen event to do with independence? Nothing it is just an event during the Independence Day parties."

Miguel: "There is just one beauty queen contest that has something to do with the independence day and this is the one where we select the popular queen."

Andrea: "This is a complex topic and you will find many opinions about it. But the contests do not represent the Cartagenian culture. What it does is reinforce economic and political inequality and racism."

Yonas: "The national queen contest has been implemented into the Independence Day events to get more attention. So it was a strategic decision and reinforces the colonial culture in this city and its touristic context. The contest of the popular barrios has been implemented afterwards because we from the barrios populares do not have access to the national contest for economic, social status and racial reasons. Cartagena and their beauty queen contest are companies. And isn't it ironic that we celebrate Independence Day from the Spanish crown to vote for a queen?"

Independence day and the important historical events of the 11th of November, when African descended revolutionaries launched a coup in Getsemaní, are only recognised in the popular beauty pageant event when people from barrios populares are elected to represent key figures of the fight for independence. More bizarre is the fact that the national beauty queen pageant organisers have decided to choose the colonial city of Cartagena for a mostly white and upper class beauty contest instead of a modern city such as Medellin or the capital Bogotá. The organisers decided to occupy one of the most historical places in Colombia during the Independence Day celebrations, excluding those of Afro-Colombian ethnicity who were supposed to have gained their independence through the Getsemaní coup. Somewhat paradoxically then, at the heart of Cartagena's independence celebrations is a national beauty contest that reflects and reproduces historical inequalities that independence was meant to signal the end of. The popular beauty queen pageant is an event to distract the majority of the population of Cartagena from this fact, keeping them away from the election of the national queen, occupying them with selecting their own queen.

The beauty queen pageant example provides important background on how social class, gender and race intersect and reproduce inequality. I continue to focus on issues in the Cartagenian context that reproduce inequalities and intersect with social class. Social class does influence young people's future life chances and how they can navigate themselves towards social mobility outcomes. In particular educational and occupational opportunities are linked to the socioeconomic background of young people. The next section of this chapter will describe the labour market situation in Cartagena and focus on educational

and occupational opportunities structures within Cartagena to provide important information I will refer back to later in my empirical chapters.

5   Cartagena Today: Educational and Occupational Opportunities in Cartagena

In 2015 young people represented 32 percent of the Colombian population (DANE, 2015c), with up to 75 percent of them living in urban areas (Edilma Osorio et al., 2011). In 2011 the Colombian population was estimated to be 46,044,601 inhabitants (a projection from the DANE census 2005), of which 49.4 percent are men and 50.6 percent are women. Accordingly young people in the country number approximately 10,920,99, that is 23.7 percent of the total population of the country (51 percent men and 49 percent women) (Tatis et al., 2013). The population distribution graph below (Figure 3) shows that young people make up the majority of the age group between 10 and 34; people who will look for employment in the near future, or are currently employed or of employable age.
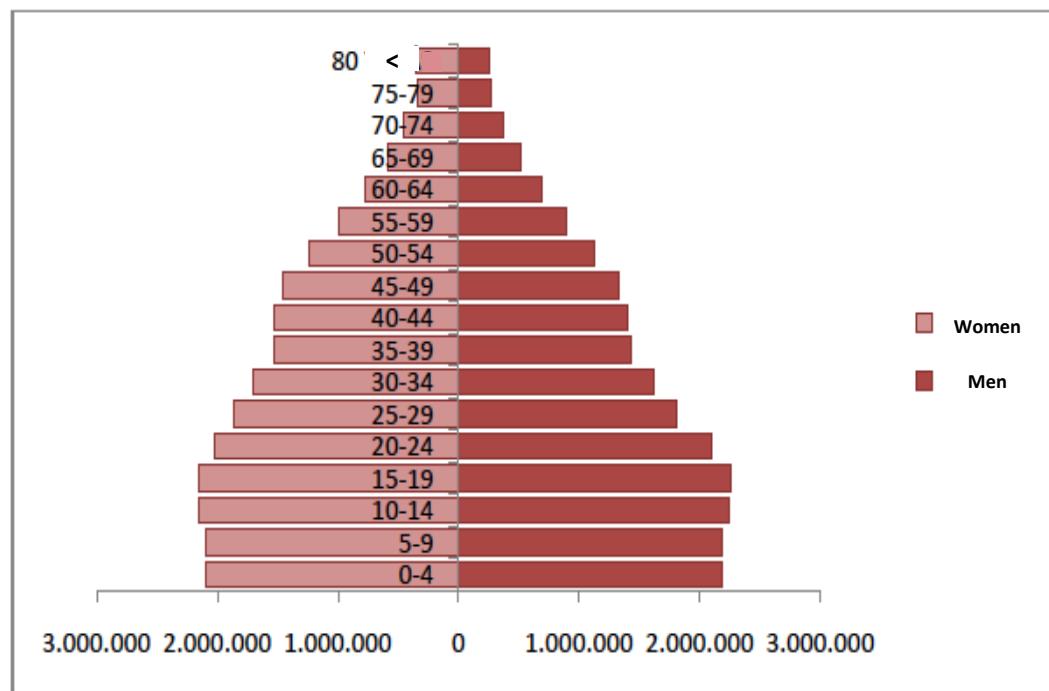
Figure 1 - Colombia. Population Pyramid 2011[24]

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[24] Source: Tatis et al., 2013

In 2011, 1,163,445 Colombians were categorised as unemployed, people who do not have a job, but are actively seeking for one. 44.2 percent of these people were young people (Tatis et al., 2013). This suggests that young people in Colombia are the age group most affected by unemployment.

In 2010 Cartagena's estimated population was 944,250 people, young people representing 18 percent, a number that is actually lower than the national average (De la Hoz et al., 2013, DANE, 2015a).
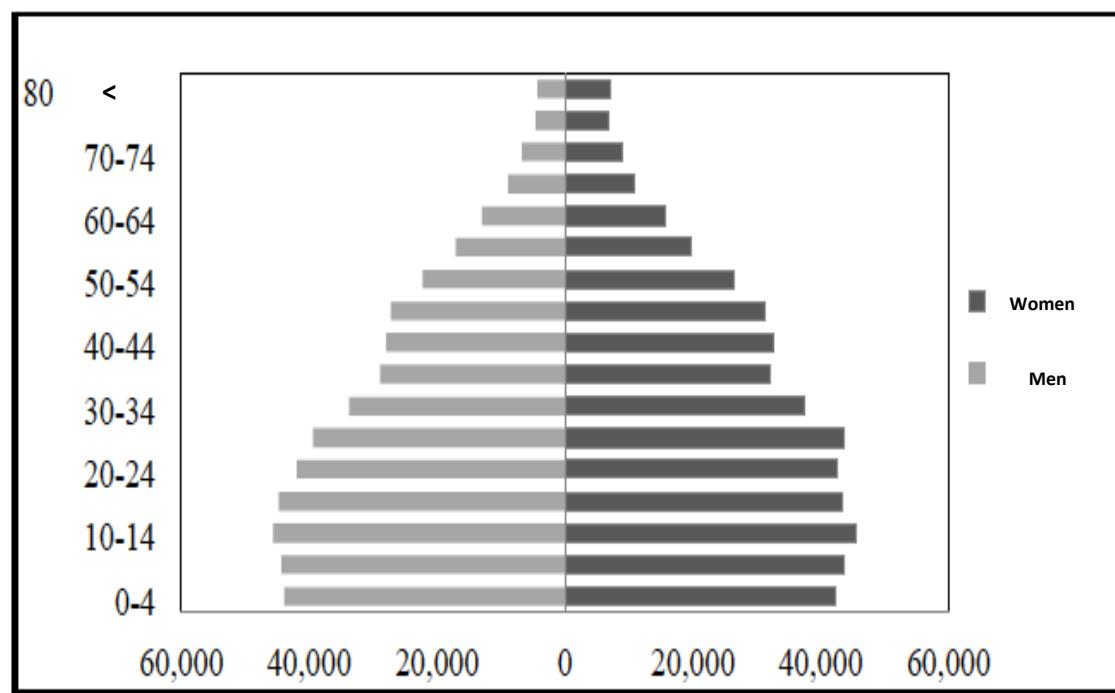
Figure 2 Cartagena. Population Pyramid 2010[25]

Youth unemployment in Cartagena is however three times higher than adult unemployment although it has declined since 2001. In 2010 the youth unemployment rate in Cartagena was 30 percent (14 percent lower than the Colombian youth unemployment

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[25] Source: De la Hoz etal., 2013

rate) with a total of 50,989[26] young people aged between 14 and 28 without jobs (De la Hoz et al., 2013, DANE, 2015a).

De la Hoz et al. (2013) write that the majority of unemployed youth in Cartagena are young people with a Bachiller (equivalent to A-Level in Britain, and the necessary educational level to enter university) qualification, while young people with higher degrees such as professional or post-graduate degrees are less likely to be unemployed.
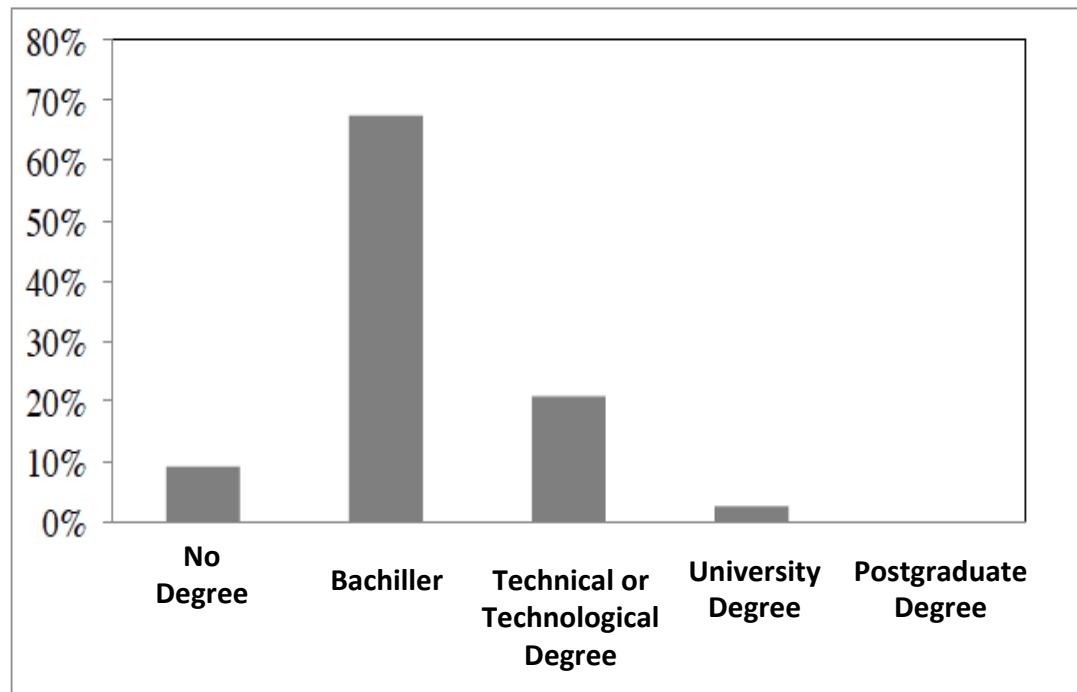
Figure 3 – Youth Unemployment and Education Level[2728]

Over 60 percent of the unemployed youth that do have a Bachiller do not enter higher education. This suggests that either they want to enter the labour market without a tertiary degree, preferring to produce income for the household or they cannot access tertiary education, as the costs are too high and they are forced into the employment market (De la Hoz et al., 2013). The cost of education in Colombia is high, even compared

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[26] This number has been adjusted from the original article of De la Hoz with numbers of the Cartagenian population from DANE 2010
[27] Source: De la Hoz etal., 2013
[28] The figure may be perceived as being even better for young people not having a Bachiller at all in relation to unemployment rates, however the number of young people who do not finish their Bachiller nowadays is relatively low which creates this statistical distribution.

to Western countries (World Bank, 2003). The tertiary education system, and in particular the university system, is divided into public and private institutions. Tuition fees for private institutions are rarely affordable for young people from the lower estratos socioeconómicos in Cartagena (and in Colombia in general). The number of spaces available at public Universities are far fewer than those available at private institutions. The costs for university degrees varies depending on the course and chosen university. For example, a first degree in business administration at the private university 'Universidad de San Buenaventura' costs COP 3,171,000 (£666) per semester, while a semester of medicine at the private university 'Universidad de SINÚ' costs COP 8,080,500 (£1697).[29] Additionally students have to pay for matriculation, other administrative fees and transport. By comparison the public university in Cartagena, 'Universidad de Cartagena', costs about COP 280,000 (£59)[30] for almost all courses per semester and offers different financial support options for young people from poorer households. However, student intake is limited; only 100 students every year can enter the business administration course, while 90 spaces are available for medicine. The application process for the public university works through a universal exam system, which all applicants have to sit. In 2010 10,150 young people sat the exam, of which only 1,157 were accepted (El Universal, 2010). Therefore only approximately 10 percent of the total applicants were able to enter the public university and only if they rank high in the entry exam. It would be difficult for most of the young people in my study to pay the 280,000 COP per semester to study at the public university. The minimum salary in the city was 650,000 COP per month at the time of my fieldwork, and Cartagena is one the most expensive cities in Colombia in terms of the cost of living. Many people from barrios populares are not even able to obtain the minimum salary for their work and a student state credits can only be obtained with a guarantor, something that not all young people have.

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[29] These figures were taken from the websites of the Universities in 2016.
[30] In an interview in 2013 with the one of the administrative offices of the University of Cartagena, one of the academic advisors told me that the minimum amount that needs to be paid per semester is around 280.000 COP.

The student state credit system, ICETEX, offers young people credits on different conditions, depending on their estrato socioeconmico. Financial aid can be used by students to study at Universities (private and public), as well as at technological and technical institutions.[31] Students can apply for a credit that is paid out monthly in quotas and can either be used to cover tuition fees and administrative costs, or as for maintenance, or both. The total amount available for a maintenance credit depends on various factors; the total amount per semester can be up to the equivalent value between two and five state minimum salaries. The time they have to pay the money back is also variable and depends on the socioeconomic status of the student. Interest rates do however tend to be high, ranging from 6.77 percent to 16.77 percent. The young people also need a guarantor (ICETEX, 2015). The application for credits is complicated and official documents are needed from public institutions such as the SISBEN, the body which evaluates people's estratos classification. Most young people are not familiar with the process of applying for credits, at least in the first instance, and this can hinder their ability to attain them. Santiago, a young boy of my study, for example, had not been able to find a guarantor while I had been in Cartagena. His parents were ineligible because they did not have any income or any property. The lack of a guarantor was stopping Santiago from accessing his desired choice of degree.

Hence in Cartagena there exists a correlation between socioeconomic background and education level, as households of low estratos cannot afford to pay for university fees. Segmentation occurs within the city as young people with similar educational levels live geographically close to each other in low income estratos in barrios populares. According to Wilson (1987) and the neighbourhoods effects literature this segmentation serves to reproduce inequality as it makes it difficult for young people to access the necessary resources social capital to enable social mobility. In Cartagena young people with less education usually live in the marginal parts of the city, areas around La Popa, La Ciénaga de la Virgen, Olaya and Pozón in particular. All these barrios are made up of households of

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[31] The technological and technical institutions may use the word university in their name but are officially separated. Other insitutions such as SENA have own names.

estratos one or two. In Figure 4 De la Hoz et al. (2013) illustrate that the majority of young people that were unemployed in 2010 were from the estratos socioeconomicos one and two, while almost no young people from estratos five and six are unemployed. Patterns of residence, educational achievement and employment all thus correlate across Cartagena.
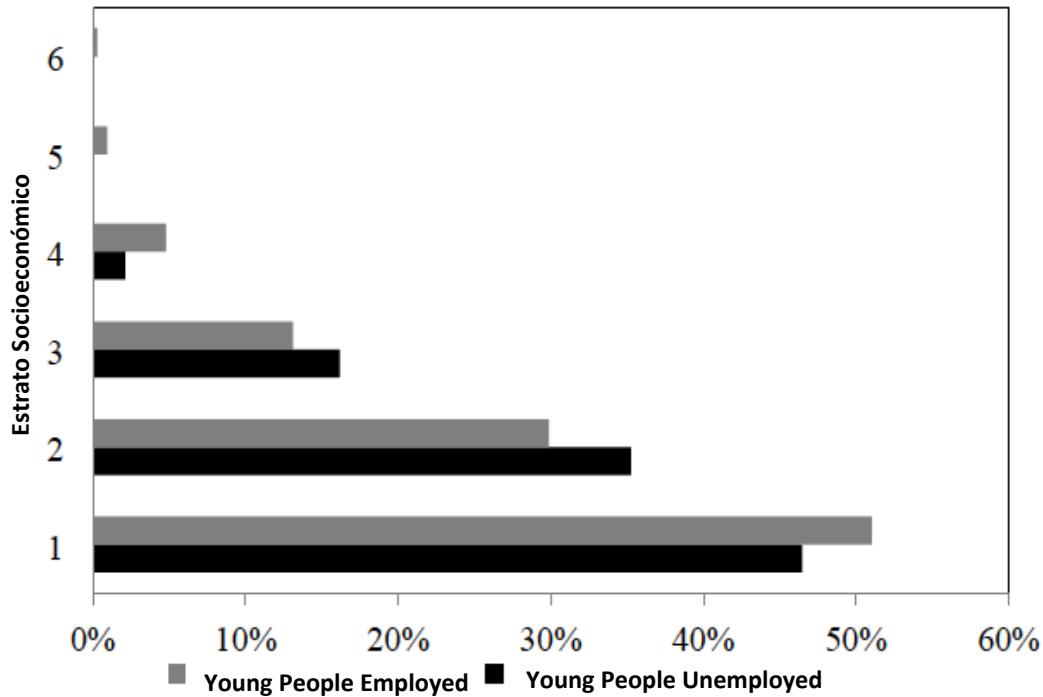
Figure 4 Unemployed and Employed Youth According to Socioeconomic Stratification[32]

For example, Tatis et al. (2013) argue in their analysis of the youth labour market in Cartagena, based on data from the DANE Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares from 2011, that young people who are categorised as economically inactive instead of unemployed tend to be studying, trying to enhance their chances for social mobility. However, as I have suggested already, young people from lower estratos face barriers to access the 'right' kind of education. Miguel and Andreas present two cases that exemplify how a technical or technological degree such as the ones from SENA may not be enough to enter the labour market.

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[32] Source: De la Hoz et al., 2013

A further barrier is the expectation that young people should have work experience. Alessandra mentioned in the focus groups about a good life in La Popa that one of the main barriers to obtaining a stable job, was not so much the difficulty of obtaining a university degree, but building the necessary '*palanca*'.

Alessandra: *"[…] something that affects all of us young people is unemployment, the youth unemployment. They say we need work experience but a young person who finishes his or her studies at higher education what work experience can this person have?"*

Alessandra is aware of the demands of the labour market but complains that these are difficult to fulfil as she is busy studying and does not know how she can gain practical experience until she finishes her studies. It was the same for Alessandra as for Miguel and Andreas. Both boys struggled to obtain internships, even though apprentices are meant to be attractive to employees because of the lower wages they can command. As an additional result high unemployment rates occur because young people cannot study the required university degrees and gain the required practical experience at the same time.

If somehow a young person from a barrio populares manages to get a degree from a higher education institution and combine it with some *palanca*, employment becomes more probable. To repeat what Hannes told me in the focus group about a good life, discussed in chapter 4,

"Being at university, that does not give you necessarily a good life. It does not give you a guarantee to have work, or let's say you study but you need the network, la rosca, la palanca as well or you won't enter in nothing."

Colombians mainly use informal channels to obtain work and employment; it is along these channels that social capital, '*palanca*' moves (Viafara and Uribe, 2009, De la Hoz et al., 2013). Jiménez (2011) suggests, looking at data from DANE from 2009 and 2010, that people tend to first go through their social contacts in the search for employment. It is only after these have been exhausted do they turn to more formal channels, such as leaving a CV at a company in person, and then to very formal channels such as job adverts. Jimenez concludes that informal social networks are the most useful channels for employment, followed by formal search channels. Moderately formal channels are the least useful. In

Cartagena, 41 percent of unemployed youth stated that they had asked for advice or tried to find employment opportunities through family, friends or colleagues (De la Hoz et al., 2013). The concept of *palanca*, social capital, is a concept that is of importance and I will provide more information about during my empirical chapters.

6   Choosing the Fieldwork Sites - Two 'Barrios Populares'

In order to investigate young people's aspirations for social mobility and how their development and attainment is influenced by their social context, their spaces and places, and the social structures they inhabit, I decided to choose two barrios populares in which to conduct my fieldwork. Researching aspirations of youth from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Cartagena has its challenges. As I am interested in how the wider social structures influence the young people's habitus and ability to acquire capitals necessary to achieve upward social mobility it was important for me to identify neighbourhoods that represent this exclusion of their inhabitants and the key problems that occur to young people living in barrios populares. From the beginning of my research, and from my experience of having done research for my Masters thesis in Cartagena before, I wanted to select participants that live closer to the city centre and richer areas as well as participants that live far away from these richer areas and city centre and thus include a spatial disadvantage. The influence of this spatial aspect and how young people may differ in their aspirations and navigational capacity therefore is one important criterion for the selection of research site.

I focus on two barrios populares in Cartagena because of their different marginalisation levels, their distinct locations, distinct histories and their consequentially distinct influences on the aspirations and social mobility of the young people that live in them. Both barrios have been categorised as barrios, with households mainly of estratos one and two, and the majority of both barrios' inhabitants are of African descent. This means I look at barrios where young people live in disadvantaged social conditions in terms of economic opportunities, education quality, health service provision and transport. Both groups of young people grow up in contexts where being from a barrio popular means being

disadvantaged. However, while one barrio, here called 'La Popa', is placed closer to the city centre of Cartagena and therefore provides young people with different influences and spaces they can move in, the second barrio, 'El Pozón' (both barrios are marked in map 5 below), is about an hour by bus from the city centre. Young people's spaces and social contexts, as well as opportunity structures in El Pozón therefore differ. For instance, the influences of the city's higher social classes are less present in daily life in El Pozón. The respective proximities of both barrios to important places in the city may also influence opportunities for work.

Map 5 – Important barrios of Cartagena and population density per barrio[33]

'El Pozón is one of the biggest barrios in Cartagena. According to the Census the population is 41,431 inhabitants (DANE, 2005a)[34]. The barrio contains, almost exclusively, the poorest

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[33] Source: http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/

kinds households of estratos one and two (CEDEC, 2013). 'El Pozón' is mostly called just 'Pozón' (henceforth in this study as well), which means something like water hole, which it was before the barrio was created there.
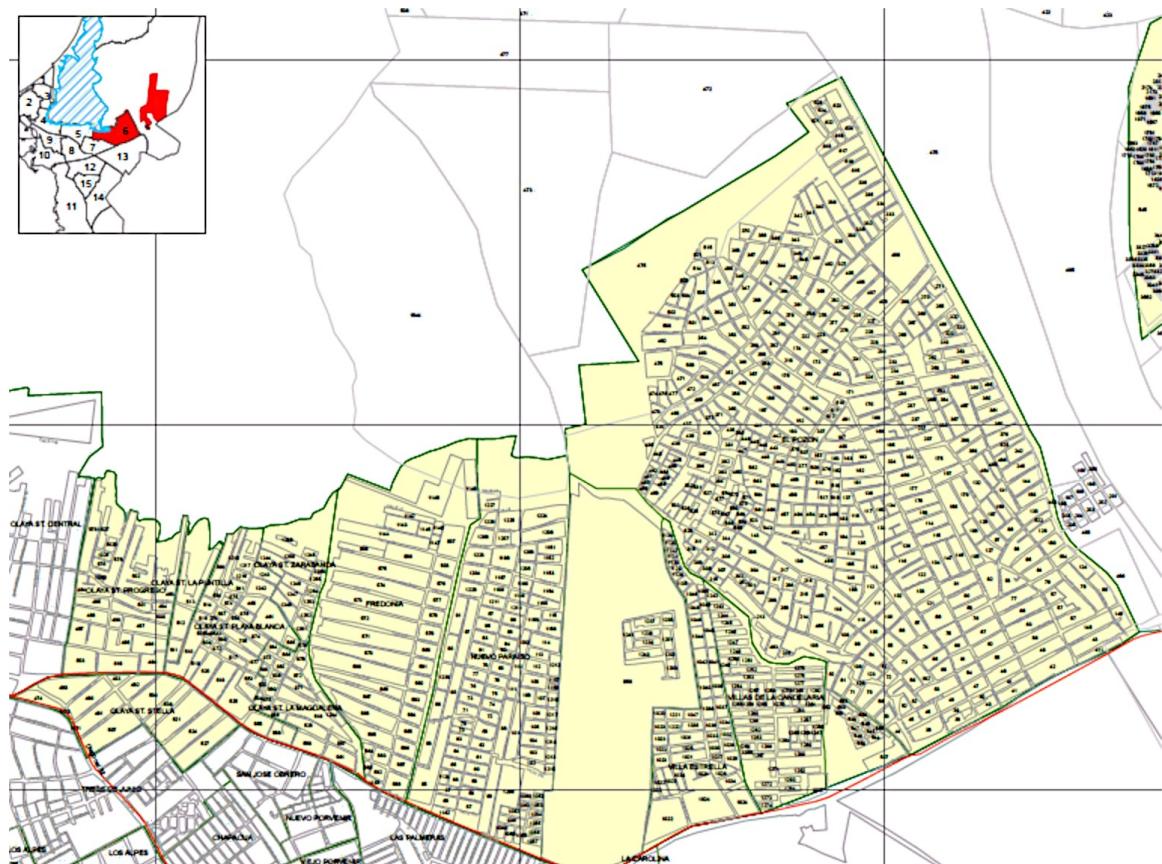
Map 6 – Barrio Olaya and 'El Pozón'[35]

Today the barrio is comparable to a small city. You can find all the major necessities of life in its main shopping street including food and clothing markets. In the barrio there are several primary and secondary schools and a medical centre, although people from Pozón claim that the medical centre is always short of medical supplies and care is of poor quality. Buses bisect the barrio so that people do not have to walk the long distance from

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[34] An Excel sheet with inhabitants per barrio numbers is also accessible through http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/
[35] Source: http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/pdf/descargas/division_politica/comunas/UCG6.pdf

one end to the other. Young people living in Pozón are usually second generation Cartagenians, the barrio having been built predominantly by displaced people who had to flee the violence in the surrounding small towns and rural areas when Guerrilla and Paramilitary bands were fighting during the drug wars. Pozón is perceived as one of the two most dangerous barrios in the city with the highest homicide rate since at least 2008 (Goyenche González et al., 2013) and a lot of gang activity. This is a tragedy bearing in mind people living in Pozón fled violence to offer their children a better life but now have to face organised crime and violence in the barrio (Goyenche González, 2007).

In contrast the barrio, which I call here 'La Popa', is close to the city centre. It is possible, while not always safe, for the young people living there to walk to the historical centre. Also the beaches, the central market, the airport and other places that offer opportunities for work and education are close by. Though I call this barrio 'La Popa' it is important to mention that this is not the official name. 'La Popa' actually consists of more than one barrio and is rather an area. However these barrios are small and the sum of the barrios in this area are still smaller than the barrio 'El Pozón'. I chose the name 'La Popa' as the barrios that create this area are on the hill 'La Popa' in the city. At the top of this hill there is a monastery but the hill itself, and the barrios that are directly around the hill are occupied by a lot of illegal housing, so called invasions (these are not part of the area I call 'La Popa' and therefore not part of my chosen barrios). The area I call 'La Popa' in this research consists of the barrios Torices, Santa Rita, Canapote, Los Comuneros, San Pedro and Pablo Sexto Segundo and partly Loma Fresca (see Map 7) that are placed to the north or on the hill la Popa, some of them bordering the illegal housing invasions.

The population of the area 'La Popa' is approximately 35,082 inhabitants (DANE, 2005a). Similar to Pozón the area suffers from violence, as two of the oldest gangs in Cartagena operate and fight over territory close by, although when they fight is unpredictable. The area is marked by fewer homicides than Pozón but there is still a lot of crime, particularly robberies on the street. Households are mostly of estratos one or two, but there are some of estratos three. My participants are all from estratos one or two households.
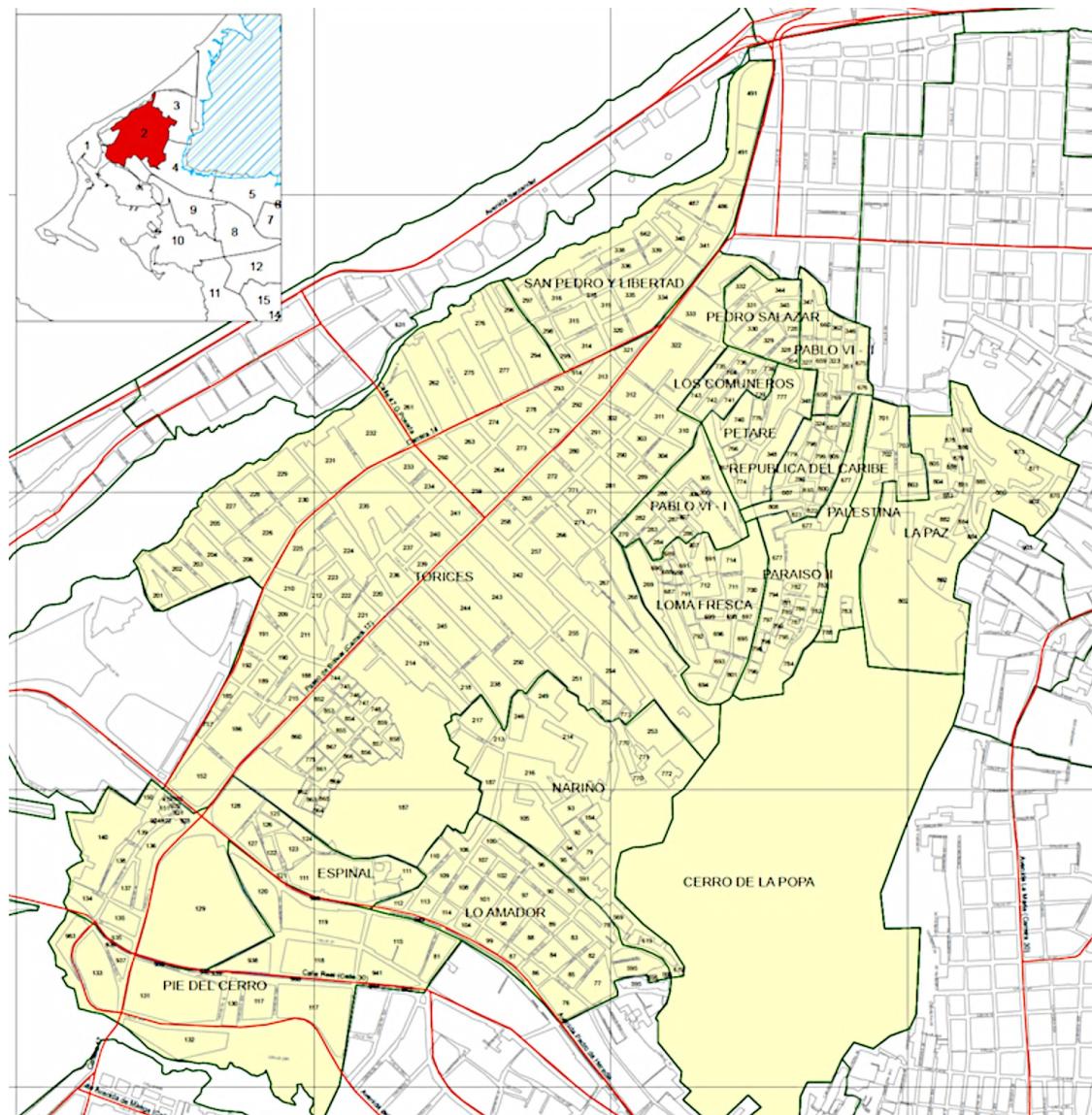
Map 7 - Area of 'La Popa'[36]

La Popa is not as self sufficient as Pozón. There is a market but most shopping has to be done in nearby barrios or in the city centre. Buses run through the Paseo de Bolivar, a big street that connects the central market with the barrio Crespo next to the airport. There are also so called 'colectivos', which are cars that transport several people at a time and are therefore cheaper than taxis, in terms of price per person. To get to barrios such as 'Pablo Sexto II', one of the barrios where many of my participants live, it is necessary to

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[36] Source: http://midas.cartagena.gov.co/pdf/descargas/division_politica/comunas

take a moto-taxi as normal taxis do not drive there for security reasons. The most important difference between Pozón and La Popa is the proximity to the city centre. Young people who live in 'La Popa' are much closer to the city centre and the other rich parts of the city and therefore are influenced in different ways by their place and space than young people in Pozón.

I chose to compare this area with Pozón, as I could compare the young people of both barrios in relation to the structures of their sectors[37] of the barrio. In Pozón there exist different sectors marked by varying degrees of insecurity that manifests itself in the frequency of gang activity, delinquency, robberies, sicarios (contract murders) and other violent acts. These areas are the sectors that are more distant to the main street that leads through the whole city to the city centre such as the sector 20 de enero. And in La Popa areas that are more disadvantaged in these aspects are the smaller barrios that are at the bottom of the hill La Popa and up the hill such as Pablo Sexto II. In contrast, sectors in Pozón closer to the main street have better infrastructure and greater safety. In La Popa the same counts for barrios close to the street Paseo de Bolivar such as Torices, Santa Rita and Canapote. Security issues are an important factor in how the young people are able to move in their spaces and in turn influence their aspirations and how they pursue them.

One other important factor for choosing these particular two barrios populares over other similar ones was that I could obtain greater access to young people and the community in the barrios through local NGOs, something which I discuss in more detail in my methodology chapter 3.

Both suburbs offer differing examples of how young Cartagenians have to face structural and spatial challenges. Looking at the two barrios together provides me with a better sense of how spaces and places influence young people and their navigational strategies, thinking and actions towards meeting their aspirations and achieving social mobility.

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[37] In Spanish parts of barrios are called 'sectores' and they are like little divisions of the barrios with their own names.

7   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I attempted to provide a contextual background and setting for the rest of my thesis. By describing the city of Cartagena from my own perspective and through using secondary data and literature, I have shown how Cartagena is a city of contrasts or many 'realities'. It is a very unequal city. On the one hand there are very rich and wealthy areas, Bocagrande and the historical centre, whose mostly fair skinned inhabitants live cosmopolitan lifestyles. On the other hand there are poor neighbourhoods, the barrios populares where the majority of people are of African descent. This stratification is not something new but rooted in the city's colonial past as the main slavery port for Colombia and the rest of South America. Colonial structures are reflected in the social structures in the city today. The beauty queen pageant is just one example of the way intersecting factors such as race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background and class, as well as area of living, continue to structure life in Cartagena, as they have done in the past. Inequalities of race and ethnicity, social class and socioeconomic background, and gender, affect young people in their everyday lives. The young people in my study face the barriers of a neoliberal political and economic environment, combined with barriers of racism and class left over from the colonial period. Education has been privatised to a high extent and is for the majority of the young people in my study unaffordable. Yet higher education and in particular university education, is one of the main drivers of social mobility. Even when young people choose to study at universities or other higher education institutions they lack the *palanca* - social capital - to enter the sectors they desire to work in. Additionally I described the context of the two neighbourhoods where I conducted my research. I illustrated their similarities and differences, where they are located and suggested the reasons that I chose these two barrios specifically. They provide me with the opportunity to compare how they influence young people's navigational capacity in different ways. The background information about the city and the neighbourhoods and their social structures given in this chapter is important for the chapters that follow where I will analyse and discuss in greater depth the young people's aspirations for social mobility and their navigational capacity to achieve it.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

In this chapter I provide an account of the methodological approach I have used in this research. I start with my research philosophy, which has important implications for my research design and my choice of theoretical lens. I continue by describing my research design, including the process through which I selected and recruited participants, and the methods through which I collected information that enabled me to answer my research questions. Finally I present an account of how I analysed my data and end with some short concluding remarks.

1   Research Philosophy

My research philosophy is best described as critical realism. Critical realism, explained helpfully in the work of Bhaskar (1989), argues that reality exists independently of our consciousness, impressions and thoughts of it, whether it is material or social reality, and whether we are able to adequately understand it (Yeung, 1997, Sayer, 2000, Houston, 2001). Sayer (2000: 11) elaborates further that "the real is the realm of objects, their structures and powers. Whether they be physical, like minerals, or social, like bureaucrats, they have certain structures and causal powers […]." Critical realism therefore challenges both worlds, the law finding objective world of naturalists/positivists, where reality is only true if it is observable, and the open social world of constructivists, where all knowledge is comprised of subjective elements and socially constructed (Jones and Merritt, 1999, Sayer, 2000). In the most extreme form of constructivism, knowledge is perceived as entirely constructed by social processes and therefore rendering impossible the idea of any objective reality. A mediated formulation of constructivism does however accept some objectivism (Jones and Merritt, 1999: 351). Critical realism is thus close to a mediated form of constructivism, as it is concerned with the human interpretation of social phenomena, while believing in a reality independent of this interpretation (Tan, 2010). While positivism acknowledges that there are events that are observable, it ignores the social structures and mechanisms that create these events and the fact that not all events are observable,

but rather their effects which may differ according to certain contexts. This makes universal laws about future occurrences of events unreliable (Bhaskar, 1989, Tan, 2010: 2-3). Important aspects of critical realism with regard to my research are its assumptions that individuals are enabled or constrained by the structures of the social context that they occupy, and that they also play a part in reproducing and transforming those structures (Porter, 2000: 143, Cruickshank, 2011: 2). "[…] structures are constraints or enablements in relation to the life-project of individuals: whether a given form of structural organisation is a constraint or enablement depends on the life project of the person attempting to engage with it (Farrugia, 2013: 287)". Therefore structures influencing actions of the young people of my study may constrain them as they are linked to the inequalities reproduced within their socio-historical context. The critical realist is concerned with issues of existing political, social or economic relations which can create inequality and exploitation, and aims to create a critique of those relations, demonstrating that social structures might be exploitative (Cruickshank, 2003).

With regard to the young Colombians in my study, structures such as opportunity structures, internalised structures of behaviour, attitudes and social norms (disposition of habitus), affect the formation of their aspirations, their navigational strategies towards them and their ultimate achievement. However, that does not mean that the young people are only bearers of structural principles internalised into their habitus, determining their beliefs, thinking and acting. Bourdieu's concept of habitus situates him as a critical realist in my opinion and not, as is many times claimed, as a structuralist (Nash, 2003). Bourdieu distances himself from the perception of being a structuralist, calling himself a structuralist constructivist.

> "If I had to characterize my work in two words, that is, as is the fashion these days, to label it, I would speak of constructivist structuralism or of structuralist constructivism, taking the word structuralism in a sense very different from the one it has acquired in the Saussurean or Levi-Straussian tradition. By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and

will of agents, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices

or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a twofold

social genesis, on the one hand of the schemes of perception, thought, and

action which are constitutive of what I call habitus, and on the other hand

of social structures, and particularly of what I call fields and of groups,

notably those we ordinarily call social classes. (Bourdieu, 1989: 13)"

The dispositions of habitus are structured and structuring in so far as they reflect the existing possibilities available to young people, and that they shape social practices (Farrugia, 2013: 289). Reflexive actions that emerge according to structural conditions change the disposition of habitus and young people negotiate opportunities and changes within their social environments (Farrugia, 2013). The development of young people's aspirations and their strategies to pursue them are therefore on the one hand structured and guided by habitus. On the other hand, though reflexivity and self-dialogue with regard to their social conditions (such as opportunity structures), young people can alter their dispositions and act with agency. This understanding of how young people perform social practice illustrates how meaningful subjective beliefs within an objective, structured environment are in constant interrelation, reproducing existing structures but also transforming them. Researching from a critical realist perspective allows me to observe the relationship of the young people's agency to social structure.

In the following sections I describe the methods used in this research. These are in line with the critical realist approach, which suggests an iterative research process, and the use of multiple methods linked with the theoretical assumptions about the interplay between agency and structures that I have just outlined (Porter, 2000, Sayer, 2000, Cruickshank, 2003). An ethnographic approach, combined with multiple conventional and participatory methods allowed me to explore the influence of the objective structures the young people inhabited, the subjective meanings and perspectives of the young people, and their interrelation with respect to the young people's possible future selves.

2   Using an Ethnographic Approach

In this section I focus on the research process and explain how I applied an ethnographic approach through my study. Ethnography means a picture or description of the 'way of life' of a group of people. In the past ethnographies addressed a small culture bearing groups, usually intact, self-sufficient as a social unit, and most importantly, 'strange' in the eyes of the observer (Wolcott, 1988: 156). The researcher aimed to study human behaviour within the cultural context of this group. Customs, institutions and events were of special interest, and helped to describe the way of life of the group (Wolcott, 1988).

From a critical realist's perspective, ethnography is not just about the description of the understandings and the actions of individuals with regards to specific events, but also about uncovering the relationship between structure and agency, how structures may be exploitative and oppressive (Porter, 2000, Porter, 2002, Cruickshank, 2003). For example Wacquant (2003: 5) defines Ethnography in the following way:

> "[Ethnography] is social research based on the close-up, on-the-ground observation of people [or] institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do."

Wacquant's description of ethnography is a very useful one for my research, in that I am interested in observing the young people within their spaces and places to understand why they act, think and feel as they do with regard to their futures.

Today ethnographies are not necessarily set in geographically bounded areas but also in urban settings (Wacquant, 2003) and ethnographers study all kinds of groups of people and/or cultures, structures and mechanisms in societies. They can be in multiple sites (Punch, 2012) or trace history and practices within sites (Visweswaran, 1994, Weiss, 2002) that are not geographically-based communities, but communities formed through channels such as the internet (e.g. Garcia et al., 2009, Baker, 2013) or examine structures that transmit social inequalities (Willis, 1977). Riaño-Alcalá (2000) used an ethnographic approach in her study in Medellin, Colombia, to look at people's memories of violence in the past and Visweswaran (1994) conducted what she described as a feminist ethnography

about how women engaged in the Indian nationalist movement. Neither of these studies was set in a geographically bounded community, in the conventional sense.

Ethnography allows a fuller understanding and greater insight into different facets of everyday life and is one of the ways I examine how the structural influences of young peoples' spaces and places in Cartagena influence how they move in the city and what they aspire to. While I also used more formal methods such as interviews, hanging out with the young Cartagenians provided me with more contextual information about their lives.

While traditionally ethnography has been perceived as setting the researcher in the social context of the researched as a complete participant, many researchers remain somewhat detached, or want to stay detached (Edmund, 2005). For example, Punch (2012) describes her experience of doing ethnographic research with young migrants in Bolivia and explains that, while she usually stayed in hotels, she did at one point need to share a bed in the kitchen of one of her participant's homes for two nights. This, in her personal opinion, took the ethnographic experience a bit too far. Visweswaran (1994) on the other hand visited her participants for a couple of hours rather than being a constant part of their social life. Thus the involvement of the researcher in their ethnography can be described as a continuum, from complete participation to detached observation (Edmund, 2005). My own position was in the middle of this continuum. While I did not live in the same communities as my participants I still spent a lot of time with them, usually the whole day, hanging out, meeting at the local NGO that provided us with space to work, accompanying them to events, friends' houses and to the other contexts of their daily lives. At the end of the day, most of the time, I left their neighbourhood and became the detached researcher.

Consequently I do not see my research as a pure ethnography because, even though I have hung out with my participants and had the opportunity to spend a large amount of time in their social spaces, I did not have the possibility to live in one of the participant's 'barrios populares'. I lived instead in a neighbourhood that was a 'barrio popular' in the process of transformation into an area more like the richer parts of Cartagena described in the previous chapter. The neighbourhood is the oldest part of the city and housing is very diverse, some houses being in poor condition and others renovated and modernised. Despite the modernisation, social life in the area was structured in similar ways as it was in

the contexts in which my participants lived. Away from the main plaza, a space usually dominated by tourists, people sat in front of their houses with loud stereos, houses which were of similar construction to those in Pozon and La Popa, with dirt floors and curtains instead of doors. Therefore while my research consists of many ethnographic characteristics it is not a pure ethnography but rather an ethnographic approach, also combined with further methods that I describe below.

3   Reflexivity on My Presence and the Research Process

There can be a question to what extent it is an advantage or disadvantage being an outsider or insider during the data collection process and analysis of data (Merriam et al., 2001, Hodkinson, 2005, Ryan et al., 2011). Similar to Punch (2001), however, I faced challenges doing ethnography in my chosen field sites. I am a white European middle-class female from a distinct cultural, social and economical background. I am also older than the young people in my study. I was conscious that my own perception of what being young involves could be very different to Cartagenians' definition, and influence my research assumptions. I was also aware I might influence my participants. The ethnographic approach accepts these possible biases, but stresses the crucial importance of reflexivity and the researcher actively reflecting on her assumptions (Punch, 2001). I therefore included reflective routines in my fieldwork and the analysis of my data, thinking about my own beliefs and attitudes, as well as the reactions and answers of my participants. I used the bus drive from Pozón to my own neighbourhood to read and complete my notes. At night I thought and talked about my days with the young people from the barrios with Colombian and German friends. I always remained aware that the complete elimination of my prior assumptions, and my influence on the research, would not be possible.

During my time of fieldwork I was enrolled as a visiting researcher at the faculty of Rural and Environmental Development of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá and as such I did presentations of my work. In one of those presentations the discussion of me being able to do my research as an outsider emerged. The faculty at Javeriana is, interdisciplinary, similar to most UK development studies schools, and therefore my

audience contained anthropologists, natural scientists, and geographers. The staff of the faculty developed a discussion about me doing this research as a German woman studying in a UK University and not being native in culture or language in Cartagena. However, after a while two sides developed in the discussion, one arguing that I am disadvantaged being an outsider and another that I am in an advantageous position with my external perspective being able to identify structures an insider would not. While I felt first unsure about their arguments I realised that as long as the person doing the research is not from one of the neighbourhoods of the young people, everyone can be defined as an outsider.

Being an outsider in research, in particular in research that is concerned with social structures and their influences, does have its pros and cons. However in my case I argue that there have been more advantages in being an outsider. Also being a foreigner and a woman of different ethnicity and culture provided me with many advantages. Of course this is in my opinion always context specific and therefore I do not generalise this argument to other research per se.

In my case, however, I believe the researchers in Bogotá who claimed I am too much of an outsider would be perceived as outsiders themselves. Bogotá, as other regions of Colombia, differs much from the coast and from Cartagena. Colombia is diverse in culture, ethnicities, and social structures. People from Bogotá, for example, are called Cachacos in the rest of the country and in Cartagena they are not labelled very positively because many of them came to the city and took over businesses and are perceived as part of the social class that excludes the young people. In contrast, I am from a country that is far away, that is well known by the young people for its football team and production of high quality cars (we had many conversations about cars, free speed limit highways and they taught me a lot about my own country's football teams). Additionally my appearance is different: blond, blue eyes, white skin colour, and I catch a lot of attention when walking through the streets in the neighbourhoods. While all this seems academically trivial, for establishing rapport it was of much help. The young people were curious about my country and started conversations with questions about Germany and Europe. I was also not familiar with many things that exist in Colombia. Therefore the young people started to teach me about their country and region, about daily experiences and explained to me

things I was not sure I understood. Especially during tours through their neighbourhoods they enjoyed showing me new varieties of fruits and once they realised I did not know them, teaching me how to eat them. In terms of language and my interest in learning to speak with a Colombian coast accent created much interaction where the young people taught me words and pronunciations, often accompanied with laughter about my accent. Thus being an absolute outsider worked well for me in terms of creating trust relationships that were based on equal exchange and some of them resulted in friendships. It also allowed me to ask questions that could be perceived as dull, sensitive or offensive, questions that are often personal such as about boy or girlfriends or family members, questions about race and discrimination experiences and questions where I may have been perceived as naïve. But knowing that I am not part of their close social circle or someone official from the country may have lifted some emotional and cautious barriers on the side of the young people. Consequently in these terms me being an outsider opened many possibilities to create rich and thick data.

On the other hand there is the question of my presence and its influence on the data collected itself. The fact that I was asking about aspirations and how the young people want to achieve a good life influenced answers to some extent and I am aware of this influence. In some cases being a research student may influence answers with respect to their educational aspirations for instance. It is possible that some of the young people provided me with ambitious aspirations because it was me and the position I represent. Still I have been aware of this influence during my analysis and included this aspect. For example, one of the young boys answered me that he aspires to go to Europe to study. Yet I spend much time 'hanging out' with the young people at their spaces and places and used a combination of different methods to collect my data that allowed me to probe and triangulate it (see discussion of methods used below).

4   Selecting and Recruiting Participants

I decided to conduct my research in Cartagena, as it is known as a city of contrasts in Colombia with rich inner city neighbourhoods and poor suburbs outside the inner city

walls. In my context chapter (chapter 2) I described how the city is divided between rich and poor parts, and the history of these divisions. I lived in Cartagena before spending time there doing my fieldwork, and had some idea of the city and its stratification into rich, middle class and poor neighbourhoods and some knowledge of the reputation of certain neighbourhoods. I decided to explore young Cartagenians' aspirations in two neighbourhoods where they constantly try to create some form of social mobility and to realise opportunities. La Popa and Pozón (described in detail before in chapter 2) are contexts where few opportunities for mobility (physical and social) present themselves. They are talked about in negative ways, something that influences how the young people of these neighbourhoods are perceived by wider Cartagenian society. The two neighbourhoods provided me with a research environment where young people are perceived as disadvantaged. However, while both groups of young people in my research face similar challenges, they do so to different degrees, and sometimes, for different reasons that are often place and space bound.

In the next section I describe my participant selection and recruitment process including the challenges I had to face building trust with the young people. I then continue the chapter with an illustration of the methods I used in combination with my ethnographic approach, and provide an account of my data analysis.

4.1 Selecting Participants and Building Relationships

Even though I had stayed in Cartagena several times before, for periods of up to nine months, I underestimated the challenges a researcher faces when it comes to finding participants. I did a scoping trip five months before starting my fieldwork, establishing some new relationships with important gatekeepers and reconnecting with existing ones. After some discussions with scholars from the University of Cartagena in the school of social work and with the employees of an NGO I had worked with in Cartagena, I was able to identify key persons that were able to create important links between me and two local NGOs in the neighbourhoods of La Popa and Pozón. The process was not a straightforward one, especially in case of La Popa, which was selected only after I was able to connect with an NGO there. In the case of Pozón, I was able to quickly establish a relationship to a small

local NGO through a student in the school of social work. He accompanied me to the house of one of the organisers of the NGO in the barrio. Travelling alone was not an option at that time, as I neither knew the way, because of the fairly complicated bus system in Cartagena, nor was it safe to be unknown in Pozón. Once I got to know Oscar, one of the organisers at the NGO in Pozón, recruitment of participants was not difficult. I realised that things that worried me at the beginning, my status as an outsider, and my identity as a white, European female, actually worked in my favour in several ways. In both neighbourhoods I found that people, young and old, were very interested in why I was there. Making contact with local people was much easier than I expected, especially in Pozón. Once Oscar organised a meeting with the young people in Pozón I was able to recruit several of them for my research and subsequently recruited several of their friends over the following weeks. The equivalent process in La Popa was more difficult and it took me two months longer to establish good relationships with young people. I was able to recruit young people through the local NGO in La Popa. Israel, one of the founders of the NGO, was very helpful, organising an initial meeting where I could explain what I wanted do and why I wanted to work with the young people. Through my time hanging out with the young Cartagenians in my study, visiting them at their homes, making tours of their neighbourhoods, and enjoying cooking sessions and other activities, I was able to build relationships of trust with them. Some relationships turned into friendships, more than just a researcher and researched relationship. Certain young people provided me with rich information and were questioned by me persistently. They were also supportive relationships, the young people gave me advice where I needed it, helping me to find my way through the complicated bus system, offering me a place to stay when it became late, teaching me to cook, and discussing the things of everyday life with me.

As my sampling strategy was purposive, I needed to be selective with regard to my participants. Situations where younger children, often siblings, were curious about me and wanted to participate proved difficult to manage. I could see that some of them felt disappointed when I explained to them that they were too young. Yet they were always welcome to hang out with us, especially when we were meeting at young people's homes. I included young Colombians aged between 15 and 22. In Colombia the age group between

14 and 26 years has been identified as being in the process of becoming adults and is in the official age range within which people are categorised as young (Programa Presidencial de Colombia Joven, 2004, Bolaño Navarro et al., 2009, Giammaría León, 2011)[38].Furthermore the young people were from lower social classes; all my informants came from houses of estratos one and two and lived in one of the barrios populares characterised as marginal neighbourhoods with high crime and violence levels. Within the neighbourhoods I further selected young people that were from areas with different degrees of perceived danger, as this has important implications for issues such as their geographical mobility and I wanted to avoid contrasting extremes of these issues when comparing data of the two neighbourhoods.

Many of the young people were of African descent or mestizo, fitting the situation in the city at large, where inhabitants of richer areas are mostly white skinned and inhabitants of poorer areas are mostly darker skinned. I recruited young people through contacts I established during my time I stayed in Cartagena before and during fieldwork, thus University students, NGO employees and personal contacts who acted as gatekeepers. Once I was able to recruit young people through NGOs I continued with snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008)[39]. Therefore the young people in my research introduced me to friends living in their neighbourhood according to my selection criteria. At the beginning of my research I worked with a lot of young people, many of whom only participated in my research a few times. Consequently I divided the sampling of my participants into two groups per neighbourhood. One group represents all my participants including those who participated in just a few of the activities and interviews I arranged, while the other group consists of a core of young people who I got to know a lot better (see table 1). The core groups from Pozón and La Popa are the young people I spent the most time with, in homes, at the NGOs, at events or on the streets. They participated from the beginning until the end of my fieldwork visit, joining in with all the research activities. Most of my findings

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[38] Additionally to the reference given here this age group has been identified through conversations with scholars and NGO employees during my scoping tip in spring 2013 and my fieldwork.
[39] Although I am aware of the way snowball sampling affect the composition of my sample I needed to rely on it, as I have not been able to recruit enough participants through other channels.

are based on the insights I learnt from them. The following table gives an overview of my participants.

Young People: All Participants			
	Age	Barrio 'La Popa'	Barrio 'El Pozón'
Female	15-24	8	6
Male	15-24	4	11
Total		12	17

Young People: Core Groups			
	Age	Barrio 'La Popa'	Barrio 'El Pozón'
Female	15-24	4	4
Male	15-24	3	5
Total		7	9

Table 1 - Purposive Sample Design Young People

Additionally to the young people I included caregivers, University contacts and NGO employees in my study in order to gain a more complete understanding of the social contexts the young people lived in. These individuals also provided me with an opportunity for some triangulation of the information I gathered from the young people (Yin, 2012). The NGO employees and University contacts were from Pozón or La Popa, or neighbourhoods close by, and provided valuable information on the young people's lives and the challenges they face. The inclusion of caregivers allowed me to examine differences between generations, in terms of aspirations and values more generally. In contrast to the groups of young people I spent less time with adults and therefore did not divided them into total number of adults and core groups I worked with.

Apart from the participants mentioned in the tables, there were other young people who joined us spontaneously, usually friends of my participants, who were curious about who I was and what we were doing. More young people participated in the barrio Pozón than La Popa. This was due to the time I spent in the respective barrios. I started working two months earlier in Pozón, which enabled me to build relationships with more participants.

However, because the young people I recruited through NGOs in their neighbourhoods it is important to mention that this has an influence on the data I collected. The young people

of my study either were involved in activities of the NGOs or were friends with young people active in them. Therefore all young people of my study present youth with positive and successful pathways and as we see in chapter 4 they all have high aspirations, which at least partly has been influenced by the local NGOs work. Young people who are not involved with NGOs in their neighbourhood may therefore have different and possibly lower aspirations and present different desired future pathways. However, my argument is not about the aspirations themselves and if they are high or low, as does the social mobility aspirations discourse that I critique. My argument is about how young people's navigational capacity to achieve their aspirations is influenced as well as how aspiration attainment opportunities are related to place. Consequently the selection bias through an NGO does not restrict my findings about this navigational aspect.

5   Methods Used

In addition to the ethnographic component of my research I used a multi-methods approach where participatory photography and filming were used in combination with group activities, mapping, interviews and observations. In this section I will describe the additional methods I used for data collection, focusing on how using a participatory visual approach provided valuable insights into the everyday lives of the young people in my study. I mentioned that the ethnographic approach requires a degree of reflexivity in terms of reducing the influence of my own assumptions and by using participatory methods to complement the ethnographic aspects of the fieldwork, and the interviews I conducted, I was able to shift power relations in favour of the young Cartagenians and thus reduce the danger of reproducing knowledge based on my own point of view, rather than theirs knowledge (Dodman, 2003, Langevang, 2007, Johnsen et al., 2008, Lombard, 2013).

Further participatory methods are used as a part of my multi-methods approach in order to gain insights about the young people's everyday lives from different angles. I do not perceive my research design as a pure participatory one, but see within it what Franks (2011) calls 'pockets of participation'. The research aims, questions and the approximate time-schedule were set at the beginning of the research project and the participatory

methods I deployed were designed to try to maximise the participation of young people, rather than their involvement in shaping the research at every stage of it (Franks, 2011). Franks (2011) uses the term 'pockets of participation' to describe participation in research which is unescapably top down, but which includes participatory elements. I had owned the research and determined the topic, time schedule and used several methods including structured interviews and group activities. Even though these put me in a powerful position to determine the course of the research, the young people were and are in possession of insights, knowledge and experiences I did not have but depended upon. I decided that incorporating 'pockets of participation' would be the best approach to balance the time and topic restrictions of the project with the need to give the young people enough control to indicate the important aspects of their everyday lives and to represent their meanings in relation to their aspirations. In the following sections I describe the methods used and highlight the advantages of including them.

5.1   Group Activities

At the start of my fieldwork I began my data collection by conducting group activities. One of the reasons for this was that I was not able to visit the young people's homes easily. Getting orientated in neighbourhoods like Pozón and La Popa can sometimes be difficult and I did not want to put myself in unnecessary danger. Geographical movement in barrios populares is linked to being known and knowing the place. A white European female, seen for the first time and who appears to be lost, would be a tempting target for gangs. My personal experience in the majority of these situations, where I was not sure where I needed to go exactly, was that local people were rather worried for me, rather than being a danger to me. Still I decided that starting with group activities at the local NGOs would enable the young people to tell me about their neighbourhoods first. A map-making exercise allowed them to indicate the most important places. The activity and the maps that were produced gave me my first impression of the neighbourhoods.[40] Within a couple

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[40] The young people also marked their home in the map so that I was able to orientate myself on the important places such as the NGO or similar places that were close to their home.

of weeks I knew where the homes of my participants were located and how to arrive there. Local people even started greeting me on the street.

Starting my research with group activities was beneficial because it provided me with the opportunity to get to know the young Cartagenians and build rapport and trust. I felt that at the beginning of my research my participants felt more comfortable to discuss perceptions and opinions in the company of their friends than when they were alone with me in one to one interviews (Langevang, 2007). Before conducting interviews or visual activities about the influences of their spaces and places on their aspirations, I got more contextual information as well as some broad ideas about the young peoples' aspirations through some fairly open discussions about my research (Billson, 2006, King and Horrocks, 2010, Robson, 2011).

I ran a session to meet all the young people of one barrio at their local NGO, the day I began to recruit them. We discussed my research objectives, how I wanted to work with them, and I clarified some of their questions before asking for their consent. It was a very useful experience because the young Cartagenians were curious about me and where I was from. They asked me questions about why I was doing my PhD in England as German. They then taught me about who was playing for particular football clubs in Germany. I on the other hand could ask questions about them and their friendships to each other and about their activities within the NGO. From our first meetings the young people were not shy about teaching me particular words, only used in Cartagena and the region around it, and how to pronounce words in costeñol.[41] These interactions shifted the power relations between us and created an environment of more open exchange when it came to discussing my research interests.

After a bit more small talk we continued by discussing what 'aspirations' meant to them, as the word aspirations can be understood differently in both English and Spanish. After this introductory session I had some understanding of the dynamic of the group and knew who might take dominant roles in discussions. I decided to conduct some of the subsequent

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[41] Costeñol is the word used fort the particular Spanish accent people in Colombia have when being from the Caribbean Coast.

sessions with groups divided by gender, as gender has been identified as an important characteristic in the development of aspirations and strategies to achieve them (Gottfredson, 1981, Gutman and Akerman, 2008). In these sessions the young people wrote a short profile or factsheet about themselves. They put their name, information about their family and what they like to do in their free time on the sheet, as well as whether they are in school, university or work, and what they want to be in the future. These factsheets detailed valuable information that I transcribed into a table for my own use as a prompt for the individual interviews I was planning. The fact that I already knew something about them, their family and current education enabled me to dig deeper into issues in interview more easily than if I had not done the activity.

In the second part of this session the young people were asked to draw the map of their neighbourhood, including the important places in it. Comparing the maps of the girls' and boys' groups, in particular those from Pozón, it is remarkable how similar they are. Rather than only marking certain important places such as their homes, school, the medical centre and other locations, both groups developed maps that included information that related to restrictions on their mobility. For example, both the boys and the girls decided to mark dangerous areas and very poor areas, the discussion over which provided insights about what dangerous and poor, and other social problems meant to them. The maps, and the discussions about them, yielded important data about the geographical mobility of the young people, and restrictions affected boys and girls in different ways. I come back to this topic in Chapter 6.

Other activities involved discussing how the young people understood a good life, how they perceived the stratification of the city, and discussions about the meaning of money and security issues. Another map exercise complemented these discussions, the young people pinning neighbourhoods with different colours according to their security level. The later group sessions were not divided by gender, and most of them were conducted at the local NGOs.
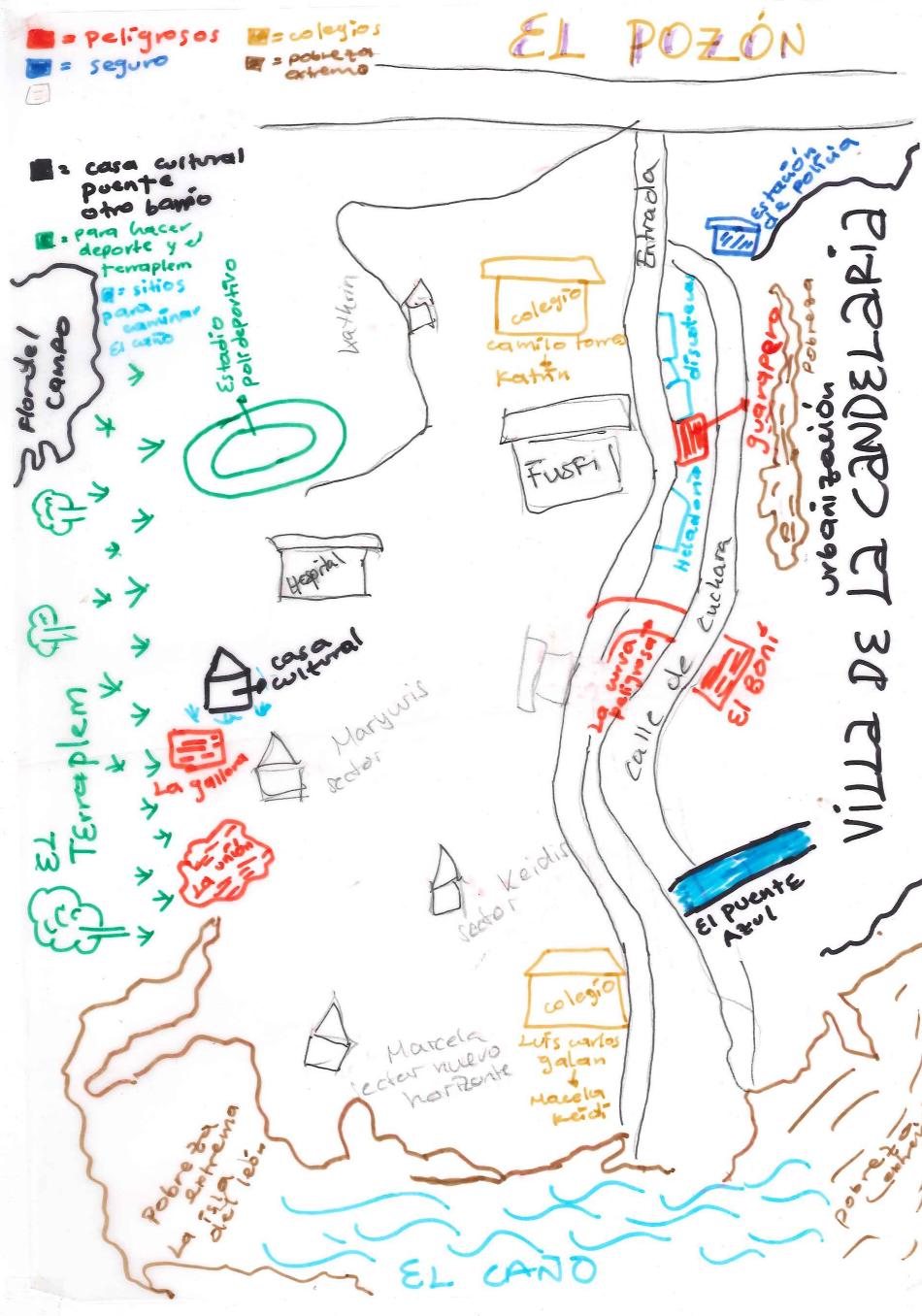
During later stages of the fieldwork we had many informal discussions in groups during, for example, cooking sessions at one of the participant's homes. These informal discussions developed trust between the young people and me; the young people were not hesitant in

providing their opinion or speaking to me openly. These discussions were often about topics like education, living standards in the city, security issues, politics as well as friends and family. Sometimes in these 'hanging out' sessions we also just talked about things like the fruits they have in Colombia, that we do no have in Europe, or music and or other everyday topics. I also had the opportunity to ask some more detailed questions, as my own understanding of the contexts and the spaces of their lives progressed.

5.2   Observations

Mason (2004) describes observations as a method of generating data where the researcher can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of a particular setting. I was interested in the young people's everyday lives. Observations were therefore a part of my research at every stage. While the observations provided me with detailed information about the young people's social contexts, how they move in their spaces, and their behaviour in different situations, I am aware that my presence shaped their behaviour (Gray, 2004:238-239, Mason, 2004: 92). My presence as a white European woman in neighbourhoods where the majority of people are of African descent influenced how the young people behaved while walking with me through their streets and the topics of their conversations. Thus they might not have been as open when talking about certain themes as when they were alone with their friends. Similarly they might have told me different versions of their desired futures and how they might achieve them to present me with a certain picture, based on who they thought I was, and what I would approve of. This brings me back to the fact that I had to consider how I influenced the study with my presence (Mason, 2004) and be reflexive.

5.3   Interviews

Interviews featured in the research in two different forms. Firstly, I conducted semi-structured interviews with a list of overall topics I wanted to ask about.[42] Secondly, I

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[42] An example of the interview topics and schedule is attached in the appendix

conducted informal interviews about topics that emerged during other parts of the data collection process. I did the semi-structured interviews with the members of the core group of young people, those outside my core group, and with parents and key informants such as NGO and University employees. While I used an interview schedule with the topics I wanted to cover, the interview itself was flexible and open to changes in case I might pursue in depth-investigation of a particular theme that emerged. The topics in the interviews with young people were clustered in themes about social environments such as the neighbourhood, city and household, as well as about aspirations and the young people's desired futures plans. The interviews for adult participants featured questions about past experiences and past and future aspirations.

The face-to-face interviews allowed me to explore the subjective views and meanings the young peoples' and adults' aspirations involved, and about structures that affected their achievement. Additionally, the interviews were beneficial as they provided the chance to probe and expand upon some of the issues that arose in the group activities (Gray, 2004, King and Horrocks, 2010). Most of the interviews took place at the local NGOs or in the young people's homes. All the parents I interviewed at their homes. Other adults were interviewed in their work places, the NGOs or the University.

In cases where certain themes emerged at an advanced stage of my research, I used small group discussions and short interviews with my core groups to explore them. The influence of the young people's social contexts with their enabling and constraining structures remained however an issue that I felt was difficult to grasp sufficiently through interviews, and the observations I had been able to make. Not being able to participate in all the activities of the young people's lives, go to school with, and go along to certain events that took place at night, I felt I was missing important information that I needed in order to understand some of the responses of the young people to my questions. Indeed, I still felt I needed information to help me check if I was even asking the right questions. This prompted me to use visual participatory methods, the nature of which I explain in the following sections.

5.4 Participatory Visual Methods

5.4.1 Participatory Photographing

Research that engages with young people increasingly acknowledges them as the experts on their own lives, perceiving them as 'beings' rather than 'becomings' (Clark and Moss, 2005). They are treated as individuals with their own realities, experiences and knowledge, rather than at a stage of transformation into 'complete' individuals. They have their own priorities, experiences and perceptions of the social world. These may differ from those of adults, but they are equally important. It was therefore vital to create a space for the young participants in my study to express themselves and their perspectives on their experiences. Conventional methods such as interviews may not provide young people with this possibility as they may feel obliged to answer questions in ways the adult researcher expects them to (Dodman, 2003). After conducting interviews on young people's households, skills and resources, as well as their use of their city, Hansen (2005) reflected that young people were not providing her with much information. Hansen realised the problem was not that the young people did not have much to say about their lives and desired futures, but rather that she was asking the wrong questions, questions based on her own assumptions of how a young person's life should be (Hansen, 2005). Through the use of participatory photographing Darbyshire (2005) derived important information about children's physical activities that complemented the information she got through more conventional methods. In his study children photographed trampolines in their backyards. They had never mentioned trampolining in interviewing, and Darbyshire had not thought to ask about it. If the lives of young people are, as Young and Barret (2001) argue, constructed in a different kind of society or world to adults, then it is important to yield some control of the research process over to them in order to avoid imposing adultist assumptions onto the researched participants. Participatory photography gives young people the power to choose what to tell (see also Langevang, 2007).

With respect to my research, I encountered, as Hansen did, hesitation on the part of some of my participants to answer some of my questions. However, in contrast to Hansen, I did not feel that young people did not answer my questions but that I was missing something

important when reviewing the interviews. Particularly when I asked them about their aspirations, or their everyday spaces, it felt as if they sometimes responded in rather superficial ways, and did not articulate what was really influencing their aspirations. I could have been asking the wrong questions, but it also occurred to me that words and questions in interviews might simply not be the best media through which to explore the link between the young people's spaces and places, and their aspirations for their desired futures. My interviews and group activities developed out of my ideas of what I wanted to know from my participants. Influenced by recent literature on young people from different contexts, and my own experiences, I already held certain assumptions about the young people's spaces and places and the challenges they face as they make their way towards a good life. I decided I had to reduce my influence over the research process, letting the young people tell me what was important in their everyday lives and social contexts.

Participatory photographing and filming was introduced at a later stage of my fieldwork. I decided to work with digital cameras, which have a value for reselling. I needed to select groups whose members I could trust them to be responsible and to avoid situations where they could put themselves in danger. I also needed them to return the cameras, with the photos, the data, intact. In the end only one group failed to return a camera, it having been stolen by someone outside the group.

Working with digital cameras was not something new for the young people, as family members and friends had at times owned one. Giving young people digital cameras tends to prompt the creation of a high number of pictures, as young people often find it fun to take photographs (Lee, 2010, Whitzman et al., 2013). Participants can choose to shoot pictures without restriction, providing the researcher with insights into their everyday lives, at points when the researcher is not present. Digital cameras display the result immediately on the screen and this provides young people with the possibility to test and frame a photo to their liking, remove pictures and to store them privately (Lee, 2010, Nind et al., 2011).

Cameras were handed out two times during fieldwork, one per person, and lent for a period of up to 14 days. Before they started photographing I briefed the young people in detail as to how to use the camera, and explained the ethical issues that are necessary to

consider when taking pictures. Some of these issues are, for instance, the importance of obtaining the informed consent of people who are photographed, and being especially responsible when picturing minors. The first set of photographs were taken without any more specific instructions from me, apart from the request that the pictures should show me the everyday lives of the photographers. Some of the young people asked for more instructions. The second time I handed out the cameras I therefore asked the young people to take pictures of their homes, neighbourhoods, streets, work places, Universities or schools, and of their recreational spaces. As an extra option, I asked them to photograph spaces and places they perceive as particularly important to them, or places they especially like or dislike.

After each round of photography I collected the cameras and conducted face-to-face interviews with the young people about the photos they had taken. I audio-recorded the interviews and used a tablet computer to show the pictures instead of printing them. In the interviews I asked the young people to tell me what they saw in the photographs and why they chose to take and show those photographs to me.

The follow-up interviews on the photos helped me to understand their meanings. One of the boys in Pozón, for example, had taken a picture of a hole filled with rainwater. My first impression was that he wanted to convey to me problems to do with infrastructure in his neighbourhood. Only on his explanation in the interview did I understand that the water from the rain affected people's health. The standing water is a breeding site for mosquitos with dengue, which had already killed three young children. I would not have been able to interpret the picture on my own, as mosquitos are not even part of it (plate 1). During later interviews I discovered that the boy who took the photo aspires to be a doctor, but had decided to apply for a business administration course in order to obtain a job and save money for the expensive medical degree.[43]

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[43] The reason for applying to study business administration instead of medicine is connected to the system of the state credits in Colombia. For young people in poorer suburbs it is easier to get a credit for business administration, as the fund is bigger per person than for medicine.

Picture 9 - Picture taken by one of the participants in Pozón

The content of the photos varied between featuring family, friends, or self-portraits, to photos of the physical and material surroundings of the young people's everyday lives. There were also photos of social gatherings and parties. The amount of photos that each person took ranged between a few up to several hundred. Sometimes the young people took additional pictures on their phones and sent them to me through 'whatsapp', a mobile application.

While I was expecting many more pictures of material and physical spaces, most of the young people surprised me by taking more pictures of their social lives. This was especially surprising in the case of the second round of photography as my instructions had been to include pictures of physical spaces. This is a good example of how the young people took control, shaping the research and indicating their own perspectives on what was meaningful and important to it. Furthermore, the interviews indicated that the events, people and places in the pictures had a relative set of significances to the young people. I could not have discovered these without the picture-interviews (see also Dodman, 2003).

Dodman (2003) argues that research based on the written or verbal word has limitations related to the research context and the questions it asks. The participants also showed

emotions when talking about their pictures, for example, they looked sad while looking at pictures of family that lives far away. One girl from La Popa presented me with pictures of her time at social gatherings with her friends. These friends were from the different spaces she moves in. Friends from the neighbourhood where she lives, friends from University and friends and family from an island close to Cartagena, called Tierra Bomba. The girl grew up on the island. Only by analysing the pictures was I able to imagine all the different spaces she moved in. But the interview also provided me with some sense of what being with these people meant to her. The people in her neighbourhood are also part of the NGO where she works. With them she shares a passion for working with children. Her friends from University have the same aspiration to become a Spanish teacher. The people from the island are her family and closest friends. In the interview she explained that leaving the island and her family was something she did reluctantly, and only because she would not have the opportunity to study at University there. Such insights can be difficult to gain from conventional interviews undertaken without participatory photography. It is possible to talk about such circumstances and events without the prompting of photographs, but talking with reference to photos makes it more likely conversation will turn towards them.

It can be difficult, or impossible, to access certain spaces and places as a researcher, especially when the researcher is from a different cultural, social and economic background. Some spaces are not accessible to the researcher because they are dangerous (Young and Barrett, 2001), or simply because participants do not feel able to share certain spaces with a researcher who is not part of their social group (Darbyshire et al., 2005, Langevang, 2007). For instance, the girl mentioned above let me visit her on Tierra Bomba and presented me to her family. However, she made sure I left in the late afternoon so that she could spend time with her friends and family without me.

In other studies of young people that have included participatory photography and filming, researchers also worked with respondents who could not or did not want to include the researcher in some aspects of their social lives. Langevang (2007) had restricted access to different types of networks and social activities in her study of youth and their everyday lives in Ghana. She had to deal with tactics of resistance such as silences, laughter or

excuses of sickness on the part of the young people she researched. In my case I found that young people mostly limited my access to certain spaces and places because of worries about my safety.

Participatory photography provided me with insights into spaces I could not access easily, and opened doors to further research opportunities. During the interviews about the pictures I asked if some of the young people would take me to the places they had photographed. They often did, explaining that the reason they did not take me with them before was they were unaware of my interest in those places and spaces. One boy took a lot of pictures of the place where gang members meet and fight in his neighbourhood.[44] Plate 3 shows this place.

Picture 10 - Street in Barrio La Popa taken by participant

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[44] Gang activities do not have much structure. Sometimes they fight each day for weeks, but there are also weeks or months when there is no activity at all.

During the interview the boy told me that the gangs fight at the end of his street at the top of the hill. I asked him if it would be safe for me to go to his home and take a look at the place for myself. He was surprised but arranged for me to visit his home during daytime so that we could combine the visit with a tour of his neighbourhood, including the place in the picture.

5.4.2   Participatory Filming

The filming that the young people did as part of the research project had behind it a similar rationale to the photography. I tried not to influence the young people's choice of topics for the films, although as the filming took place at the end of the fieldwork period, it was inevitable that some of my interests and perspectives would be reflected in them. I conducted several planning sessions with the young people. These started with discussions of the topic, and then moved on to discussions about how to present the chosen theme in a short video. There then followed several shooting sessions. The group from La Popa decided to focus on the topic of education and created an interview schedule to interview randomly selected people on the streets of the city centre. The group from Pozón focused on structures of stigmatisation. They were interested in how people from other neighbourhoods perceive Pozón and in comparing these opinions with locals. They also created an interview schedule, asking random people in Pozón and in La Popa about their perception of Pozón. My involvement in the shooting process was minimal, limited to helping the young people with technical questions, reducing the suspicion of interviewees by explaining the project to them, and helping the young people to obtain informed consent. The filmings were followed by a session to show and discuss the films that were produced. Both groups came together for this event. I used this opportunity to observe the interactions and discussions of the Pozón and La Popa groups with respect to the videos. The discussions of the videos provided me with valuable contextual information about the respective challenges the young people in Pozón and La Popa face in acquiring cultural capital, accessing quality education, dealing with the stereotyping of their neighbourhoods and living with infrastructure problems.

The session provided the opportunity for the young people and for me to listen to each other's perspectives on topics which affect them all (Wheeler, 2009); a platform to reflect on their social environment. The exploration of issues such as labelling by the young people provide the possibility for counter labelling as they reflected on the results of the filming and discussed these (I discuss the issue of stigmatisation and labelling people from certain neighbourhoods in Cartagena in chapter 5 and 6) (cf. Wheeler, 2009).

Another advantage of participatory filming is that it offers the opportunity for the communication of information in multiple ways (Wheeler, 2009). The method conveys visual and audio information. For me as the researcher, this was important as in interviews respondents recall their memories (Trell and Van Hoven, 2010) in the video, and also in the photographs, the young people provided me with additional knowledge beyond words with visible and audible data.

The use of participatory filming and photography gave the young people the opportunity talk about topics they felt important, and to discuss how these issues affected them in their present and how they might affect them in the future. Through deciding what to show to me they shifted from a position of stakeholder in the research project to the position of an owner, at least of part of it (Franks, 2011).

5.5   Challenges and Pitfalls

There are several challenges and pitfalls that need to be addressed when working with young people and visual participatory methods. I asked all participants for informed consent and they signed a consent form. However, there remained ethical dilemmas surrounding how to treat the people pictured in the photos and videos. I have chosen to avoid presenting pictures in my work that show faces or other identifiable characters. The content of the pictures still informs the content of the thesis, even if the pictures themselves are not included.

Working with digital cameras or any kind of recording device in contexts like Cartagena's barrios involves the possibility that those devices will put participants and the researcher

in danger (Young and Barrett, 2001, Didkowsky et al., 2010). As I mentioned, one camera was stolen during my research by someone outside the participant group. I ran a discussion about behaviour with the cameras with the young people and set rules that they should not take a camera with them to places where it could cause them to come to harm. Yet the participatory method used in this research is based on the assumption that the young people are responsible agents so I also had to trust them that they knew best what kind of behaviour would pose a danger to them. In general the young people were responsible and did not get into dangerous situations. One girl asked me to give her more time to make pictures so that she could show me her street and the surrounding areas. She lives in an unsafe area and wanted more time so that she could gather some friends, mostly males, to go with her while she was taking pictures.

One of the biggest challenges was time management. Working with young people is difficult as they can lose interest during the research process. My experience was that the young people in my study were often preoccupied with other things in their everyday lives. It was a challenge to get them interested and involved in a research project for as long as eight months (see also Trell and Van Hoven, 2010). Aged between 15 and 22, the young people had busy days at school and university, spent time with family and friends, and in some cases did some community work with local NGOs. Researching their aspirations and the influences of the structures of their spaces and places on them required keeping the young people engaged. The participatory methods outlined in this section proved helpful to this end.

6   Limitations and Reflections on Methodology

I mentioned Pozón is one consistent neighbourhood while La Popa consists of many small barrios populares. This is an issue that cannot be avoided when researching with two cases that are supposed to be close and far away from the city centre because neighbourhoods close to the city centre have grown more slowly over time and are therefore much smaller. Neighbourhoods more distant to the city centre grew fast and with a high influence of internal displacement of people because of the violent conflict in the country. Barrios

outside the city centre are objects of displacement within the city when territory has been used for development projects such as the barrio of Chambacu that was completely erased and people were re-located to the outskirts of the city. Today a city council building dealing with tax issues stands in this area. Other relocations of people within the city occur for tourist industry development reasons and today, for example, the inner city area, which was residential, is now mostly converted to hotels and shops.

However, big neighbourhoods such as Pozón are divided into sectors as aforementioned. I was able to recruit participants in sectors of both neighbourhoods that have some similarities in terms of access, safety, cultural living habits and housing and infrastructure. Therefore in terms of mobility restrictions and similar forms of exclusion and stigma, the youth of certain sectors and little barrios experience similar situations. In particular this became clear during a group activity with both groups of young people together showing and discussing the videos they made. In this activity they agreed on the existence of certain forms of exclusion based on their place of living and socioeconomic background such as being perceived as dangerous.

6.1   Participant Recruitment

The recruitment of participants was conducted through the channel of NGOs in the selected neighbourhoods. I identified two NGOs, one in Pozón and one in La Popa that are well connected to the youth of their area. Because my spatial mobility was limited at the beginning of the research it was difficult to recruit young people independent from the local NGOs. Therefore I needed to find a way to get in contact with young people from the selected areas. Other possibilities such as working in a local school or shop were not available and would have narrowed down the group of young people too much, especially as I wanted to work with young people who are already at Univeristy as well. Once I established a relationship with the young people I continued with snowball sampling and was able to recruit their friends to participate in my research. However, this recruitment process created two limitations. First, all my participants have been part of the NGOs to some extent during or prior to my fieldwork and thus the work of the NGOs influenced the young people's socialisation, habitus and aspirations development. Secondly, the groups of

young people per neighbourhood were not gender equal and differed in their age ranges. Therefore while in Pozón I was able to recruit many young men in the age between 15 and 22, I was only able to work with four girls intensively in this neighbourhood of whom only one proceeded already to tertiary education. In La Popa it was the reverse and I was able to recruit more girls than boys and all my core participants in this group apart from two had already entered tertiary education.

Also because of the age range difference between the groups I could not directly compare boys and girls in the neighbourhoods and age may be an additional factor influencing differences in the development of aspirations. Still the age ranges are similar and all of my participants have been in a life stage where they either have entered univeristy and were trying to realise their aspirations or they were shortly before finishing their Bachillerato and needed to think about the next step to take in their way to navigating towards their understanding of a good life. Thus the different age ranges emerged during the analysis as even an advantage in terms of being able to analyse these decisions and navigational processes from different life phases.

7   Data Analysis

I had several different kinds of data when I came back from fieldwork and therefore the first step in analysis was to decide how to organise it all. Many of the face-to-face interviews I transcribed myself word by word in their entireties aiming to preserve the original meaning of what participants said but also how they said it. Some of the expressions the young people use do not have good equivalent English translations. People from Cartagena also speak a kind of slang with a certain accent. I therefore decided to transcribe the narratives in Spanish.[45] Photo interviews have been transcribed only partly word by word. Some of the young people took hundreds of pictures and not every picture told a story. There were also many photos showing the same situation or space. For most of the photo interviews I only wrote down the content of the narrative rather than

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[45] I am fluent in Spanish and have been working and visiting Cartagena area for several years, so I am also very familiar with the kind of Spanish spoken there.

producing a word for word transcription. However, I decided to transcribe verbatim those discussions that were prompted by photos that appeared to be of higher importance to the young people.

I also did informal interviews and made observations during my fieldwork and had to find a way to transcribe and organise these different kinds of data without losing their meaning. I decided to code the notes from my informal interviews and on my observations, as well as my interview transcripts, with NVivo, a program on which I also could order my visual data as well. The coding, management and analysis of my data was guided by the framework and concepts of my research, outlined earlier, but I also left room for new themes and concepts to emerge (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Coding was composed of two steps and was orientated by Tracy's guidelines (2013), namely: Primary cycle coding, second level coding and synthesising. Primary cycle coding is a line-by-line form of coding where a word or a short phrase summarises the line. Secondary level coding reorganises the primary cycle codes and is the first analytical step where the researcher begins to categorise codes and interpret them as possible concepts or themes. Synthesising is part of the analytical process and reflects the analytical thinking of the researcher. It consists of writing memos and loose analytical outlines of the codes (Tracy, 2013). While I did not do line by line coding, I decided to group lines into themes. In short, I started with the second step. I then created theme nodes, with sub-nodes, in NVivo. These nodes included 'neighbourhood', 'aspiration navigation' or 'social capital'. These themes were based on my theoretical framework. I did include visual data in my NVivo file and linked this with the narratives from the interviews and the film project.

When coding, especially with software, there is a danger of reducing the data into simple, categorised, smaller segments which then are interpreted piecemeal, without being connected to the data set as a whole (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Holloway and Jefferson (2013) argue that coding can decontextualize data, and that parts of the data set might only be able to be interpreted correctly as a part of the whole from which they emerge. To avoid losing context or misinterpreting bits of the data in this way, I always stepped back after coding and connected the coded segments up to the whole data set. I cross-analysed the visual data against the narratives and interviews of the young people. I also analysed

the semi-structured interviews and the other interviews I had conducted in relation to the photos. My analysis of the data was a thematic one based on my concepts and frameworks and open to new emerging ones.

8   Concluding Remarks

This chapter outlined my methodological approach, adopted to fulfil the aims of my research. In order to explore the structures of the young people's social contexts, to understand how structures influence their desired future selves, and to examine how they act in certain ways to attain their aspirations, an ethnographic approach was identified as appropriate. This approach provided me with the opportunity to observe the young people going about their everyday lives, and build relationships of trust. It also allowed for important themes to emerge through the fieldwork process. My ethnographic was not however a traditional one as I was not completely involved in the young people's lives and left their social context, becoming a detached researcher at the end of each day. I combined my ethnographic work with group activities and semi-structured interviews, as well as with participatory visual methods. These innovations helped me to triangulate data, and avoid reflecting my own perspectives and interests onto the young people. The combination of these different data collection methods had the advantage of giving the young people some power to share their opinions and beliefs about what was important to them. The visual participatory methods in particular offered them the opportunity to shape the research and research process. Finally, once the fieldwork was finished, organising, transcribing and coding the data allowed for analysis that was based on my own theoretical assumptions but was also influenced by emerging themes. It was an iterative process that informed the focuses of my analytical chapters, to which I now turn.

Chapter 4: Aspirations and a Good Life

1   Introduction

It is August, one of the hottest months in Cartagena. The sky is clear and the sun shines into the patio of the NGO where we are sitting in the shade in a circle. I am in Pozón, meeting young people from the barrio for the first time. Around 15 have come and I am happy that so many are showing interest in participating in my research. The young people make jokes and laugh amongst themselves and ask me questions about where I am from, and what I think of Colombia and Cartagena? I feel welcome and the curiosity of the young Pozoneros makes it easier for me to get into conversation with them. *"So, how do you understand the word aspirations and what are your aspirations?'"* I ask. One after the other answers my question. Some clarify the word 'aspirations' for me in Spanish, '*aspiraciones'*, while some start directly, detailing their aspirations.

Samuel: "I think aspirations are tangible things, or maybe rather goals, so not necessarily tangible but things we want to achieve in the future. And the occupation is an aspiration that may bring us to other not tangible aspirations such as being happy. Me, I want to be a cinema director."

Andreas: "What I want is to be a graphic designer and start my own company, and I want it to be known nationally and internationally."

Andreas and the rest of the young people in the circle start a discussion about whether aspirations need to refer to an occupation or can be something else. They also discuss whether an occupation serves as a means for achieving other aspirations, such as being happy. While Andreas and Samuel are talking with the other young people in the group I notice that Alessandro is contemplating something. Suddenly he interrupts the other young people.

"I have an aspiration. I want to have a restaurant. Also I want to be a cook. I want to make this happen; I mean something bigger, perhaps even in another city. So if I have the opportunity to do this I do it. I also think of starting a business that sells a variety of beauty

products, you know what I mean? I mean people here like these products so it would be a
good business and I start with one, the restaurant, being a cook or the shop, but one
realises the other and from there … (He stops for just a second before he continues) I mean
from there I will start to get out of poverty. Or maybe not getting out of poverty but at
least feeling comfortable and being able to help my family."

The other young people laugh shyly, perhaps because they are surprised about Alessandro's honesty but perhaps also because they know exactly what he is talking about, and agree with him. His honesty about his aspiration to leave poverty behind provides me with several insights. First, it tells me that he feels he lives in poverty and has compared his living situation with those of others in the neighbourhood or the city. Second, it tells me he thinks about his social condition, how to alter and to enhance it, and that he feels responsible for the support of his family. Third, his statement shows that his social environment influences his ideas about the future. He knows that, for instance, a shop selling beauty products would be a good business, as people in the area are interested in beauty products. He reflects on the opportunities given to him and on his abilities to realise them. Leaving poverty, stepping towards a good life, means having a business, such as a restaurant or shop; these are some of the means he discerns to navigate himself and his family towards a good life. However, he also acknowledges that he may not get out of poverty, but hopes that he will at least be comfortable and be able to fulfil his responsibility to his family.

Looking at Alessandro and his comment that he wants to leave poverty, or at least be more comfortable, and able to enhance his family's social condition, suggests how the young people of Pozón and, as we will see later, in La Popa, are conscious and aware of their disadvantaged social conditions. They regularly state they are poor and they are from a lower socioeconomic background. Yet poverty is a contested concept. For me poverty is rather an intrinsic concept and does not depend only on material shortcoming. I believe similar to Sen (1999) that people need to be able to choose their desired pathways and poverty exist when they are restricted in their freedom to choose. The young people of my study, however, talk about material poverty when they refer to them being poor and compare themselves to other people in terms of material thresholds. Therefore the young

people compare themselves with people in their spaces and places of everyday life and perceive those of them as not poor who have, for example, a house of two floors or a car. However, this does not mean the young people do not try to enhance their social condition, or are in any sense fatalistic. On the contrary, Alessandro's statement that he believes he is poor but is nonetheless making plans to change his social condition in the future, reveals that young Cartagenians do not accept their social conditions as given and try to resist and counteract their effects. The young Cartagenians of my study demonstrate self-awareness and reflexivity when it comes to their possible future selves. They have concepts of what a good life is about, and of what is necessary to achieve it. Their concepts of a good life may, as Alessandro explained, not necessarily involve a move out of poverty, at least in terms of income thresholds and poverty lines. For the young people a good life can be understood in more subjective terms, such as living well, being comfortable and being able to help their families (Camfield, 2006, Camfield et al., 2009, White, 2010).

These nuances are what this chapter is about. It is about how the young people I met from Pozón and La Popa understand what is a good life from their perspective. It is about their aspirations and how they articulate them. And it is about the obstacles the young people perceive as constraining them to achieve a good life. In this sense this chapter is also connecting my previous theoretical implications with the data I collected. It serves therefore different purposes.

First, I link Bourdieu's concept of habitus and my previous explained theoretical framework with data collected. Bourdieu's theory explains how people are influenced consciously and unconsciously in their thinking and acting, and how the structures of their everyday lives influence their capacity to move towards the achievement of their aspirations (Gale and Parker, 2015). I begin therefore to introduce the aspirations of the young people, by describing those of James, a young man from Pozón. He exemplifies well how habitus and aspirations are interconnected and how the articulation of aspirations to a good life is embedded in a person's social past and present context. Second, I explore the aspirations of my other participants including their navigational capacity and the relationship between their agency and the structures of their social environment. Having explained in my introduction that aspirations are often perceived as a means to achieve upward social

mobility outcomes, I ask the young people what they believe a good life consists of. They offer an alternative understanding of enhanced living conditions that go beyond educational and occupational outcomes. Third, I explore the obstacles the young people perceive are constraining them in achieving a good life.

This is the first of four empirical chapters about young peoples' aspirations for social mobility, and their navigational capacity to achieve them in marginalised neighbourhoods (barrios)[46] in Cartagena. The four chapters discuss different aspects of aspirations, and strategies of navigation towards them, within the enabling and constraining structures of the young people's social contexts. The second chapter explores the influence of a sense of belonging on this navigational capacity and on the development of aspirations. While these two chapters are focused on the subjective perspectives of the young people and how they act and think, in the third chapter I describe structural aspects in more detail, exploring how spaces and places influence young people's physical mobility and access to the resources necessary to realise their aspirations. The last of the empirical chapters focuses on educational and occupational opportunity structures in particular and how they work to enable or constrain in the young Cartagenians in the study.

2   Negotiating and Aspiring to Possible Future Selves

James and I sit in the front room of his house. It is close to the main street in Pozón and easily accessible. The house has four rooms. The front room is a typical combination of a kitchen and living room. There are two bedrooms, one for James and his two brothers, and one for his parents. The final room is the bathroom. There is a patio outside. We had several cooking sessions here where James and other young people from the neighbourhood taught me how to make '*patacones'*, a local dish made out of green bananas. James is a member of the core group of youth I work with in Pozón and we spend a lot of time together in the barrio and in other places where his everyday life plays out. He

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[46] I will use the words barrio and neighbourhood interchangeably, as in contrast to other countries all neighbourhoods in Cartagena are called barrios irrespective of their socioeconomic status. The term used for poor neighbourhoods specifically is barrio popular.

is 21 years old and has lived in Pozón all his life. He studies civil engineering at a private univeristy, obtaining a state credit to do so. It is his second degree; before he studied radio and television production at the University Bellas Artes in the city centre. He accessed that course through a scholarship. He feels he is poor but thinks he is better off than other people in his barrio, as he knows some cannot even afford to have three meals a day, and because he and his family live in a much safer place than those who live in the gang affected areas of the neighbourhood[47]. When I ask James what he wants to do in the future and how he wants to live, his answers provide a lot of information about what he aspires to and what he perceives as a good life.

"First I leave the barrio, trying to find a barrio where it is possible to get to know a different ambience and afterwards getting independent. At the moment I cannot (get independent) because I am studying and depend on my parents but afterwards, yes I want to be independent and live on my own […]. I want to have my own company when I am finished studying. Something like lending equipment or workers to construction sites so that they work on different construction sites and for different companies."

Being independent, living on his own and having his own company are high aspirations in themselves, and I perceived them first to be out of the range of someone who comes from a barrio popular like Pozón. Ray (2006) argues that when people develop aspirations they develop them in an aspiration gap - the distance between the aspirations and their actual conditions. It is this gap that affects future-oriented behaviour. If the gap is too wide the aspirations are perceived as too distant to be reached and if it is too narrow they are perceived as too small to be worth investing in. Analysing James' aspirations, initially the gap appears wide. His parents have not undertaken higher education, he is from a lower socioeconomic class, and his family relations all live very close by in the barrio. There is no history or expectation of leaving it. Rather than being independent it is more usual to settle down and start a family. Davidson (2011) argues that aspirations include as much an expression of perceived possible future selves and the intention to work towards them, as

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[47] I will use the words barrio and neighbourhood interchangeably, as all neighbourhoods in Cartagena are called barrios. The term used for poor neighbourhoods specifically is barrio popular.

they do express fears and perceived limitations. James is aware of the obstacles in the way of his achievement of his desired future, but he also demonstrates a resistance to those restrictions. He believes he will be able to overcome these obstacles and to incrementally increase his possibilities and chances in life (Vigh, 2006). James further provides some information about what he perceives as the characteristics of a good life in the future, a topic that will be discussed later in this chapter in more detail. For now it suffices to point out these include living in a different neighbourhood and being independent from his family. As I talked to James about his future he continued to explain his plans in terms of occupation and education, how he plans to navigate himself towards his desired future self.

"(I want) two things: First I need to find work in a company like an employee so that they pay me for doing work, but thinking well for the future… I would like to have my own company or maybe with partners so that they can do different things. First a company who employs people who work then in different construction sites and second a company which lends equipment to construction sites […] I also want to specialise after my degree (of civil engineering). Maybe doing a Master or a doctorate. I thought of specialising in designing material structures but this is related to a lot of calculation and numbers and this is difficult for me. […] I also like the administrative part of projects, I like to work with people and to coordinate […] There are two ways in the univeristy, I have the opportunity before I graduate to start a Master or a specialisation afterwards. However I have to pay for it from my own money, as I cannot borrow more from the state. I would like to do a Master in a foreign country because this gives you additional value in your CV. Those who study in Argentina have an additional value and they get employment more easily. […] I also saw in the univeristy some possibilities to study in Turin in Italy and I looked at this as well to make maybe my postgraduate there."

James expresses a plan, taking into account his own abilities in relation to the opportunities he perceives being available to him, and with an awareness that he may have to shift some of his plans depending on his acquisition of different cultural and economic capitals, like his ability to pay for studies. Understanding James' aspirations and his perception of a good life provides insights into his behaviour, what inspires and

motivates it. James' evaluation of the opportunities available to him, and the constraints he must deal with (Crivello, 2011), inspire him to think of multiple pathways towards his aspiration, different ways of behaving. Analysing young Cartagenians' navigational capacity to achieve their aspirations is at the same time analysis of the complexities of the social, cultural and political context they are embedded in, as well as their histories within these, their self-perceived abilities and the forms of capitals they have acquired.[48]

It must be mentioned that I perceived James as a young person who had developed an exceptional navigational capacity, and he is not representative of all the young people in my study. Still, looking at James' plans provides an example of how young people from Pozón can have high aspirations, and make plans to achieve them, even though they sit in a disadvantaged starting point in Cartagenian society. This fact links the social navigation of the young people to the theories of Bourdieu. Bourdieu explores the issue of different social starting points in France in particular. In his analysis of the French education system he argues that young people from better social classes start school at an advantageous position because they have a habitus that is valued by the higher, more dominant social classes, and because they have already obtained a set of capitals that allows them to move through the education system and into higher classes easily (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The theory helps to make sense of people's aspirations and, more particularly, people's navigational capacity to achieve those aspirations. Navigational capacity is linked to what Bourdieu calls having a feel for the game, the idea that young people may be constrained to enter spaces such as academia, not just for economic reasons, but also because they do not have the necessary habitus to play the game of academia (cf. Bok, 2010). James, for example, aspires to go to a national or even foreign univeristy to obtain a Master's degree. He needs to have the right quantity and kind of dispositions and capitals to be able to access a univeristy place. He must learn how to play a game unfamiliar to him in his current social spaces.

James' statement demonstrates that he has been able to acquire enough cultural capital, in the form of information, to make informed and well thought through plans about how

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[48] Details about the history of Cartagena and Colombia were discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis

to go about achieving his aspirations. He studies at a private, with young people who are predominantly from higher social classes and experience fewer structural constraints. Amongst them James has obtained the dispositions necessary to develop a feeling for the game that he will need to play in the other academic spaces he wants to pass through. James had in fact managed to quickly get a feeling for the academic game at the point of his application.

"[…] I sent the application […] and later they (the univeristy) called me that I have to do an exam. I did the exam and it went well. Afterwards I had to do an interview to see if I knew some of the stuff I wanted to study or if I had any knowledge. There I invented some things. I answered the general questions but sometimes I added a bit more to the things I actually knew. After this they called me again to do a psychological interview and because I knew how to behave that went well. And then they published the list with all those who got accepted, I think it were only five they would give (money) to study and I was in these five."

James mentions he invented some things to make a better impression and enhance his chances to be accepted for the scholarship, indicating he already knew what was expected of him. Second, he states that he knew how to behave in the psychological interview. In other words, he had the dispositions necessary for the interview and had a feeling for how to behave and act during it. His successful navigation of the route into university illustrates that habitus is not influenced only by structures but through the interplay of internalised structures and agency. Entering the private Arts university was James' first step into an academic field populated predominantly by people from higher social classes. Private Universities in Colombia are at the high end of the education spectrum in terms of tuition fees they charge. They are expensive by international standards (World Bank, 2003: 52) and are usually only an option for well-off segments of the Colombia's population. Applying to one of these Universities is difficult, applicants must sit an exam and undergo several interviews (World Bank, 2003). Even if they can somehow find a way to pay the fees, the application process disadvantages those young people from poorer areas who are

not able to enjoy the same quality of secondary education as young people from high social classes.[49]

Aside from allowing him to acquire scholarships and credits that would allow him to undertake further study at these kinds of institutions, the time James spent studying for his first degree in the Arts university provided him with experiences and dispositions of how to behave in academic spaces. He acquired new forms of cultural and social capital as he gained new knowledge and friends. These had impacts on the form of his aspirations, as well as on his capacity to achieve them. Despite being from Pozón, positioned in a constraining structural space, with few quality secondary education opportunities, and limited access to economic and cultural capital of the kinds that matter at university, the navigational routes of the past provided him with the required dispositions to find the means to enter his desired degree. Doing a degree helped James plan further study. This demonstrates what Massey (1998: 124-125) has argued - that we have to look at the routes of young people rather than their roots - in order to understand how they create their identities and navigate towards their aspirations.

James may act habitually to some extent, but during his conversation with me he evaluated his opportunities in a reflexive way, pointing out his abilities, like his mathematics skills, and his available resources, reconciling them with the expectations of others in the educational and industrial spaces he aspired to occupy (Bottero, 2010, Farrugia, 2013). This suggests that young people's aspirations are a product of social structures, in interrelation with agency. The navigational strategies of the young people involve their being reflexive about their own abilities, and they develop strategies to try to achieve social mobility, rather than just reproducing their current social conditions. The next section explores the aspirations of some of the other young people in my study, from la Popa and Pozón.

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[49] I will discuss the educational system more in detail in Chapter 7

3   Aspirations and the Desired Future Selves of Youth in La Popa and Pozón

During my first meetings with the young people from Pozón and La Popa, and in subsequent individual interviews, they often began talking about their occupational and educational aspirations by explaining where they currently are in life. The majority of the young people expressed the wish to study or were already studying, and wanted to find employment that matched their degree, or to continue with a specialisation at university. See table 2 for an overview of the young peoples' aspirations.

One of the young Cartagenians from La Popa, Lenard, told me his plan to study and then to continue with a further degree in order to achieve his aspiration of being a medical professional.

"I am studying nursing. Afterwards I want to study medicine and specialise in neurology. I want to be a neurologist. In nursing I cannot specialise that way because it is a different field. [...] So when I am a nurse I start working in a hospital or a health agency and with the money I earn I can pay the medicine studies. I want to study at the public university. [...] Until now I have not failed a single module and if I continue with marks like these I can enter medicine studies without making the entry exam. [...] if I can specialise in neurology, uuh I can find work until in Harvard, this is my dream."

Lenard's aim is clear; he wants to be a neurologist, a profession that would give him a stable income and a good social status, two major factors influence his choice of future social condition. He demonstrates that his navigational capacity is well developed, he is already studying at the public university, where he has acquired capitals necessary to navigate himself further towards his dream to study medicine. He is aware that if he has good grades he does not need to do an exam to enter medicine so he is currently focused on acquiring the further necessary cultural capital, in the form of a good degree, and medical knowledge, to enable him to enter a medicine course. He is also conscious of the economic capital he will need to accrue to achieve this aim.

	Occupation/ Education Aspirations	Family and Future Living Aspirations
Marci	Forensic professional medical, Owning a clothes shop, Owning a restaurant	To have a family
Katia	Executive secretary, Paediatrician, Studying hotel and tourism	To have a family and do charity work
Maja	Study Social Communication in Bogotá, Work in TV as moderator or as an actor	Have own things, live in a quieter and safer place, go to Bogotá or have her own apartment in Bocagrande, not more than 2 children
Karla	Study English, Nursing, Going to the military	To have a family and educate own children well, wants to stay in Cartagena
James	Own Company to rent construction equipment and workers, Specialising with a master or doctorate	Help other people, to have a family, travelling in the country and world
Larson	Owning a restaurant close to city centre	To have a family, two children, safer and quieter place to live, three meals a day, car, house, business, wants to be rich
Santiago	Medical professional (doctor,) Actor or model, Study law	To have a family, to live in better social conditions (safer and more economic resources)
Miguel	Joiner of aluminium works (cannot find job), Studying technology of civil construction sites right now at an institute, Actor	To have a family, wants a change for his barrio to a better socioeconomic standard
Patricia	School teacher, Doing master in psychology	To have a family
Yorlanda	School teacher, Administrative position as well to influence policies and quality of education system	To have a family, 2 children, house, living with her parents and aunt to take care of them, wants to live in Cartagena
Jessi	Medical Professional, Specialise in her degree with something (she is studying medicine at the public University at the moment)	To have a family, 2 children, getting to know Colombia and other countries, Having her own things
Alessandra	Finishing her social work degree, no concrete plans but wants to do something in topics of feminism and with young people	Not necessarily with family
Lenard	Medical Professional (Neurology), (Is studying nursing at the moment and wants to get into public University for medicine)	To have a family, house in quieter place, get to know other cities and countries, 2 children
Hannes	Working at Ecopetrol at the quality part and (quality control of petrol), Having his own business (not clear in what)	Good work and have a family and children, quietness
JD	He wants to study but no concrete plans	To have a family, study in another country, 1 child
Caro	She is studying administration at a technological level, no concrete plans for afterwards but wants to be independent (she has to stop studying regularly because she is at a private University and cannot afford the fees)	To go to Medellin to study, not marry, adopting children

Table 2 - Overview Aspirations of La Popa and Pozón Youth

A similar dynamic is notable in Hannes description of his future plans. Hannes is from La Popa and he studies industrial engineering at a private university. Hannes was focused on what he wanted to do before he entered university. Knowing that Ecopetrol, an oil refinery based in Cartagena, is one of the biggest employers in the city he made an effort to learn about the different opportunities to work there, planning his studies accordingly. He picked a specialisation that the company regularly looks for recruits to have been trained in.

"I want to work in quality control at Ecopetrol. I want to verify the quality of the petrol there in a laboratory. Every now and then they do tenders for this but they only take one out of 30."

Hannes studies the technology of quality control, as part of an industrial engineering course, preparing him for his desired occupational future. He looked for information about what was possible to achieve with the company. Instead of acting habitually, he evaluated his options for employment in Cartagena, acting agentically. He obtained the information about the terms to apply and enter the course he needed to study in order to become employable by Ecopetrol. It is a focused, precisely planned pathway that I rarely observed among the young people in my study. Hannes explained that in the past he had witnessed a lot of violence, including the murder of his cousin. These experiences led him to drink, and to go to a lot of parties. He said he got ill and realised after a couple of years that if he did not change his lifestyle he probably would end up on the street as a drug addict. He turned to the church and reorganised his whole life. Hannes now aspires to a quiet lifestyle and a good job that enables him to live in a different place so that any children he might have in the future might not have similar experiences to him growing up. His aspirations are not developed independently from his past but linked to them, creating interests and desires for the future, and motivating young people to act to achieve them (Foster and Spencer, 2010). Hannes' choice of Ecopetrol is also influenced by his wish to stay in Cartagena, close to his family. His older two siblings had already left Cartagena, which Hannes sees as a form of betrayal, leaving him as the only child near his parents.

Yorlanda, from La Popa, is also focused and strategic like Hannes. She had to shift her aspirations and adjust her pathway in the past. Her aspirations when I spoke to here were not focused solely on herself.

"The truth is I like to work with children and therefore I decided to study being a teacher. I am also working at the NGO with children. I do internships with the university in schools. First I studied at a technical level infantile pedagogy. When I finished I worked for two years and now I am in the 5th semester at the university. Therefore I am a bit behind because of the technical studies I did first but this degree is not valued so much. If I had studied from the beginning at university I would have been finished by now. However, once I finish I want to work in schools but later I want to be part of their administration to be able to enhance quality in schools."

Here Yorlanda explains that only a professional degree is valued, confirming the existence of what Bourdieu calls doxa, a social discourse that, in this particular case, dictates that a university degree is necessary to be successful. Yorlanda regrets having studied a technical degree first, as this degree is less valuable and has not helped her to realise her desired future. She changed her plans according to opportunities available to her, enrolling at university. While she enjoys working with children and wants to become a teacher she also thinks further. Yorlanda has aspirations that are not only linked to her own wellbeing and her own achievement. She also wants to be part of a process that will create change that may enhance other young people's schooling; an aspiration that demonstrates her feelings of responsibility to her community and people elsewhere in Cartagena and Colombia.

Yet, while the majority of young people in my study presented a clear picture of what they want to achieve in the future, not all young people were that sorted. For example, Katja from Pozón explains to me her plans for the time after she graduates school (which was at the time of the interview due in one year) and they appear somehow unsorted.

Katja: " I will have a career because I want to be an executive secretary. If I cannot be an executive secretary I want to be a paediatrician. If I cannot be a paediatrician I would like to study hotel and tourism studies."

As I was puzzled by her answer of three unrelated possible professions that also require three different career paths and degrees I began asking what exactly she then wants to do and how? Her answer again was puzzling to me as she said she wants to study. I ask what she wants to study and she answers *"a course".* To my questions where she wants to study then she tells me that she will study at the University of Cartagena. A couple of minutes later I probed this question in our interview and asked her again what she wants to study at the University of Cartagena. Katja then answered to me that she wants to study occupational health, yet again another career. Thus Katja provided me four different ideas of her near future but could not elaborate further on how to achieve them or what is necessary to realise these occupational aspirations. While it is true that for being paediatrician she needs to study, the University of Cartagena does not offer occupational health studies, as this is a technological career provided by specialised Institutions and not Universities. Still Katja has been an exception and it is possible that she has even less opportunities to think about her possible future. At daytime she cares for all her siblings and cousins and at night-time she tries to finish her secondary degree. The time she is able to spend thinking of her future and to act to realise her aspirations seems therefore limited.

The statements of the young people from La Popa demonstrate how their aspirations are connected to their past and present experiences, and the knowledge they have gained in the spaces they have moved in. Apart from Katja the young people had clear ideas about their futures. Lenard worked in a medical environment and through moving in this space developed an interest in neurology. Yorlanda, who has worked with children in her recreational time, looks for employment in the education sector, while Hannes, who experienced poverty and resents his sibling's departure from the city, has a straight forward focus on his future with one of the biggest companies in Cartagena. Contrary to much of the aspirations literature, in particular that from in the UK and Australia, in which a lack of aspiration is shown to hinder young people's social mobility (see also Brown, 2011, Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011, Allen and Hollingworth, 2013, Brown, 2013a, Gale and Parker, 2015), the aspirations of my participants are great. It is rather the navigational capacity of the young people, their capacity to plan and construct pathways to

achieve aspirations, as well as the structural constraints of their social context (a topic further explored in later chapters), that influences how their social mobility is constrained.

All the young people's aspirations have things broadly in common. They are linked to their understanding of what a good life is, and that particular educational and occupational aspirations can act as a means to achieve other aspirations that are part of what a good life is. Achieving stable employment to earn a stable income is the means through which most young people understand they will be able to fulfil other aspects of a good life, such as a sense of safety living in a safe neighbourhood. The development of more specific aspirations however has to be investigated in detail as specific occupational aspirations, for example, do not develop in isolation from influences in the young people's social spaces, and the evaluation of their own abilities in comparison to those around them. This latter process is linked into the young people's habitus (Appadurai, 2004, Bourdieu, 2005, Gale and Parker, 2015).

4   Aspects of a Good Life and Social Mobility

I have already mentioned that a good life is a subjective concept and that young people's aspirations reveal some means through which they believe it can be achieved. The following section discusses how the young people define a good life, presenting data from both barrios, La Popa and Pozón. I explained that a good life is a form of social mobility concept, because its achievement usually results from the young people moving socially upward. However, the good life definition of social mobility goes beyond understandings of social mobility that refer to changes in class, status or the societal hierarchy, which are all usually linked to economic capital changes. A good life can be understood differently to normative understandings of what social mobility consists of. The discussion of the aspects of a good life from the young peoples' points of view also introduces their perspective on the drivers that help them achieve a good life as well as the structures that constrain them.

Although there exist many approaches to understanding a good life in development studies, such as the basic needs approaches that try to explain what needs to be covered not to live in extreme poverty (cf. Galtung, 1980, Streeten, 1981, Streeten, 1982, Stewart,

1989), or wellbeing approaches that look at subjective aspects of a good life to enhance and achieve a person's wellbeing (cf. Camfield, 2006, White, 2010) I believe that, as a subjective concept, a good life is context specific, linked to social values, beliefs and discourses about what makes a person successful in a particular society. Therefore I let the young people define from their perspective what they believe a good life consists of and what is necessary to achieve it. Similar to the wellbeing approach (e.g. Copestake and Camfield, 2009, White, 2010), I see the good life as a multidimensional concept where the young people define outcomes they have reason to value (Sen, 1999).

4.1   'Having money is not the essential thing… but … it moves everything'[50]

I sit in the big front room of the NGO in La Popa. Fans on the ceiling are moving fast to circulate the hot air in the room. The young people from La Popa arrive one after another. Most of them are at least 30 minutes late, but I expected that. Time is perceived differently here on the coast of Colombia, and especially in Cartagena, where people told me that time is not a linear concept. While we are waiting I, and the few youths that have arrived, talk a bit about everyday life. We laugh together about my accent and they teach me words that are only used in Cartagena as part of their local Spanish. When all the young people have arrived we start talking about my research. I ask them what they think the word 'aspirations' means.

Patricia: "What I want for the future. My thoughts about what will life be in the future and what is my life now."

Andrea: "Your life project."

Many of the young people together: "Goals."

Patricia: "Exactly, they are goals, something you will create in your pathway to the future."

"And what do you think is then a good life and things that are necessary for a good life?" I ask.

Eddie: "A good life is when you are fine with yourself, this is where it begins…"

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[50] Part of a sentence from Hannes in a focus group about what is a good life with the La Popa youth

"Looking for the inner peace, being calm and not having conflicts." JD adds.

Yorlanda: "Apart from this, a good life is finding the necessary conditions to live, such as good nutrition, a good house, health and a good relationship with your social environment where one lives."

These were the first sentences spoken in my first group session with the La Popa youth. They illustrate that a good life can consist of a lot of different things and be multidimensional. When I introduced the topic of a good life, the La Popa and Pozón groups explained to me that one of the first things necessary to a good life is to be comfortable with oneself. Social relationships within the family and neighbours are perceived as an important part of this. Being on good terms with the people in their often violent social environment provides the young people with a sense of calm and security.

During group work about a good life in Pozón, Andreas elaborated that he thinks that respect and tolerance are important to a good life, as without these things there would be chaos in society. He explained how important respect and tolerance are for today's society, as without these neighbours cannot live in peace together. Peacefulness in the community and the family is clearly something that is important for the young people. This is related to the fact that people in their families and communities depend on each other and look out for each other.

Larson from Pozón presented the idea of being comfortable with oneself from another perspective. While Eddie and JD from La Popa talked a lot about the relationships between oneself and others, Larson mentioned that having peace with oneself is only possible if one has no problems, particularly financial debts or dependencies on others. He connects being free from financial worries and problems as an aspect of a good life.

"A good life? A good life is when you have peace with yourself, when you don't have problems, when you are at a place where you don't need to think about whom you owe money and when you are free from everything, that's a good life."

In Larson's view a material component is necessary to be at peace with oneself. Not necessarily much money is needed, but enough to keep one out of trouble. A material dimension was mentioned by most of the young people in my study when they described a

good life. Young people perceive that money is important to fulfil basic needs, and to be able to pay for social mobility drivers, such as quality education. Nevertheless they do not think being rich makes one happy or that wealth provides one with a good life in and of itself. They perceive rich people as unhappy, working too hard to enjoy life. Still, a certain amount of money, used as a driver to achieve upward social mobility and sustain basic needs, is a crucial part of a good life.

Hannes (La Popa): "Having money is not the essential thing. I know many people who have money and they are not happy. But money gives you things you need to be well; education in Colombia is expensive, for example. So money moves everything: Education, health, dwelling, and nutrition, practically life."

Lenard added in an individual interview that he believes that a good life is about the happiness that comes from being with a partner. But, being aware that material things are necessary to life in the society where he lives, he admits that studying and earning money are important to achieving a good life as well.

"A good life for me is being happy even though you have nothing. When one is happy he or she enjoys everything and sees everything positive. But unfortunately these material things have to exist and with it the need for money. However it is also necessary to have a partner and to develop as a person. For that purpose one has to study to achieve a professional level, and later learning English."

Lenard explains how important it is to be happy, but also that this is not possible without earning money and being able to pay for the material things necessary for everyday life. Yorlanda from La Popa explains in more detail.

Yorlanda: "A good life, well first you need to be good with yourself, feel good physically, psychologically, mentally and have a good relationship with the people in your social environment, because I cannot have a good life if I have conflicts with people in my neighbourhood. Therefore having good relationships with the people around me. This also influences the economic part, although not so much, but it supports practically a house, a family, and having a house in a good condition, with all utilities for electricity, water, and gas, all public services. Bueno, they are called public but you have to pay for them. Also it is

necessary to have food and be able to pay necessary clothes, as well as being able to pay
for being able to go out and do recreational stuff. This is a good life."

Yorlanda asserts how important it is to have good relationships within the community. Yet she also highlights the necessity of paying for basic needs to actually live well. The importance of the material aspects of a good life were mentioned by all the young people in the group discussions and in individual interviews. However it did not appear that the young people thought a lot of money was needed for a good life. They do not mention luxury goods as necessary for a good life, although they live in a social environment where they can see the difference between their living conditions and the living conditions people have in richer parts of the city. They know about luxury but they do not seem to aspire to a lifestyle of luxury. The youth of La Popa in particular see the luxurious living standards of richer people on their doorstep every day, because of their proximity to richer neighbourhoods. Some of the youth can even look from their houses into the luxury apartments along the beach.

Jessi (La Popa): "[…] we want always economic and emotional stability. No big luxury but
being comfortable, having a good life in a safe place and with the resources necessary for
being well."

Hannes: "[…] no, a good life is not having big mansions or things like that. A good life is
having a partner. We are aspiring for things like this, having a family, being good with god,
having employment that gives you enough to be well and not just to survive but to live
well."

Living in rich neighbourhoods is undesirable to the youth because they are perceived to lack a sense of community, and have different culture, which includes a judgemental attitidude towards the different lifestyles of the different classes in Cartagena. I will come back to this in the next chapter. For now it suffices to state that to live well is linked to social mobility and enhanced financial situations, in comparison to most of the young people's conditions in their neighbourhoods at the time of the study. Luxury is not though necessary. James from Pozón calculated for me whether the state minimum salary might be enough to live well on.

"How much is to live well? At the moment the minimum salary is 600,000 pesos, I think. So here in Pozón the house next to my uncle costs 350,000 pesos rent per month. It is a big house but then there are 250,000 pesos left. I go shopping for my family for another 150,000 pesos. Now I have nothing left. With what money do I pay the transport to my work then or how do I pay then the public services such as water and light and gas?"

This calculation is based on prices in Pozón, a neighbourhood where prices are much cheaper than in the neighbourhoods close to the city centre. A room in this neighbourhood in a nicer house can cost 200,000 Pesos. This shows how difficult it is for people to survive when they do not earn more than the state minimum salary. It also shows how important it is for the young people to achieve upward social mobility, and gain some economic security, in order to achieve a good life. While they do not aspire to luxury the young people do aspire to economic security.

Education has been identified as the main driver behind the achievement of economic stability, and by extension the achievement of a good life, both by the participants in my study and by the literature (e.g. Torche, 2010). To achieve economic security in Cartagena one needs a good tertiary degree; at least a two or three year degree - a technical or technological degree - or better still a professional degree.[51]

Jessie (La Popa): "In these times the necessary level of education is at least a technical degree (two or three year tertiary education) because then one can get employment in the Mamonal (the industrial area in Cartagena). But for me it is important to get a professional degree (Jessie studies medicine)."

James: "With a technological degree (three years) one can find a bit better work, but better is to have a professional university degree to find a good paid employment."

The word stability was mentioned by the young people in relation to financial and material issues but also in relation to personal and relational ones. This reminds us that the young peoples' conception of a good life is multidimensional, and goes beyond the material.

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[51] A more detailed exploration of Colombian degrees and the kinds of employment they enable follows in Chapter 7.

Money is important, to cover basic needs and education, rather than finance a lifestyle of luxury. But respect and being respectful, tolerance and being good with people, are all also perceived as important and are disconnected from material considerations.

Andreas (Pozón): *"Tolerance and respect are united aspects because if there is no respect there is no tolerance. And if there is no respect and no tolerance how can we be a society? It would be a social chaos."*

Alessandra from La Popa, however, went further than Andreas. She believes that a good life includes being involved in action to transform society.

Alessandra: "I think that human development is important. I mean in terms of social development such as living in conditions where the basic needs are covered, where education is possible, where one is healthy, where the house is a house where one can live with dignity. I think these are the things that move everything and that transform (society). Quality education that allows young people to move socially and that allows them to do what they aspire to."

For Alessandra a good life has different stages, each stage creating the foundation for the next one. Basic needs need to be covered, as education is only possible when one has a house, and is healthy and nourished enough to study. Once these things are fulfilled, Alessandra expresses the belief that one can live in dignity and work to transform society.

In sum, community seems to have a big influence on the young people's perspectives on having a good life. A good life is one in which people experience stability in material and relational terms, something the young people do not necessarily experience in their actual living conditions. In their descriptions of a good life the young people of my study describe drivers for social mobility such as education and stable employment, with a salary above state minimum wage.

4.2 Limitations, Obstacles and Constraints to Achieving a Good Life

In the preceding section I presented the drivers of social mobility that young people perceived were important to the achievement of a good life. Here I look at the limitations and obstacles they need to overcome to achieve a good life. Education, the main driver of

social mobility is difficult for young people from La Popa and Pozón to access. The La Popa youth were concerned with this in particular. Most of them were at university or finishing their Bachillerato (the degree that allows one to enter university) and needing to decide what to do next. Education was identified as the main driver for social mobility but also as a factor that increases security in the barrios populares. For example, Hannes from La Popa explained to me that he thinks that many youth in his area are gang members because they are not well educated and do not therefore have any opportunities to find employment.[52]

Hannes: "Delinquencies, robberies. But I think these are people who have no good education and have not many work opportunities and they also have to eat and so it is easier than work to rob people."

Hannes and most of the other young people in La Popa grew up with a lot of gang activity in their neighbourhood and think that the youths in these gangs did not have the support to get the education needed to achieve what they define as a good life.

Paola: "Education opens many doors…"

There exists a doxa about education in Cartagena, which dictates education is necessary for social mobility and the achievement of a good life. Similar to many Western countries, in Colombia having a university degree, or at least some kind of a tertiary degree, is perceived as necessary to being able to achieve a good life. The streets of Cartagena are packed with advertisements for private Universities and tertiary education institutions. The advertisements mostly feature happy smiling people on them, and slogans that indicate that a degree from the institution will lead to future success and happiness.

The Universities in Cartagena that are linked to this discourse or doxa of necessary education are predominantly private institutions, and very expensive. Only one university is public while there are at least 13 more private Universities. Colombia is one of costliest countries in the world to obtain education (World Bank, 2003). The average income per capita in the department of Bolivar state where Cartagena is located, is 421,284 pesos

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[52] The link between education level and employment is explored in chapter 7.

(DANE, 2015b). Even after adjusting this number for Cartagena, where the official state minimum salary for formal work is 650,000 pesos, it is still unlikely that young people from poorer backgrounds could afford a university education. Only young people from higher social classes, with the necessary financial resources, have access to private Universities while young people from barrios populares have to compete for the public university, which only offers limited spaces. At the public university there are only 90 spaces on the medicine course per year, for example. State student credits are available, but they require securities such as a house. There exist high inequalities in the opportunities available to access quality education in Cartagena. How these inequalities sit alongside the education doxa in young people's heads was suggested by Yorlanda when she explained how important education is.

"[...] in terms of education you need the maximum of education. University, if you want to have a good life and being able to live well. You need to study. We, young people, how can we offer our services to the job market if we are not educated? Therefore to have a good life it is necessary to have the maximum of education possible."

Yorlanda followed the prevailing education doxa of Cartagena in this statement, and spoke without any irony when she said that the maximum of education is necessary. The discourse of education can be seen similar to education being about learning skills that have a market value and learning how to play the game.

Rather than speaking about employment, Alessandra referred back to her understanding that living well is related to human development and the important role of education in transforming young people.

Alessandra: "Living well is human development implying things already said like food, dwelling, health but principally education. And in education, the quality of it, the access to higher education here in Cartagena is very difficult and in terms of quality it cannot be just going to class and that's it. Education needs to imply also a transformation of the student."

Alessandra herself is actively involved in a women's rights group and therefore does not refer to the doxa when stating that education is important. Despite achieving material

means, she believes in the mental transformation of students and that being able to study will create a more equal society.

One of the girls from La Popa, Caro, questioned the prevailing discourse or doxa on education. Caro seems to know she ought to believe that it is necessary to do a university degree to be successful, but expresses doubt about it nonetheless.

"I don't know. I guess to achieve a good life you should study up to the maximum possible and being the best in what you do. And I guess you should do a doctorate or a Masters. But I still don't know if I want to. I mean I like what I study on a technical level even though I never thought of studying this (administration). But I do not see myself doing a doctorate or anything similar. Because I think with a technological degree you can be successful as well."

Caro was studying at a technological degree (3 years) at a private university when I did my study. She had struggled to finance her degree and needed to stop for one year because she could not afford the tuition fees. She took evening classes to be able to work during the daytime, which resulted in her losing her social contacts in her class. She did not like the social change much and felt uncomfortable not knowing the people she is studying with. She is not motivated to continue on to a professional degree (equivalent to a Bachelor degree). Caro said that she believed it is not necessarily the case that the effort and cost to do a professional degree, would result in better employment. A technical degree might offer her a good life as well. While many of the youth in my study have been able to enter university for a first degree, I did not get to know a young person in La Popa or Pozón who had continued on to do Master's degree. This suggests that pursuing further university qualifications may not be a typical trajectory of young people from barrios populares in general, despite insistence of young people in my study on the importance of getting the most education possible.[53]

Questions over the educational route to success are related to experiences the young people have had as they have tried to access resources for upward social mobility. Hannes

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[53] I will explore the distribution of degrees within socioeconomic estratos (city stratification system) and in relation to opportunity structures in Chapter 7.

explained that even though education is a good driver of social mobility, it does not necessarily follow that a degree will result in good employment after university. He made it clear that even when you get a university education, it is still difficult to overcome the inequalities of Cartagena's class society. You need to have the correct social capital to help you.

Hannes: "Being at university, that does not give you necessarily a good life. It does not give you a guarantee to have work, or let's say you study but you need the network, la rosca, la Palanca (literally driving crank) as well or you won't enter in nothing."

This comment was followed by a discussion about how difficult it is to enter any employment as employers expect experience as well as education. The young people expressed the perspective that experience is not possible to get without the social capital, connections to particular people and social groups. These do not necessarily come through attending university. '*Palanca'* is the word used for social capital. A societal structure exists of invisible ceilings, which are difficult to get through if you are a young person from a barrio popular. Eddie explained to me that inequality in Cartagena is about power being distributed unequally, the result of decision-making lying in the hands of only a few people in Cartagena.

Eddie: "The problem is that only a few persons have actually money and these few decide the things going on here."

Alessandra and Hannes elaborated further on the constraints on young people's social mobility.

Alessandra: "*It is just people are working and live for work (Alessandra finished). (Hannes) Exactly and they work like slaves. Before (in terms of decades ago) they (the employers) did not pay money and now they pay money but this is the only difference in this slavery."*

The way that Hannes and Alessandra linked people's social conditions to the colonial structures and slavery of Cartagena's past was interesting. The social structures of Cartagena are still colonial, as is visible clearly every year in the beauty contests during the Independence Day celebrations. These exclude poor Afro-Colombians, who are in the majority in the city. The colonial structure is also visible in the fact that only a small part of

the city benefits from the emerging tourist business in Cartagena. The most popular tourist destination in Colombia, Cartagena makes a lot of money from tourism. However, while the historical centre has been renovated and big apartment buildings built along the coastline, the barrios populares have not changed much. Alessandra commented on this and raised the question of where the money from Cartagena's industries actually goes. She made the comparison with colonial rule and slavery again as she did before.

"When one goes to the Perimentral, to Pozón, to Nelson Mandela (most stigmatized and poor barrios)… all this money that the tourism industry produces is controlled by just a few people and one asks, there is so much money that enters (the city) so why is there so much poverty, why there are so many abused children, why are there so many women looking for different ways to escape and to survive (she means illegal prostitution here), why there are so many young people delinquent, so many young people without access to education and healthcare. So one asks where did all this money go with this complete inequality and bad distribution of money. I tell you, history is repeating itself. During the colonial times it has been the black people and the indigenous that they subordinated. The Spanish exploited them and now foreigners and people not from Cartagena are coming here and they manipulate us and exploit us. History is repeating itself."

Cartagena is in one of the most unequal departments in Colombia in terms of income inequality, having a Gini of 0,50 in 2013, rising to 0,51 in 2014 (DANE, 2015b).[54] The statistics reflect the inequality that the young people perceive. I myself have been stunned by the structures in Cartagena. I have lived in many neighbourhoods there over the last eight years. Some of them were barrios populares, others were of higher social classes. From one I could go running in the morning to Bocagrande, one of the richest parts of Cartagena. There I saw only white people running and walking along the waterside. The majority of Afro-Colombian people on the street were nannies or cleaning ladies or dog walkers. The houses had doormen and views of the sea. There would be no music at night-time and a high police presence. In the barrios populares the picture is very different; no

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[54] A Gini coefficient of zero sttes complete quality, while one of 1 the opposite. The highest Gini according tot he CIA World Factbook was 0,63, while the lowest was 0.24.

police, no white people, street dogs and music sounding from all the small houses. No paved sidewalks; often no paved streets at all. These are the two worlds, in one city, that people describe to me. Of course these visual differences reflect the structural inequalities that limit young people's ability to achieve social mobility and the kind of good life they aspire to. The young people from La Popa make sense of these inequalities in reference to history.[55]

The Pozón youth were also critical of social structures in Cartagena. Their discussions about the problems and limitations surrounding the achievement of a good life focused around respect and tolerance.

"What is respect? Isn't it a place where we are all equal? … a place where we are all equal, independent of nationality, race, skin colour or accent. […] There are many examples where people cannot enter discotheques for their skin colour or where people look down to other people because of their lower social class. If you are from Pozón and you want to go to a party in Bocagrande, the people there look down on you because you are from Pozón."

The young people from Pozón discussed inequalities with a slightly different focus to the youth from La Popa, although the links to the reproduction of historical colonial structures were still implicitly part of their statements. The main constraints for achieving a good life that they identified were linked to the stigmatisation and exclusion they experience in everyday spaces. James refers to skin colour in the statement above, but also to class. Pozón is well known as one of the most violent and poor barrios in the city (cf. Goyenche González et al., 2013). Young men in particular are generally labelled as dangerous. Friends I know from Crespo, a well off neighbourhood, were always worrying about my safety in Pozón; an area they would never go because they think it is too dangerous to enter. Fears like those of my friends create a distance between social classes. My participants had never been related to any gang or criminal activity, but experience stigmatisation nonetheless. For James and his friends respect and tolerance are related to equality. The

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[55] For more information about the contextual background of Cartagena please see chapter 2

problem from the young peoples' point of view is that stigmatisation prevents them from entering employment and achieving upward social mobility.

Andreas: "sometimes because they have more money they look down on you. And it is the same at workplaces. If you say you come from Pozón or from Olaya or from one of the barrios populares they treat you like you are a thief and in a company those who have been working for more time there say about you to their boss "be careful that he won't rob you or do anything to you." This is how we the weaker class have to endure this."

Additionally Miguel argues that this exclusion is intentional so that the powerful class can maintain their position in Cartagena.

Miguel: "The superior class doesn't want that the inferior class advances. The class with the money does not want that the lower class rises because they want to keep their things. So many times they do not let somebody climb up in the working life."

Miguel demonstrates that he understands how power structures work in Cartagena, how class privileges create a social hierarchy which sets the opportunity structures that the young people must contend with as they navigate towards their desired futures.

The young people from Pozón and La Popa present a clear picture and definition of what they believe a good life to be, and what the drivers to achieve upward social mobility are. Being comfortable with oneself, meeting basic material needs, living in safety and in close relationship with family are important aspects of a good life. The important drivers of the achievement of a good life are access to quality education and to the necessary social capital that enables one to enter employment. The young people also mentioned the limitations and constraints that they experience on their pathway to upward social mobility and a good life. The social structures linked to the colonial past of Cartagena are still reproducing inequalities based on race and class. Invisible ceilings exist that are difficult for people from barrios populares to break through. They are stigmatised. None of these limitations and constraints mean however that the young people do not aspire to a good life and to upward social mobility.

5   Concluding Remarks

I started this chapter by presenting James and his explanation of his future plans. I used his example to illustrate how aspirations are linked to habitus, acquiring capitals and young people's past and present experiences in their social spaces. Aspirations are further perceived as a means to achieve a good life that consists, according to the young people of my study, of stability and security in financial and relational terms. I continued by presenting further examples of La Popa young people's aspirations. In contrast to arguments that young people lack aspirations, and that their social immobility is a consequence of this lack, I argue that it is rather navigational capacity and structural constraints that create social (im)mobility. Looking at the young peoples' understandings of a good life, it becomes clear that it is important to consider that concept as multidimensional, one that includes material and relational facets. Access to resources such as quality education and social capital, historical structures and stigmatisation, were all identified by the young people in my study as factors that affected their progress towards the achievement of a good life. But, instead of accepting their disadvantaged conditions and reproducing them, the young people counteract and resist them by re-evaluating their options at different points on their paths.

This is the first empirical chapter of my thesis and has therefore had several objectives. First, when talking about aspirations as a means to achieve social mobility and a good life it has been necessary to define how a good life is understood in this thesis. While there are many ways to define the concept of a good life, from different perspectives, I let the young people define what they perceived is a good life for them and what they wanted to achieve in the future. The discussion illustrated that the most important aspect of a good life is stability. Stability from three main aspects: Financial stability because having a stable income provides security in terms of being able to provide for the family and cover one's material needs. Relational stability, in terms of being good with one's family and social environment; a core aspect because it provides one with peace and calmness and a social network that can support one when needed. Having a stable relational network is further linked to security. A good life is where one is secure and not threatened by violence and danger. Aspirations such as occupational and educational aspirations can then be a means

to achieve this end of a good life; a good education and occupation to provide the stable income, for instance. Aspirations can act then as a navigational capacity and are closely linked to one's social spaces and their influences. Those young people who have developed a plan to achieve their aspirations are then perceived as having a well-developed navigational capacity and as trying to alter their social conditions to achieve upward social mobility in the future. Hannes, for example, has a clear plan for the job he is studying for, and about his desired future living conditions.

This chapter has indicated that discrimination, exclusion and stigmatisation are important limiting factors on young people achieving what they see as a good life. These are based on their belonging to a certain social background with distinct historical roots. Belonging to a certain group of people and to a certain neighbourhood influences the way young people can develop their navigational capacity and negotiate their future trajectories. These are the topics I will analyse in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: A Sense of Belonging and Its Influence on Aspiration Navigation

We are at the NGO in Santa Rita, an area of La Popa. I am with Jessi, one of the girls from La Popa, waiting for the other young people from my La Popa group to join us. We are sitting at the rear of the NGO's property, on a bench in the sun. The rest of the young people join us, having finished taking part in an event running at the NGO that day. I have been working with this group for a couple of months now, I have visited most of their homes to do interviews, or just to hang out with them in order to obtain a sense of their social environment. We know each other well. While I perceive my relationship with many of the young people to be very good, I still sometimes feel disconnected. On some occasions when I spend time with the La Popa youth, moments such as today, it feels more difficult to have natural, flowing conversations. The young people start talking about their everyday lives. As they talk I realise many of them do not see each other much anymore because they have started working or studying. I sit a bit outside of their circle and observe them. I try to ask questions and participate in their conversations but I find it hard. They are 10 years younger than me and I am out of touch with the things they are talking about. I feel like a stranger in that moment, and I am frustrated that after all these weeks I still cannot feel the same connection that I do with the Pozón youth. Right now I am the white European researcher, I do not belong to this group. I do not know the rules of their game well enough to be included in it. A few hours later we begin a tour to the church of La Popa at the top of the hill that overlooks the La Popa barrios. We travel together in a traditional bus called a 'Chiva'. I manage to sit next to Hannes and Patricia and start asking questions about who lives in the barrios we pass on our way up the hill. They include me more now, even though they mainly just want me to take pictures of them.

Another day in Pozón I meet James and Larson at James' house. We decide to spend the day together, going on a walking tour through Pozón. We start at James' street and follow the main street down to a little market. There, Larson picks a couple of fruits and asks me if I know them. I have never seen the fruits before in my life. Larson and James enjoy teaching me about the fruits in Colombia. Our relationship improves from day to day, as we share times like these. We continue to a place in Pozón that I had not been to before. It

is close to the Western end of the neighbourhood. We stop at the end of an unpaved road. Suddenly a girl appears. It takes me a couple of seconds to realise it is Clara, a girl I know from the youth festival events that have taken place in Pozón over the last few weeks. She immediately recognises me, starts talking and then unexpectedly criticises the appearance of my eyebrows, and Larson's as well. Clara says she does not like it when they are messy. Irritated at first I then realise how much Clara's criticism is a sign of my acceptance amongst the Pozón youth. We continue our tour with Clara and, while the boys walk ahead, Clara and I talk about her past and present situation in Pozón and how she is coping with living in one of the sectors where her mobility is restricted when it rains. In this moment I do not feel like a complete outsider; it feels natural walking in the neighbourhood and talking to Clara about her life.

I am closer to the Pozon youth, we talk and share more, and there exist fewer boundaries between us. They include me, explaining to me what they are talking about when we are in a group, or when they make jokes between each other. They try to share their world with me as much as possible. We cook together, go to events and just hang out at their houses. I do not feel excluded at any time. I do not feel like the white European researcher, but rather like a new member of their group realising that my skin colour and appearance is different from theirs only when we explicitly talk about it, or when people in the street look at us. The reasons for the difference in the dynamic between myself and Pozón youth and myself and the La Popa youth are diverse. The group dynamic between the Pozón youth is different to that between the youth in La Popa. Being far away from the city centre in a residential area creates immobility amongst the Pozón youth, while in La Popa many young people regularly spend time in other places outside their neighbourhood. My own mobility in Pozón is greater than in La Popa for reasons of security. I always find one of the Pozón youth to help me to find my way around. I also started working with the Pozón youth earlier in my fieldwork, and spent more time with them in total. The local NGO in Pozón included me more than the NGO in La Popa in the events they ran too, events such as a week-long youth festival.

Miller (2003) argues that the concept of belonging is a part of what constitutes our identity and connects us relationally to other people. During my fieldwork there existed a

difference in my sense of identity, depending on what group of young people I was with, and what we were doing. In the first example, with the La Popa youth, I felt like an outsider, the white European researcher, while in the second example I felt included and connected, like someone who belongs with the young people from Pozón. May (2013: 78) defines belonging as 'a feeling at ease with oneself and one's social, cultural, relational and material contexts'. I felt I belonged in Pozón. May understands belonging as a relational concept that connects people, culture and material surroundings, to habitus, the way one thinks and acts. A sense of belonging provides a person with a feel for the game, giving them an idea of what to do and when and how(Bourdieu, 1977: 161, cited in May, 2013). This feeling of knowing the rules of the game and of belonging influenced my preference for the spaces and places I wanted to move in. I am not suggesting that I did not want to hang out with the young people of La Popa, the point is rather that the sense of belonging I had in Pozón made it easier for me to hang out with the youth there. A sense of belonging also affects the young people's efforts to enter places and spaces in similar ways. A sense of belonging may influence young people's navigational capacity to achieve their aspirations, affecting the places and spaces they choose to move in or desire to enter.

In this chapter I investigate the influence of a sense of belonging on the young people's aspirations, and their navigational capacity to attain them. Having discussed in the last chapter the young people's understandings of a good life, and the aspirations they held as means to achieve them, this chapter considers how these aspirations are affected by the young people's sense of belonging to certain spaces and places. My own sense of belonging or not belonging during the fieldwork made me feel more or less comfortable, and I am interested how similar feelings influence the young people and what they aspire to in the future (May, 2013).

Prince (2013: 698) argues that the social environment is a crucial part of identity creation and that place-based experiences, a sense of belonging, can be internalised and influence young people's imagined future selves. Belonging, according to May (2013) is a concept that helps to make sense of the link between the self and society from a subjective perspective. It also helps explain how people engage with social structures in their everyday lives. The data I present here demonstrates how a sense of belonging to

particular places can have a negative and/or positive impact on the social mobility of the young people in the study. The chapter is about a sense of *not* belonging to certain spaces and places and groups of people, as well as sense of belonging to others.

Therefore this chapter is comprised of several different foci. It introduces the theoretical links between aspirations for social and geographical mobility and a sense of belonging; how a sense of belonging is linked to habitus and class culture in a society and how this sense of belonging can enable but also constrain social and geographical mobility. The second part of the chapter discusses how belonging and the sense of not belonging influenced the young people's aspirations and navigational capacity. Some spaces provide the young people with a feeling of comfort, while there are other spaces that are so uncomfortable that they are not entered at all. For example, the young Cartagenians were, consciously or sub-consciously, aware that they did not have the habitus to move in certain neighbourhoods; they were of a social class that did not belong, labelled as 'bad' or 'dangerous'.

1   A Sense of Belonging

Aspirations, and the ways young people conceive their imagined future selves, are connected to the social spaces of their everyday lives, and to how confident and comfortable they feel moving in them. As illustrated in the previous chapter in relation to James and his experiences and aspirations, this feeling of being comfortable and confident in social spaces is related to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, defined as a system of dispositions that provides one with the knowledge of the norms and values of social fields; having what he calls 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1993: 72). In spaces where people's habitus corresponds with their social surroundings they feel at ease, that is, they have a sense of belonging as they know what to do, how and when (Bourdieu, 1977, May, 2013). By contrast, in spaces or fields where their habitus does not correspond with the space or field, people feel uncomfortable, and might not be able to persist to a point where they master the game, seeking to move socially and spatially to relieve their discomfort (Savage et al., 2005: 9).

A sense of belonging incorporates two main, interrelated aspects, a place attachment that gives meaning to a particular geographical place (Relph, 1976, Miller, 2003) and a social attachment one has to people within these places (Cuervo and Wyn, 2014). Relph (1976) argues that people give meaning to places over the time they have spent in them, creating rootedness or attachment because of their experiences in those places. Places can act as a secure point from where to look out into the world, and simultaneously know one's own position in it. Leach (2002: 286) argues similarly, that a sense of belonging is created through moving through spaces and giving meaning to them, while Tilley (1994) asserts that a sense of self is bound up with places and that these places are a crucial part of building identity. Belonging is then more than just a feeling of being comfortable in a place or space, it is a part of one's identity (Miller, 2003: 217).

Focusing on young people and their sense of belonging, Cuervo and Wyn (2014) discuss how the concept of belonging has been used to understand the impact of social change on young people. They argue that belonging emphasises the importance of the relationships between young people and the people that inhabit the social contexts they move in. Such important relationships include ties to family, friends and neighbours. These relationships create a sense of belonging, and in turn influence decisions young people make (Cuervo and Wyn, 2014). More specifically, belonging to a place is linked to being known in a place and to having social capital (Visser et al., 2014). Being known in a place and having social capital therefore affects how young people imagine their future selves and what they aspire to.

A sense of belonging is not independent from one's habitus, but their interrelation can impact people's behaviour in different ways. Apart from a feeling of knowing what to do, how and when, a sense of belonging can maintain social order to certain people's disadvantage. Bourdieu (1989: 17) argues:

"It is this sense of one's place which in interaction, leads people […] to keep their common place, and the others to 'keep their distance,' to 'maintain their rank', and to 'not get familiar'."

His notion of sense of place identifies the fact that a sense of belonging tends to keep people where their habitus corresponds. People with similar systems of dispositions tend to inhabit geographical places close to each other and keep their distance from those places that require a different habitus (Bourdieu, 1989: 17). This can help to reproduce class systems, and lead to the exclusion of people from classes who do *not* 'belong' in certain spaces and places (cf. Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, Bourdieu, 1989). A sense of belonging is therefore not only created through a feeling of similarity, but also through a sense of dissimilarity and the feeling of *not* belonging. In a society with a class system such as that which exists in Cartagena, not everyone is 'allowed' to belong in certain places and spaces. Exclusion is reinforced through labelling certain groups of people in a society, creating a system of stigmatisation by ascribing negative characteristics to groups of people and/or their places. For instance, labelling a barrio of Cartagena as particularly violent stigmatises the people living in it. Power and its distribution amongst certain classes and groups of people is in this way linked to belonging. Belonging influences whether certain people are able to participate in decision making in society, and contribute to its construction in political and cultural senses.

With respect to aspirations, a sense of belonging may impact young people in different ways. On the one hand, it can provide young people with a feeling of safety and comfort. On the other hand, it can constrain young people's social and spatial mobility. There can be a tension between a positive feeling of belonging to a place and space, and a negative feeling of exclusion and stigmatisation *because* they belong to those particular places and spaces. The aspirations of young people are formed in the midst of this tension. Their sense of belonging needs to be explored in relation to both social class and to the attachments the young people have to particular places and spaces, including their specific relational aspects.

2   Belonging and Aspirations

I arrive at Magda's house. It is just one street across from the NGO in La Popa. It is a small unpaved road but because it is so close to the main street I am able to visit her house

regularly on my own. Magda just got up so I sit with her mother in the front room. Her mother is an impressive person. She works for the NGO and other local organisations campaigning for women's rights. She tells me about her travels with her work. Because I have only seen Magda and her mother in the house I ask if it is only the two of them that live there. She tells me that this is the case. I am surprised as it is very uncommon for only two women to live together in a house in a barrio popular. Magda's mother tells me that when she is travelling her brother comes to stay at the house, as Magda cannot stay there alone at night. She explains that it is possible that someone might try to get into the house and rob them:

"Just the other day a man was up the roof and Jessie from the opposite house could see him and yelled over that there is someone on my roof and tries to get in. Then once she yelled the neighbours came out as well and the man on the roof escaped as he got scared."

I ask her how often this happens. Magda's mother looks at me and says in a resigned tone that it is normal, and happens all the time, in all the barrios populares.

My short conversation with Magda's mother was interesting. She explained to me how important relationships with your neighbours are, the fact that good relations with them increases security. It also demonstrated that belonging to a barrio and knowing people there creates a sense of community. However, Magda's mother also said that all barrios populares have problems with robberies and violence, a simplified stereotype of the barrios populares as dangerous and unsafe. Belonging to such barrios affects young people in different ways and influences their aspirations for the future in different ways as well. I discuss these influences in the next three sections with focuses on stigmatisation, the importance of community networks and of feelings of exclusion. In what follows I also refer back to the context chapter, as the topic of belonging is closely linked to the colonial structures of power and class that I described there.

3   Exclusion, Stigmatisation and Not Belonging

The majority of young people in my study have grown up in their barrio and have never lived in other areas of the city. They are emotionally connected to their neighbourhoods

and they know every corner of them. James and Larson could explain to me exactly where their friends lived, who their neighbours were, and how to get to places the fastest ways. They were also connected in a relational sense, to significant others, having long lasting relationships with their neighbours and other young people living close by. Neither La Popa and Pozón were without problems however. They are disconnected to different extents from the rest of Cartagena. Living up the hill of La Popa, in the barrio Pablo Sexto II, means living without public transport. Living in Pozón on the other hand means being far away from the city centre and the beaches, safe recreational places, and the public university, and a lot of free cultural events, that are located in the city centre or close it.

Both barrios have security problems, but Pozón is stigmatised by the media more than La Popa. The media presents the barrio as the most violent in the city. City council reports confirm this, collected numbers of homicides in the city per month per barrio indicating Pozón does see the most murders of all Cartagena's barrio populares (Goyenche González et al., 2013). The pictures below are examples of front pages of the daily tabloid newspaper 'Q'hubo'. It is widely read in Cartagena, particularly by people from barrios populares, but not exclusively. The first front page states that there are three more dead in three different barrios populares. One of the deaths has occurred in Pozón. The second front page states that a contract murder left him (the little boy in the photo) without a father. The murder happened in Pozón. Such coverage of Pozón creates a dramatic and violent picture of the neighbourhood. People living in neighbourhoods like Pozón are either presented as helpless victims or as dangerous perpetrators of murder and other serious crimes.

Picture 11 - Title Pages of Newspaper Q'hubo Cartagena[56]

[56] Source: http://issuu.com/qhubocartagena/docs/q_hubo_cartagena_25_de_julio_de_2012

La Popa is closer to the city centre than Pozón and offers young people more recreational possibilities, and easier access to the events that take place in the historical centre of Cartagena. Nonetheless, particular areas of La Popa are well known for gang activity as well, and the two best known and oldest gangs in Cartagena occupy areas of the hill of La Popa. Still, homicide rates in La Popa are much lower than in Pozón, and the area gets less coverage in the media. La Popa is more affected by problems to do with regular, small robberies and muggings than serious crimes like murders. Pozón is by contrast more affected by serious gang violence, which comes in waves that hinder even the most basic task of everyday life in certain parts of the barrio.

As I described in the context chapter, Cartagena is named the city of contrasts and every year during the Independence Day celebrations the media discusses the two Cartagenas, and the respective living conditions within them. The white population inhabits one of the Cartagena's, safe and wealthy, while the other city is the one that Afro-Colombians live in, marked by poverty and crime. This kind of coverage creates a sense of belonging for the young people. They see themselves as part of the poor, dangerous Cartagena. The embodiment of structures and discourses in the media affects the aspirations young people develop. The embodiment can be unconscious and conscious. It can prompt the young people to want to protect themselves by avoiding spaces and places that contain groups of people or social classes different to their own. James told me about his experiences at university when he started his studies:

"At university it is a bit complicated and sometimes I felt ashamed to say where I am from. I thought of just saying I am from Manga or Crespo (richer barrios). When I told my friends where I am from and where I spend my free time, some of them looked at me different. […] There exist many prejudices."

James experienced how the labelling of a neighbourhood can translate into the stereotyping of young people. This stereotyping can create a feeling of shame, and emotional vulnerability. In some cases this can have significant influence over young people's choices, and can constrain their navigational capacity; young people self-protect and do not take advantage of certain chances that become available to them (Stahl, 2015). Reynolds (2013) demonstrates this dynamic in her study of black young people and their

social mobility in London. In the study a young black boy decided against studying at a university with a high reputation because the majority of students are white and he felt he would not belong there.

Low (2009) argues that places and spaces are always embodied and inscribe emotion, attachment and specific perceptions. This notion of embodied space is closely linked to Bourdieu's concept of habitus and how the structures of spaces are internalised into habitus. However, it also refers to an internalisation of place attachment, which is linked to the representation of a place in relation to other places. Place can therefore produce tensions that come from belonging to a place that is negatively compared, stereotyped and stigmatised in relation to others (Prince, 2013: 698). James, however, counteracts the stereotypes and stigmatisation through exercising agency (Bandura et al., 2001). He studies at a private University and is reluctant to embody the stereotypes of his neighbourhood as he tries to follow his chosen pathway toward achieving his aspirations. He is aware of how Pozón is labelled and the challenges he faces being from there.

"There are many prejudices. Sometimes because here (in Pozón) they murdered one, they think we are all murderers. Or they think we are drug addicts and thieves because this happens here. Just for living here they think you are this. However sometimes when I say I am from Pozón they don't believe me that I am."

His last sentence alludes to the fact that once his peers had the chance to get to know him, James transformed their picture of him, challenging the structures that constrained him initially and building new social capital in the form of friendships with students from richer backgrounds. Being at a private university with predominantly students from higher social classes can be intimidating coming from a lower class barrio such as Pozón. The stigmatisation that can result from coming from Pozón can be a barrier and may limit the aspirations of young people. In James' case however, he overcame his fears of stigmatisation and managed to build friendships at university with students from other areas of the city.

Massey (2009) states that space is a relational concept, and that it is filled with power relationships. Many barrios populares in Cartagena are stereotyped and stigmatised, and

this is certainly true of Pozón. Security issues, poverty and racism are forces that influence the young people and their aspirations through negotiating their feeling of belonging and comparing the social representation of their barrio and thus part of their identity in relation to others (Prince, 2013).

While Pozón is one of the most stereotyped areas of Cartagena, La Popa youth experience similar challenges to their peers in Pozón because their neighbourhood as well is labelled negatively. Barrio populares do have more crime and social problems than richer barrios. Categorising them into barrios populares does however create a stigmatising effect. Many negative, intersecting factors are attached to barrios populares but not to neighbourhoods classified as barrios. Some of the most important of these intersecting factors are socioeconomic stratification, the classification of estratos, the poverty level of the neighbourhood, the location of the neighbourhood and the race of inhabitants. Hannes explained to me:

"Just because you are from one of the stigmatised barrios, they say what person you are and they do not give you the possibility to get to know them and they you, even though they are so many times wrong with their perception."

Hannes explained how certain, often intersecting, characteristics are assigned to people from barrios populares, constraining their possibilities or power to alter this picture. Being labelled in this way creates an impression amongst the young people that they have no chance to exercise their agency to counteract the images that are attached to them. This can in turn lead to them to avoid certain places and spaces of fear of experiencing exclusion. Their aspiration window is thus limited (Ray, 2006)[57]. Santiago, from Pozón, for instance, explains how Cartagena is divided by a class culture. In contrast to James, he tells me that he is afraid of entering private university, as he believes that the people from higher social classes look down on people from barrios populares; he is afraid of experiencing this kind of exclusion and stigmatisation.

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[57] Aspiration window: a concept explained in chapter 5.

"At university or at work maybe, people like us have this exclusion in society because people are not used to see the bad things we are living in. Here it is normal, sure. So now that they have decided Pozón is very dangerous, if I want to enter a private university, well there where the rich families send their kids, well they look at us from above. And when someone tries to find work and has his or her education, the companies look at you as well from above […] there are dangerous barrios, I admit that but sometimes the media and the people tell things that are not true. I mean I am not defending the bad things happening here, the barrio is dangerous and actually I do not like so much living here but it is also not that dangerous as they tell in the media."

Santiago and Hannes demonstrate how they are negotiating the stereotypes and the stigmas that are involved in belonging to a barrio popular. They are aware of the judgments made about them as residents of a barrio that is perceived as violent and dangerous. Both young people link the stigma they live with to the discourse about their barrio and, even though admitting that their barrio is dangerous and complicated, argue that the discourse about their barrios is exaggerated. Jensen and Christensen (2012) explore a Danish community and its relationship to migrants. They argue that the labelling of migrants through the media reinforces wider stigma and feeds into stereotypes of race and ethnicity; just the phenomenon that I have been describing in Cartagena. The difference is that in Cartagena stigma is not just limited to a single issue like migration, but to many intersecting factors, all of which are linked to the space and place of the barrio.

Katia (Pozón), for example, explains to me how people from barrios populares are perceived when entering the spaces of richer social classes such as the barrio Bocagrande. Being from a barrio popular, and of darker skin colour, is directly related to danger and other 'bad' characteristics, while a white person is perceived as safe and 'good'.

Katia (Pozón): "We have a lot of racism here in Cartagena. For example a white guy running is doing exercises but a black guy running has been robbing someone. Also they see a black guy smoking a cigarette and they think he is a gang member, if it is a white guy smoking he is nothing."

Listening to Katia's explanation of life in the city reminded me of Cartagena's colonial history and how people were classified into first and second-class people through their skin colour under Spanish rule. The fact that in contemporary Cartagena black people rarely belong to upper class barrios, and that they are perceived as dangerous and criminal, mirrors the racism of the past and reproduces it. JD from La Popa told me something similar to Katia, but based his statement on his own experience.

"One time we have been walking in these barrios (Bocagrande and surrounding) and as the police was there they saw us and because of our skin colour and how we are dressed they thought we were gang members or something like that. Therefore they told us to leave… and they almost took us (into custody)…so it was almost a conflict with them."

Discrimination in Cartagena is still connected to skin colour. The police JD met did not know anything more about him than the fact that he is black, which was apparently enough to ask him to leave the predominantly white area. Other young people told me similar stories; that they were denied access to discotheques in the historical centre or that they had problems in richer parts of the city with the police and inhabitants that live in those places. They were perceived as dangerous because of their appearance, their skin colour and dress. These stories show how the way people dress is a part of one's habitus and cultural capital, and confirms the argument Bourdieu (1989) made that habitus creates social class differences. People who belong to different classes are separated in a hierarchy of belonging where only those with the 'correct' habitus are allowed to belong to the dominant class. This spatial exclusion and discrimination has consequences for the young people's futures and desired future selves. While most of the Universities are based in rich areas of the city, and work places are dominated by people from richer parts of the city, young people may be in danger of being excluded from life chances connected to these institutions, or may exclude themselves because they want to protect themselves from emotional harm. In this way the stigmatisation of the young people in Cartagena is linked to belonging to places. There exists what Bourdieu calls a sense of place, one which creates a hierarchy of belonging and *not* belonging, linked to particular characteristics of a person's identity (Bourdieu, 1989, Foster and Spencer, 2010, France et al., 2012, Fraser,

2013, Gale and Parker, 2015). This sense of belonging, once internalised into one's habitus, can negatively impact on young people's imagined future selves.

However the young people of my study also presented a significant degree of agency resisting media discourses and countering their stigmatisation. The young Cartagenians distance themselves and their significant relationships within the barrio from violent and illegal activities and from the stigma related to it. They express a sense of belonging to their area but not to the aspects of it they regard as being negative. Some of them demonstrate agency by distancing themselves from spaces where they do not feel they would fit in. Santiago was afraid of the social and emotional consequences for him if he were to enter university for example. A sense of belonging in this way produces on the one hand a feeling of being at ease in one's social context, where one's habitus and characteristics such as appearance correspond with the field. On the other hand it can constrain young people's life chances, because they cannot enter or do not want to enter upon pathways that would allow them higher social mobility. Having discussed the relationship between a sense of belonging and stigmatisation in this section, I explore another important aspect of belonging in the next section.

4   The Importance of Being Known and of Familiar Structures

In the last section I discussed the interrelation of belonging and habitus, stigmatisation, and their consequences for young people's aspirations. While the stereotyping of barrios populares as violent, dangerous places is exaggerated in the media that does not mean that violence and crime do not exist in barrios populares. Miguel explained to me that while the stereotypes of Pozón are exaggerated, its problems are real. He admitted it would be dangerous for a person to enter the barrio if they were not known there.

"Maybe if I were from Manga (rich barrio), not for any price I would come here to Pozón… We are labelled like gang members, like a dangerous barrio, even though we are not. Maybe a bit but not as much as they say and label us."

Similar to those people that featured in a study by Visser et al. (2014) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, the young people in my study were aware of the security problems in their

neighbourhood, and were used to the stigma of being from a dangerous place. One way they counteracted this stigma was by emphasising that there were good and bad sectors within the barrio, and that their own living spaces were in the good sectors of the barrio. Sectors are official divisions within the barrios, smaller and comparable to a postcode system.

James: "*It is a quiet (here synonym for safe) sector in comparison to the rest of the barrio. Maybe the sectors that are more distant [...] they are a bit more insecure. I don't say it is great to live here but here never happened anything. [...] there are, like in every barrio, problems because of poverty but it is quite safe. In all my 21 years I lived here never has anything happened to me.*"

As well as separating the barrio into safe and unsafe sectors, like James, and distancing himself from the dangerous zones, Hannes also elaborated on the importance of social networks. He explained that he lives in a dangerous barrio, but that knowing the people around him gives him some security.

"*Well, it (the barrio) is perceived as a dangerous barrio where I live. There are gangs and all this stuff, although not all (people of the barrio) are like this (the gangs and crime). You know that here you get to know the bad things but it has also good things here. For example my neighbours, well my neighbours and we, we actually grew up together since we were small. Therefore there do not exist any rivalries or things like that. We treat them like family and they us as well. Like cousins and brothers, you know what I mean? Therefore there always has been trust between us. Even though in the barrio exist bad things such as gangs and drugs and things like that.*"

Hannes was aware of the problems in his barrio: *gangs, robberies and all these things*. But he shifted the focus to the other kinds of relationships people have to each other as we talked. He grew up with certain people and they learnt to trust each other. In referencing this social network Hannes drew attention to the fact that people within it are categorised differently from people who are not part of it. The relationships within these networks are perceived as 'good'; people that share in them call each other by the titles of family, like cousin and brother, demonstrating the affection and trust that exist between them. Using

this categorisation, Hannes was able to create a distinction between 'them' and 'us' within his barrio. The 'good' 'us', family, and the 'bad' 'them', the people who are involved in crime and illegal activities.

However, these networks are not only important for the young people as ways in which they can distance themselves from 'bad' and fight their own stigmatisation. The networks are, more importantly, security networks that guarantee safety and spatial mobility in the barrio. Lenard, from one of the parts of La Popa that is most often described as a dangerous and difficult area to live in described his barrio and his relationships to people within it in the following way:

"It is a barrio popular and it is characterised in the universal form, like one of the barrios that are dangerous because of people who are in gangs, because of the drugs that the kids sell and take (the young people in gangs)."

Lenard, like Hannes, explained that his barrio is dangerous and has problems with gangs and drugs. He further explained that these are the kinds of problems all barrios populares have - they are universal. However, as he continued to talk to me about his barrio he referred to the fact that because he has been living there a long time he has been able to create a safety network for himself.

"Yes, I can walk freely because they know me and they know where I live. I have lived here for many years so they do not get involved with me or make any problems or any of this. I mean I don't want to say they never rob you or nothing will happen to you. There is always the chance that a fight develops at any moment or a problem comes up. But in general one can walk easily and safely through the streets here like in other barrios."

Lenard, like Hannes, created a dichotomy of 'them', the 'bad' ones, and 'us' the 'good' people. He also explained the importance of being known for being safe, that belonging to a place involves having the social capital to live and move safely in it (see also Visser et al., 2014).

As I did tours with the young people around their barrios, I learnt fast that I was not allowed in certain parts of them alone, even in daytime. The young people impressed upon me that I needed to have at least one of them with me should I want to enter these places.

Being a white European woman made me an easy target for robberies, as it was obvious I was not from the barrio. But moving through the barrios populares is not that easy even for people from Cartagena. It is dangerous for anyone without significant relationships within a particular barrios populares to go there.

The trust networks the young people described in Pozón and La Popa are typical of all the barrios populares in Cartagena, and probably for many other barrios in poorer regions of Latin America (for a comparison to poor barrios in Brazil see for example Perlman, 2003, Perlman, 2010)[58]. Being known is essential to safety in a barrio popular, and being connected to people is an important part of living within them.

James admitted that even though he belongs to a barrio popular, there are still spatial boundaries on his movements, places he does not like to go within the barrio. He explained that this is because he does not have relationships to other people there. The fact that he could walk freely in certain areas and not in others was dependent on how familiar he was with a particular area and the people there.

"[…] here the people have lived for more than 20 years, therefore although there can be conflicts, like an argument, people know each other […] Yes here is a security problem. I lived all my life here and it could be because they know me here that nothing happens to me. […] I walk here completely safe but if I go further up to the end I am not safe."

The link between being known and safety has been observed in contexts away from South America. Reay and Lucey (2000) illustrate a similar point to the one I am making in this section, describing how children in deprived areas of Britain feel how being known is a crucial part of negotiating life in their neighbourhood. Like the young people in my study they create contrasts of 'good' and 'bad', as well as 'us' and 'them', stating that nothing could happen to them in their area, as they are known there. It does not matter that there are people living nearby who engage in criminal activity. Like the young people in Reay and Lucey's study, the youth in La Popa and Pozón could give examples of what might happen

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[58] Perlman discusses marginality in Brazilian favelas. That works bears many similarities with my own work on the social structures of barrios populares in Cartagena.

if you were not known in an area. Miguel recalled the following experience, which took place when he visited another barrio:

"I don't know how it is in Manga or Bocagrande but if you enter Olaya and you are not from there it is very likely that you get robbed. In Olaya they took my cell phone from me. It was a drunk person and he had nothing left (money) to drink more so he told me to give him my cell phone. The people at the supermarket all saw that but (they did) nothing."

Miguel did not have any social capital in Olaya, a barrio popular next to Pozón. Social capital can work as a resource to help young people get into university and find a job, but it can also provide young people from La Popa and Pozón with emotional support and a feeling of safety (Visser et al., 2014).

The feeling of being known is connected to a sense of belonging. It provided the young people of both La Popa and Pozón with the ability to move comfortably and freely through their barrio. Security problems, and how these influenced the young Cartagenians' aspirations for spatial mobility, will be discussed further in the next chapter. However, as I have already mentioned, belonging was not experienced by the young people as a purely positive condition. The young people touched on the tensions involved in belonging to a barrio popular when they expressed their aspirations for the future, and the kind of barrio they would want to live in later in life. While James told me that he appreciates the unity of people in his neighbourhood and the support he gets from them, he also admitted that he aspires to live in another barrio.

"Pozón is a rich and poor barrio. Bad because of two things: economic poverty and mental poverty. There are people who try not to enhance their life and don't think of tomorrow. And rich because there are also people who fight for a better life [...] Yeah, I would like to leave this barrio and live maybe in 'Los Alpes', where my grandparents and uncles live. It is a better barrio. I don't say I want to live in Bocagrande because this would be too much to ask for but if one gives the opportunity I would do it. Even though in this sector there is not so much violence, in general there is in the barrio, and I don't want my brother growing up here in this [...] I also would like to live in Getsemani. It is a barrio popular but also has a lot of culture and history which I like [...] However, the most important thing is to live in a quiet

and safe place in the future, [...] although I would never forget my barrio and come back and visit as I spent all my life here."

James expressed his emotional connection to the people in his barrio, and to the geographical place itself. James grew up in the barrio and feels safe and at ease in the space. But he also aspires to move somewhere else. The barrios he mentioned are safer and quieter than Pozón. These are the kind of conditions that all the young people mentioned aspiring to live in in the future. James stated clearly that he aspires to live in a safe place; he would want to know his family would be safe, and not to have to worry about his younger brother. James expressed a tension between this wish to leave Pozón and a sense of responsibility to it; he stated he would come back and not forget about the barrio and the people there.

In La Popa, Lenard also prioritised the goal of living in a quiet place, safer than his own barrio; if he could choose where to live he said he would prefer to live in Manga, Crespo or Canapote. These are all barrios that are much safer, quieter and wealthier than La Popa. Crespo and Manga are particularly good barrios; made up of houses of estratos four to six. Safety and quietness were important considerations for Lenard as he thought about his future living conditions. He stated that even though people know him in La Popa, he felt something could still happen to him.

"Exactly quietness and the possibility to go out or stand at the door of your house until whatever time you want. Here you cannot do this because there are people in the barrio that even though they know you they still can take your things from you they can terrify you in some way. It is therefore not normal that people hang out outside their door at late hours in barrios like this, knowing what can happen to you. If I could choose another barrio it would be one that is quieter and safer, where you can walk freely [...] in Canapote it is quieter, Crespo and Manga are. Here, however, from this house three houses downwards or upwards you have this noise pollution, especially on weekends. Sometimes when I need to study for my university exams I do that in the night, assuming it would be quiet and then there is this (music) equipment making noise at nights until two or three o'clock."

Lenard aspired to an environment that offers him more security than La Popa, but also less noise so that he might be able to study more effectively in order to realise his educational and occupational aspirations. He felt his living environment at the time I spoke with him was constraining his ability to realise these aspirations.

Not all the young people wanted to leave their neighbourhoods in the future however; there was a balance between young people who wanted to do so and those who expressed a preference for staying where they were. Many of the latter also expressed the wish for change in the barrio itself, that their living conditions might improve without having to move. Miguel, for example, spoke highly of his barrio Pozón and, even though he was aware of the problems the barrio had in terms of violence and crime, believed that in the future the barrio would become a centre of commerce that would provide many opportunities to the people living there. He felt development would enhance social conditions and minimize crime in Pozón.

"Pozón is a neighbourhood in progress. I look at this neighbourhood like a visionary and think Pozón will be a commercial centre in the future. It has problems such as crime and gangs but this will go by. [...] At this moment it is not the best neighbourhood but life is not bad here."

The various statements the young people made showed how a sense of belonging can make it difficult for them to imagine and negotiate where to live in the future. As Relph (1976) argues, the neighbourhood is the young people's 'home' where they have their roots and relationships to other significant people. They know the barrio and feel connected and at ease there (May, 2011). This is a factor many young people mentioned when I asked them where they wanted to live in the future. Miguel mentioned that:

"One has to learn to love their land. There are other neighbourhoods like los Alpes, San Fernando and Manga and they live well with their luxury but one is getting used to how things work here where one is born and learns not to feel bad about it."

Other young people were not so equivocal, just highlighting the advantages they perceived of living in their barrio. For example, for Jessi, La Popa is the area she felt it would be best to live in in the future because of its location within the city:

"Well I have family who lives in different parts of Cartagena. And in all neighbourhoods it is same. But I think because of convenience and the area I live I would stay here because it is close to the centre. Many things change. One may move to a safer neighbourhood but is more distant (from the city centre), and because of the transport and all this."

Karla from Pozón, on the other hand, highlighted the relationships in the community as the reason she liked to live in the barrio. Pozón's distance from the city centre was not so much of a problem for her:

"I like to live here. I like the people here. Yes, you see fights and it is different to live here but I like my neighbourhood and the distance to the centre does not bother me. At least there is a bus that takes you everywhere."

The young people did not think their homes in the barrios were necessarily the best places to begin life from, but some felt that they had grown to belong there; getting attached to the place and used to the social conditions there, as Miguel said. James argued that he could feel at ease in other barrios as well, as long as they had similar structures to his own. James stated that he would like to live in Getsemani because it is a *barrio popular* like Pozón. His statements demonstrated the tension between his feeling of belonging in Pozón, and the feeling that perhaps he should leave people behind to move to a safer and quieter life in another barrio. His description of possible places to live in the future also demonstrated a sense of belonging to a wider culture of barrios populares the city, the fact that he felt it would be easier to live in some barrios than others.

Hannes, in contrast, had an opinion that sat between Miguel and James's. His two older siblings moved to Aruba, a Dutch Island in the Caribbean. His sister married and started a family there, and his brother decided to follow her and find work on the island. Hannes had visited them and I asked him if he had plans to go to Aruba to live permanently.

"Look, I have been there and you know things are very different from things here. I mean, things like the culture, the opportunities, you know what I mean? But, I have been there and still I appreciate Colombia and what it makes unique and when you leave the country, being Colombian, and being outside of Colombia, you hurt your own land, whatever it is you hurt your own land."

This statement suggests Hannes perceived that leaving the country would be wrong, detrimental to Colombia. For him, leaving the country like his siblings would be a form of betrayal. Hannes continued by telling me that he did not want to leave; he wanted to stay in Cartagena, albeit in another suburb that would offer him and his future family more security. In particular, he wanted his future children to live without the bad experiences he had in his barrio when he was younger. However, the barrio Hannes stated that he wanted to live in was still one of the lower estratos and not one like Manga, Bocagrande or the historical centre. The barrio would have similar culture and social structures to his current barrio. Unlike Miguel, Hannes did not seem to be concerned about improving his current barrio or changing the structures there.

The statements of the young people from both barrios illustrated a sense of place in a Bourdieusian sense, one that is connected to habitus and the power relations within certain places. While they had different ideas about their current barrios and about staying or leaving them, all the young Cartagenians in my study preferred the idea of living in similar cultural and structural environments to the ones they had grown up in. They preferred the structures of barrios populares, where community is important and associated social capital provides safety. This feeling of belonging to certain structures is linked to the habitus and the way young people had learnt rules and habits of living that are very different in from those learnt by members of other social classes living in Cartagena.

This was not just true of young people. I also interviewed adults in the young people's barrios to explore their sense of belonging to the barrios populares. Yoelis is one of these adults. She is from La Popa, where she has lived all her life. She worked at the NGO there at the time of my fieldwork. When I interviewed her she defended her barrio and the people living there, explaining that the crime in La Popa is not related to the people living in the barrio.

"Well, in my area 'los comuneros' (a part of La Popa), the barrio where I was born, it always has been considered as a dangerous barrio. However I always said, me having lived there almost all my life, that it is possible to say that the people who live there are not part of the gang culture we have there. They do not sell drugs and nothing of that stuff."

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When I asked her if she did not want to live somewhere else, maybe in a barrio of higher estratos, she answered that even though living conditions may be better in a richer barrio, she could not live in one of them because of the structures and dynamics that determine lifestyle.

"No, to be honest I have never seen me living in one of those barrios because I consider the dynamics in those are different. Their dynamics do not conform with the dynamics of a barrio popular and to what I am used to. I mean, where people know each other, where all people of the barrio help each other, where the neighbours know if something good or bad happens to you but where in a case of emergency they are also there to help you, where you feel accompanied. I think in barrios that are richer where people are supposed to be of higher estratos, there people almost never say hello to each other. Every single one is living in their own house and their relationships are very cold to each other. Thus I cannot imagine living there at all, in a barrio where you cannot talk to your neighbours, where you cannot have a life in a functional community."

Yoelis offered two important points in her narrative. First, that living in a barrio popular is about living within certain familiar structures, which inhabitant's habitus corresponds with; a point also made by the young people when they talked about where they would feel comfortable moving to if they were to leave their barrio. Second, Yoelis described how important it is for people to be connected with each other and have good relationships, a point that was also mentioned by the young people, both as an aspect of security and more generally as an aspect of a good life. The social structures of a richer barrio were perceived by Yoelis and the young people as being impersonal; people living in them were perceived to be disconnected from their neighbours without a strong community to rely on. Living in a barrio popular was thus perceived as being very different to living in a barrio of higher social class. These perceptions were linked to the identities of the people I interviewed. Their habitus, which included the form their relationships took in the barrio, would not match the field or space of the richer barrio, where people related differently, in more individualistic ways. Other adults I interviewed answered my questions about belonging similarly to Yoelis. For example Lena, a university professor who was living in a barrio popular next to Pozón explained to me that it is structures of community that make

you feel you belong in a barrio popular. She described how, when it rained and water entered her house, her neighbours called her at work and helped her clean up. This is something that Lena suggested would not happen often in richer areas of Cartagena. My own experiences living in richer and poorer parts of the city resonate with the story Lena told. I believe it is the structures of barrios, more than the social class of the people living there that creates the relational dynamics within them. Neighbourhoods where I lived in houses and not in apartment buildings consisted of the same structures that the youth in the barrios described. Even in Crespo, a richer area of Cartagena, I found neighbours had known each other for decades, and I saw a similar community structure to the ones young people described as being unique to the barrios populares. By contrast, my experience of living for a short while in an apartment building was very different. I did not know who my neighbours were. This indicates the physical structures of the spaces in the city were important in defining the kind of relationships people maintained in them.

Another factor that in my experience divided richer and poorer neighbourhoods was the size of houses in the respective areas. This was something that one of the young people, JD, also picked up on during a conversation I had with him. Living in a bigger house and in a good, safe and quiet place close to the beach was something that he expressed he would like. When I spoke with him he was living in La Popa with four siblings and his parents in a two-bedroom house. His desire for a big house was not accompanied by a desire to occupy the kind of social structures that he felt characterised the barrios where the bigger houses in Cartagena were located.

"So do you want to live like in one of those rich big houses close to the beach?"

JD: "Well, yes I like it, I like to live in a big house but not in these places."

"Why?"

JD: 'I don't know, it does not attract me completely. If I had the opportunity I would like to live in a house like this big but … like I like it […] I mean more than anything is influencing the way of living. Those people (rich people) don't have this cultural identity… I mean more than anything it is this, the cultural identity that is missing. Apart from this what interests

me most is living in a quiet place, thus if I had the opportunity to have a house and live quietly (in a sense of being noisy but also being safe) there I would go.'

JD explained to me how important his cultural identity was to him; being from a barrio popular and living within its social structures mattered to him. It was the knowledge of these structures, ways of living together in a community, which provided JD and many of the other young people in my study with a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging socially influenced their future living place aspirations as much as, if not more, than material considerations, like the idea of simply being able to live in a bigger house.

James mentioned that he would consider living in Bocagrande, but immediately, before finishing his sentence, suggested that this would be too much to expect. Bocagrande is a very rich barrio with high apartment buildings, which is close to the historical centre. It consists only of households of estrato six, and people living there are predominantly of white skin colour. Bocagrande, as one of the richer barrios, has different structures and requires a different habitus to the one James has cultivated living in Pozón. James' sense of belonging creates, in a Bourdieusian sense, a distance between himself and other social classes. This sense of belonging to a place is based on one's habitus, which provides one with a feeling of belonging to a space of similar habitus, but at the same time keeps people with different habitus distant. In other words, habitus provides the young people with a sense of where they belong but also, as Bourdieu (1989) argues, tells them simultaneously where they do *not* to belong. James, for example, felt strongly that he did not belong in Bocagrande and to aspire to live there is too much to expect. This position relates to what Miguel argued, that someone has to learn to love their neighbourhood and get used to living there, even get used to its problems. Miguel's and James' statements imply that their sense of belonging limits their aspirations; they seem to feel that there is little option but to live where they belong.

5   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I discussed how a sense of belonging influences the aspirations of the young people in my study. A sense of belonging is understood as a feeling of comfort or ease in

spaces and places, and includes a place attachment as well as relationships with people within a certain social environment. A sense of belonging is linked to habitus as it provides one with a sense of knowing what to do, when and how. Therefore belonging in this chapter has been understood as a part of one's identity, an embodied state, internalised through the structures of the spaces and places one moves through in the present and has moved through in the past.

A sense of belonging affects aspirations, by influencing the navigational capacity of the young people to achieve them. Aspirations, as a means to achieve what the young people define as a good life, are linked to one's social spaces, both those of the present and of the past. Belonging, as a mechanism that makes one comfortable and lets one know how to act, influences aspirations in three ways. First a sense of belonging influences aspirations by producing a feeling of exclusion and stigmatisation. In the cases of the young people in my study, belonging to their barrios populares, La Popa and Pozón, means they experience stigmatisation and exclusion. Cartagena is a segregated city whose colonial structures exclude young people from barrios populares from entering certain social spaces, and from accessing certain events and opportunities. Skin colour is still an important factor in this discriminative process; the young people are labelled 'bad' and 'dangerous' because of their race. The young people may develop feelings of fear because of their stigmatisation and try to protect themselves by not entering certain spaces. In particular they may feel disinclined to enter higher education spaces, especially those of private, higher education (Stahl, 2015). Habitus and a sense of belonging are intertwined and cannot be understood separately. Belonging creates a hierarchy, where habitus and social class determine who belongs and who does not. Secondly, a sense of belonging provides young people in La Popa and Pozón with social capital and community networks that help them to feel safe from the immediate dangers that surround them in the barrios. The networks also provide them with emotional support. Safety, and the ability to move easily are important contributing factors to the young people's confidence about themselves and about their futures. The third issue explored in this chapter was the sense the young people had that a sense of belonging is embedded in community structures, and that the structures of the barrio were better in many respects than those in other, richer neighbourhoods. The way

of life that exists in the barrios populares was perceived as important and desirable by the young people. JD even claimed that richer barrios lacked a cultural identity. The idea of living in barrios where structures are different and neighbours may not know each other was not that appealing to the young people in my study, and was not part of their idea of a good life. This is despite the fact that they recognised that people from richer barrios have more opportunities for social mobility. This is an example of the way in which a sense of belonging can create exclusion in an unconscious way through habitus. It can develop a hierarchy of belonging, where only those who belong and who know the rules of the game for particular places and spaces can realise certain life chances.

Chapter 6: Constraints on Spatial Mobility and Navigation within Neighbourhoods

1   The Journey to Pozón

It is a hot day in November. The seasonal winds do not start before the end of December and I walk to the bus station, which is on a big street next to the outer wall of the old city. There are a lot of cars and buses; I can choose between the yellow bus that says `Pozón' or a more colourful bus that says 'Crespo', in big letters all over the windscreen. I try to take the yellow bus; a friend told me it is faster and safer. There are many yellow buses; every single one of them serves a particular route to a particular destination. After a bit of searching and waiting I find a yellow bus that says 'Pozón' on a little plate positioned on the windscreen. I enter it, pay the fee, and move through the turnstile[59], sitting down on one of the hot plastic seats. I usually take the right hand side of the bus so that I can work out exactly when to get off the bus once it reaches Pozón. The right side of the bus is though also the side of where the sun shines. I am able to sit at a window while I wait for the bus to start moving.

The bus finally leaves the bus station and the Castillo San Felipe on the left, passing the hill La Popa, heading to the inner city market. The bridge at the market is under construction; there is only one lane for all the buses, motorbikes and cars heading to the market. We move very slowly, passing clothes shops and the vegetable and fruit stands. It smells like old fish, meat and decaying vegetables. There is loud music; people talk loudly over each other. The bus takes on more passengers and some have to stand. Thirty minutes have already passed since I started my journey.

We continue, passing the football stadium and Plaza de Torros on the left hand side, and reach the mall 'La Castellana'. This is the outer part of the city. Not a poor area, but a mix of poor and middle-income households. Only locals visit the mall; tourists rarely come here. The street widens here and a lot of buses and moto-taxis sit at the entrance of the

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[59] There are two kinds of buses. Buses that have a turnstile are perceived as safer, but they also demand passengers to pay the exact fee. Those without a turnstile are perceived as less safe, less modern and usually just have a conductor who collects the fee. This makes it possible to negotiate a price for a journey.

mall. The drivers of both buses and moto-taxis are yelling attempting to get passengers to join them.

Almost an hour has passed since I started my journey to Pozón. The main overland bus station is at the end of the road we are on, and the city becomes less dense here. There is a lot of free space, although numerous signs at the roadside reveal planned future developments.

We stop next to the overland bus station and people in the bus look at me. Some ask: 'this is the main bus station, don't you want to get off?' I reply: 'No, I am continuing to Pozón'. Their faces betray surprise, irritation and worry. A white, 'gringa'[60] girl, travelling into Pozón, alone?! This is not something they would recommend to a girl with my appearance. The bus turns to the right hand side and enters Pozón. It is a very steep curve, and I am always afraid the bus will keel over one day. But the driver knows what he is doing and we arrive safely. Most of the bus drivers are from Pozón and work for a company that allows them to do the route to the city centre and back each day.

We enter the barrio's main street. Usually I leave the bus at the fried-chicken shop and enter James' street or stop at the blue shop that says "estrella", go right, and enter the street the NGO is on. Today I am meeting James and some of the other young people at his house, so I yell 'Parada' which means 'stop the bus'. I get off and cross the busy street. A lot of motorbikes honk and come up and down the street. Many eyes look at me curiously. Some people know me though and know where I am heading to; some young children recognise me and greet me with a smile and say 'hola mona' (Hi blond girl)[61]. I walk another 300 meters or so on an unpaved road. I arrive at James' house where his father is working on some metal fencing on the terrace. He sees me and greets me with a smile. We exchange a couple of sentences and I enter the house where James is already waiting for me.

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[60] Gringa is a term that is used to describe a foreign women, especially one of US American origin.
[61] The word 'mona' or 'mono' means blond in Colombian colloquial Spanish, and is used to describe blond people. Blonde is an unusual hair colour in Colombia and blondes tend to attract a lot of attention as a result.

Picture 12 - Street in Pozón

Why do I tell this story? It introduces how moving to, within and through a barrio is influenced by different social mechanisms, including the relationships that one has within these spaces. It introduces the topic of the chapter, spatial mobility in Cartagena, and suggests how moving in spaces and places of the city is not only about physical movement but also about knowing how to move socially. The chapter also discusses the importance of place itself, the material structures within the barrios and the wider city, and the relational structures that exist between people. I ask questions about whether the barrios are dangerous, and if people are helpful and protective towards each other? And whether the barrio's streets are passable or if environmental problems make them difficult to pass?

In looking at such questions the chapter engages with issues concerning mobility and spatial-relational effects that shape young people's navigational capacity. Having examined in the last chapter how a sense of belonging influences the young people, this chapter analyses the spatial influences on them, in terms of geographical place, social space and

mobility.[62] I explained in the previous chapter how location and place-based stigmatisation place the young people in my study in a disadvantaged position to realise life chances, relative to other people in Cartagena. However, the neighbourhood effects literature argues that it is the place itself that creates inequality and fewer opportunities for social mobility, rather than the discourses or stigmas that surround it. Spatial mobility enables access to material resources, and cultural and social capitals. Spatial mobility therefore is linked to the young people's ability to achieve their aspirations. It is in this chapter where the usefulness of the term navigational capacity is most obvious; the chapter is about the way the young people work out paths through spaces and places, and try to navigate themselves towards the good life they aspire to. Being socially mobile is then linked at least to some extent, to physical (im)mobility. Being physically mobile, able to travel to university for example, means a young person is able to acquire important cultural and social capital. They can acquire knowledge and skills and create a social circle that offers connections to opportunities away from the barrios. The neighbourhood and its social and material structures determine physical mobility. The neighbourhood and the wider city, have important influences on the young people themselves. This chapter analyses the young people's (im)mobility, their access to resources, capitals and information that would enhance their social mobility, but it is also about the structures of the geographical places the young people inhabit, and their influence on shaping the young Cartagenians' navigational capacity.

I continue with a brief conceptual overview and show how I deploy the literature in relation to geographical and social mobility in this chapter. The section then describes a typical journey to La Popa. This provides a contrast to the description of the journey to Pozón that I have just offered. The geographical differences between the neighbourhoods and the different challenges of movement around them are highlighted. I continue by examining in more detail the geographical location of the young people's barrios and how location influences the young people's (im)mobility and navigational capacity. I look at the

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[62] When I use the term mobility I mean both geographical and social mobility, when I refer only to one of them I will state so clearly.

location of the barrios in relation to important places in the city, and also how the young people are located within their own barrios, and at the challenges of moving in them. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how spatial influences affect and shape young people's aspirations and their navigation towards them.

2   Mobility and the Neighbourhood

The concept 'neighbourhood effects' suggests that the neighbourhood an individual lives in has an impact on his or her life chances, opportunities, experiences and socialisation (Wilson and Wilson, 1987, Musterd and Andersson, 2006, van Ham et al., 2012). In particular, socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods are perceived as having a causal relationship with socio-occupational mobility, school drop-out rates, educational achievement, social exclusion and behaviour more generally (Musterd and Andersson, 2006). According to Wilson (1987) individuals living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are isolated from important role models and institutions and suffer from restricted access to knowledge and resources. Therefore disadvantaged neighbourhoods are supposed to have an impact on the inequalities people experience when living in these neighbourhoods rather than better off ones. In respect to young people and their aspiration development and achievement, neighbourhoods may have an effect on how successful young people are able to develop aspirations and the navigational capacity to achieve them because they have an impact on their internalised behavioural skills and on their opportunity structures.

According to the recent literature on neighbourhood effects (van Ham et al., 2012, Sharkey and Faber, 2014) the number of studies of neighbourhood effects is growing, providing important information about how neighbourhoods affect individuals, and particularly how they affect individuals negatively. However, the majority of these studies can only confirm correlations between individual outcomes and neighbourhood characteristics (van Ham et al., 2012). Since the 'Moving to Opportunity' study, a large quantitative neighbourhood effects study conducted across a number of large US cities, many authors have argued that it is not possible to answer the questions of whether and when neighbourhood effects matter, but rather under what context and specific conditions (Galster, 2012, van Ham et

al., 2012, Sharkey and Faber, 2014). Small and Feldman (2012) maintain that using an ethnographic approach, conducting open ended interviews and participant observation enhances our understanding of the exact causations of, and contexts for, neighbourhood effects. It has been argued that focusing on the individuals living in the studied neighbourhoods, and including other contextual factors that may intersect with neighbourhood effects to contribute to their disadvantaged situation, is important (van Ham et al., 2012). For example, in the case of Cartagena, neighbourhood and location may contribute to the unequal opportunity structures in the city, but inequality also intersects with other context specific factors, such as the social background of the Cartagenians living in different barrios, and the historical discrimination against certain ethnicities that has gone on for centuries. These factors work in relation to each other, each reinforcing the other.

I am interested in how neighbourhoods impact on young people's aspirations and their achievements, and believe that intersectional characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, class etc. need to be included when analysing the reproduction of the inequalities linked to neighbourhood contexts. With respect to young people and their possible future selves, Prince (2013) claims that it is necessary to include the potential role of the physical environment when thinking about the aspirations of young people, arguing that placed-based experiences may be internalised and encoded into young people's identities.

Low (2009) argues that spaces and places are socially constructed by the people who live in them and know them. They are culturally and historically specific constructions (Rodman, 1992: 641 cited in Low, 2009). This production of place and space, Low argues, includes the embodiment and internalisation of certain emotions and feelings of attachment in individuals. This notion of embodiment of space is linked to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, how people internalise their social surroundings unconsciously and reproduce this internalisation with their thinking and acting in society (related to the last chapter about belonging). That means that spatial effects are not just affecting young people from the 'outside', limiting their ability to achieve a good education because good teachers are only present in certain neighbourhood's education facilities for example. It means spatial effects are internalised and structure young people's goals and aspirations

themselves. What Prince (2013) calls a place-identity involves a deep sense of familiarity with the place. The places take symbolic meaning for young people and their imagined future selves are influenced by their place-identities (Prince, 2013: 700). While this dynamic impacts on the young people's sense of belonging, as discussed in the former chapter, it is also further linked to the young people's mobilities. Spatial-relational conditions on the one hand affect young people and their aspirations in quite tangible ways; like in the case where a neighbourhood is relatively distant from locations in the city, where universities and industries are based. On the other hand spatial-relational effects are also internalised or embodied, and shape young people's behaviour, where they even think or choose to move. For example, young people may choose not to leave their neighbourhoods, even when they get an opportunity to physically do so. This can have negative consequences as opportunities for education and employment, as well as opportunities to acquire other important social mobility resources may require young people to enter places and spaces other than their immediate environments.

In this chapter I treat neighbourhood effects as intersecting with factors such as class and ethnicity; these factors are intertwined with neighbourhood and place, and reinforce the inequalities that can be connected to them. I explained earlier that in Cartagena disadvantaged neighbourhoods are usually named barrios populares. The concept of a barrio popular in Cartagena is not however only based on the socioeconomic background of its inhabitants, but intersects with ethnicity. The majority of the inhabitants of barrios populares are of African descent. This concept of how neighbourhoods affect young people then is linked to the embodiment of mechanism and structures related to it, bringing back Bourdieu's habitus and how structures influence the thinking and acting of the young people about their possible futures, while living in the barrios populares (Swartz, 1997, Bourdieu, 2005). Therefore the contextual environment, as in the combination of the physical and relational environment with its structures of discrimination, does matter for the young people when they try to realise life chances (Sharkey and Faber, 2014).

I start the next section with a description of my journey to the neighbourhood of La Popa. The following sections discuss neighbourhood effects in the young Cartagenian's living environments; I investigate how neighbourhoods impact on young people's mobility,

enabling or constraining their navigational capacity to achieve their stated aspirations. I start with the geographical mechanisms that affect young people in my study, that is the location of the barrio they live in, in relation to other important places. I include a discussion of the infrastructure available to the young people. The next section describes the environmental and material conditions of the young people's immediate neighbourhood, factors that may constrain the young Cartagenians in various ways. I continue from these more tangible influences to discuss less tangible effects such as noise levels, privacy and other related issues that appeared important in Pozón and La Popa, but are not usually included in neighbourhood effects studies. Lastly, I explore how boundaries are drawn in neighbourhoods in relation to crime, violence and insecurity. This section highlights the forms of discrimination concerning class and race that I mention throughout the thesis. Stigmatisation and social capital will be included in the analysis, although both have already been discussed in the last chapter in relation to belonging, in this chapter I look at the lives of the young people in terms of mobilities rather than in terms of belonging.

3   The Journey to La Popa

I leave my house, turning to the right and then turning left into the street 'media luna'. It is a famous street, popular with tourists in the evenings and at night. Getsemaní, where my house is located, is a historic place, the neighbourhood of slaves and free black people. Today tourists and residents mix on its streets. I enjoy the walk amongst the old colonial buildings to the moto-taxistas. Every stone of the houses tells me a story of the past and Cartagena's history. I walk along the busy street until I reach the corner. This is the end of Getsemani, where a bridge leads to the Castillo San Felipe. At the corner I negotiate the price for a moto-taxi to Pablo Sexto II in La Popa. Moto-taxis are motorbikes that offer taxi services; they are faster than cars or buses. But moto-taxis have a bad reputation. Some people say their riders are dangerous and less responsible than bus and taxi drivers. Today there is no other option but to take a moto-taxi, as Pablo Sexto II is only accessible by

motor-bike. There are no buses or official colectivos[63] entering the barrio, and walking up the hill is not an option because of security issues. When I want to walk the young people meet me up at the bottom of the main street through the barrio. They warn me that I may arrive but without my money and phone, they say. Hence I walk to the moto-taxis at the corner and we discuss prices. I give them my destination and one of them takes the lead, accepts my price and hands me a helmet.

We cross the bridge and pass the Castillo San Felipe on our right hand side, entering the street Paseo de Bolivar. This is a busy street lined by many shops and small businesses. It leads from the main Avenida of the city through the barrios Torices, Santa Rita, Canapote, Lemaitre to the barrio San Francisco, situated next to the airport. We pass Torices and arrive at the CAI (a small police station with two policemen). There we turn right up the hill.

The NGO - my main contact point here in La Popa - is a couple of meters further on, just beyond the market of Santa Rita. Today though I am visiting the young people in their homes. We turn right up the hill before the market of Santa Rita, leave 'Los comuneros' on our right hand side and turn left into 'Pedro Salazar', then right again, up the hill. In contrast to Pozón, I do not go to many of the young people's houses in La Popa on my own. We meet at the NGO and go together to their homes. Even though the media presents Paseo de Bolivar and surrounding barrios as relatively safe, I feel safer walking alone in Pozón than in La Popa, mostly because the community in the former knows me better than the community in the latter.

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[63] Colectivo is a name for a Car that collects four or more people and drives a special route through the city. It is faster than a bus but cheaper than a taxi.

Picture 13 - Street in La Popa

Once we arrive at Pablo Sexto II the moto-taxista turns left and left again and we enter an unpaved street. Suddenly I realise that I do not know where we are. I had instructed the moto-taxista to take me to the entrance of the barrio, but only now do I realise that the barrio has more than one entrance and exit. We stop and for a moment I am afraid to show that I have no idea where we are. I am not sure if the moto-taxista may take advantage of my vulnerable situation and rob me. The moto-taxista asks me if we have come to the correct place and I decide to take the risk and say 'no'. The moto-taxista immediately starts explaining that he is from the barrio and might be able to help me to find the place I am looking for. I take my chances and describe the house of one of the boys in my study. 'I am looking for a house that is situated at a corner close to Pedro

Salazar that was pink but now painted blue[64], where people sell soup.' The moto-taxista immediately turns into the next unpaved side street, it has an impressive view to the sea over the church of Torices. I can now see Lenard in front of his house waiting for me and already making jokes about how I have made a new friend. From this day on Pedro, the moto-taxista, was my regular taxi to Pablo Sexto II. He was a great help to me in that he made it possible for me to visit the young people at their homes in the barrio more easily and regularly than I would have been able to had I not met him.

Picture 14 - Street in La Popa

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[64] Every year at Christmas time people paint their houses in barrio Populares in a new, bright colour.

4   Geographical Location and the Spatial Effects of Pozón and La Popa

Wilson (1987) argues that people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods may be isolated from mainstream individuals and institutions. As a result, inhabitants experience reduced access to knowledge and resources more available to people living in other locations. One of the factors influencing young people's aspirations is the location they live in. Musterd and Andersson (2006) state that an area where a high density of people in a disadvantaged situation reside will have an impact on this neighbourhood's residents. As described in Chapter 2, Pozón and La Popa, are located in almost opposite parts of the city, as the map below shows.

Map 8 - Map of Cartagena de Indias

La Popa is much closer to the city centre than Pozón. It is a 5 minute moto-taxi drive from the city centre and during the day and for the young people it is possible to walk. The beaches and other important places such as the airport and the main market are close to La Popa. By contrast, Pozón is an hour's bus drive from the city centre, the beaches and

the main market. It is closer to the main overland bus station. The mall La Castellana that I mentioned at the start of the chapter is one of the main places young people from Pozón go to for recreation, but it is still half an hour's bus ride from Pozón. These differences between the young people's neighbourhoods may have implications for their navigational capacity - their mobility opportunities and access to resources. In the following section I will discuss these connections. I am interested in how the geographical differences affect (im)mobility and the young people's life chances.

As suggested in the neighbourhood effects literature, the respective locations of the two neighbourhoods offer young people living in them certain opportunities, and also places on them certain constraints. These have to do with achieving employment, further education or enjoying recreation. The possibilities of moving to places and spaces that many of the young people aspire to are unequally distributed between the young people in Pozón and La Popa. Sheller and Urry (2006: 13) assert that being spatially mobile affects individual's upward and downwards social mobility, and may be convertible into status and power. Mobility then can work as a resource itself enhancing access to economic, social and cultural capital (Kaufmann et al., 2004). These young people from more privileged neighbourhoods have access to more money, enabling them to travel and access more resources than the young people from the barrios in my study. This leads me to ask questions in this section about the (im)mobility of my young participants, the access to certain places and spaces they have, and how these things differ for the young people of Pozón and La Popa. Consequently aspirations' attainment depends much on the interrelation of these (im)mobilities, possible opportunities and capital acquisitions (see Musterd and Andersson, 2006: 120).

Because La Popa is much closer to the city centre, to the beaches and the market, the young people living there have easier access to places of potential employment and education, as well as places where they can work to create social networks that might enhance their chances of obtaining education or employment. For example, the University of Cartagena, the only public university in Cartagena, is located in the heart of the historical centre. Every year the university offers an orientation day where young people arrive at the university and receive information about the yearly exam that every person

has to sit to enter the university system. If they want to sit the exam the young people need to travel again to the university. As the young people in my study are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, their financial resources do not generally allow them to study at a private university, unless they have, like James, been able to obtain a state credit. The public university is for the majority of young people from both barrios the only way to get a professional degree. For young people of La Popa it is easier to travel to the university even when they cannot afford transport costs, as they are able to walk the distance from the barrio. The young people from Pozón must spend an hour on the bus to get to the city centre, and pay the fare. The price of transport therefore makes it more difficult to enter the public university for youth from Pozón than from La Popa.

While the young people in the majority of cases are able to pay for travel to the university or to other education facilities, they did even have less money to access other opportunities. As I mentioned, there are other desired places that are easier for the La Popa youth to reach than for the Pozón youth to reach. For example, at the time of my study, Andreas from Pozón was looking for employment to be able to contribute to the household's income. He was able to study art and design at the private University Bellas Artes in the city centre. A lot of Andreas' education was financed by his mother. She had often worked two jobs at once to allow her son to study. However, Andreas had struggled to find employment after leaving university. When I spoke with him he was considering working on an hourly basis for a supermarket chain to earn some money until he could find a better job. Unfortunately the closest supermarket belonging to the chain in which Andreas had connections was a bus drive of at least 30 minutes from the barrio. Andreas did not take the supermarket work as the amount of money he would earn per day would not have been worth the bus fares for getting to the job and home again.

Cassandra, one of the adults I interviewed during the course of my study, is one of the founders of the local NGO in Pozón. She described to me how some people in Pozón have never seen the city centre, as they cannot afford to pay the transport. Fares always have to be paid per bus and travelling to work places can include changing transport, which means paying two fares. Even on the state minimum wage (of 650,000 Pesos) in full time employment, transport costs can take half of the daily salary of someone from the barrio.

In terms of creating income, people from La Popa have an advantage over people from Pozón, located as they are, closer to places of employment, to which they can walk. The location of the barrios and the infrastructure that connects them to wider city influences young people's work and education opportunities.

It is not just prospects for employment and education that are closely linked to the location of a barrio. Many times when I was with the young people of both barrios we discussed what they like to do in their free time; what are the spaces and places they like most? The girls in Pozón told me that they spend most of their time at home, or at the NGO, because there is nothing else to do in the barrio, apart from perhaps walking along the main road with its clothes and food shops. The girls emphasised that these shops were very basic. Other recreational places are often inhabited by gangs and are too dangerous to linger in for long. The girls and boys of Pozón both told me they like to go to the beaches, while the girls, in particular like to visit the shopping malls. One day I went with the girls from Pozón to the mall. They showed me how to play games in the game area there. They enjoyed taking pictures of themselves in the mall. The trip was a rare event for the girls. The mall is only accessible by public transport, as are the beaches and the historical centre of the city with its plazas and the city walls, where people tend to hang out at evening and night time. The young people from Pozón wanted to spend time in all these places, but the cost of transport prevented them from visiting them with any regularity.

Patricia, one of my participants in my study from La Popa, told me that she believes that the culture of Pozón youth is different to that of the La Popa youth, because of the distance of Pozón from the city centre. While she explained she could just walk to the centre, Patricia reflected that the Pozón youth rarely visited the city centre and were not able to enjoy the opportunities it could offer them. Bauder (2001) suggests that neighbourhoods develop resident stereotypes that create ideas about residents' work ethic, skill levels, educational levels, occupational preferences and gender roles. Bauder states this external representation of neighbourhoods has a relationship with the internal representations of the neighbourhood amongst its inhabitants. Patricia offered me something of a stereotype of the Pozón youth, telling me that they have a different

culture, which is related to their neighbourhood and its location. Certainly the young people from Pozón have a close relationship to their community and call themselves Pozoneros. The stigmatisation of the barrio as a poor and dangerous neighbourhood and immobility issues do limit their access to important resources too. But, whether the young people from Pozón have a different culture, one that may exclude them from certain job opportunities, I am unable to verify.

The La Popa youth, living in close proximity to the city centre and beaches, have different rhythms of life to the youth in Pozón, often spending time away from their own barrio for significant periods during the day. Lenard for example plays football every Friday afternoon on the beach with friends, and Jessi likes to go for a walk there with her grandmother. The young people from La Popa are more able to socialise with different groups of people outside their immediate neighbourhood, and have more opportunities to create different kinds of social capital. Social capital, called '*palanca*' in Cartagena, is perceived by the young people as one of the main drivers for social mobility. Hannes (La Popa):

"There is employment, what there is not is opportunities because the opportunities are only available for few people. […] if you enter a company you enter the company at a low rank but those who have the network, 'la rosca', 'la palanca', those have privileges. […] I have my network through my dad, he knows many people."

Hannes does not spend much time at his house. Every time I called him he was busy meeting people in other parts of the city close to La Popa. His father works as a painter and renovates colonial buildings in the city centre. This employment provides his father with many contacts at businesses in the city centre, and Hannes is aware how advantageous these contacts could be to him in the future.

Miguel, one of the youth from Pozón told me: *"How I see it, is that there are people who have the network (la palanca) and those people have more (opportunities) than others. For example those people in better barrios, they have much more 'palanca' than the poor."*

Larson, from Pozón also stated: *"Yes ,correct that is the word 'palanca', that is if a person knows you and this person has a good position or status in a company he or she will help you to get employment in this company."*

A certain kind of *palanca* is necessary for the young people to find employment or to enter university. As Hannes mentioned, it is not enough that employment is available, to obtain it requires social capital. The La Popa youth are more mobile than the Pozón youth, and rarely stay at their homes for long; they move through different barrios and meet different people close to the city centre obtaining important contacts. The La Popa youth can also access facilities such as health centres, different schools and shops, more easily than the Pozón youth. As they are located near some areas of high status housing, these facilities often provide better services than those further from the centre, and from Bocagrande. The Pozón youth usually stay in Pozón and their contact with people from other parts of Cartagena is less frequent. Their access to good quality facilities is also restricted.

The location of a barrio in Cartagena and the spatial mobility or immobility implications this location has, has effects on the young people's navigational capacity toward upward social mobility and the achievement of a good life. While this section examined the different spatial effects that existed between the barrios, the next section is concerned with immediate spatial effects within each La Popa and Pozón respectively.

5   Spatial Effects of the Immediate Environment

While the location of the neighbourhood within the wider city, in relation to other important places limits young people's access to opportunities, the immediate neighbourhood young people live in can be disadvantageous to them too (Musterd and Andersson, 2006). For example, the quality of teachers and resources like textbooks at a school affects students' educational outcomes, and factors such as violence in the areas schools are located in prevent young people from succeeding (Pradeilles et al., 2014). To apply for higher education young people in Cartagena have to sit an exam and those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods have to compete with young people from richer neighbourhoods in this exam, and subsequently at higher education levels and in the job

market. The educational system serves to reproduce class hierarchies, and young people compete for higher education places and employment from different points of departure (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The private and public education system that exists in Cartagena makes these differences even greater; the young people from La Popa and Pozón are not able to afford private institutions, nor are many of these geographically close to the barrios. Quality private education institutes are geographically distant from the youth in Pozón in particular, while the La Popa youths live closer to richer neighbourhoods and may at least be able to visit private schools.

Yet both groups of young people were dissatisfied with their secondary education and complained in particular about English language classes as being useless. I sit outside of JD's house with JD and some other La Popa youth. We are discussing the video project about education. Andrea and Caro wrote an introduction to the film and they would like to film it and then present the whole film to the other young people. One part of it discusses the privatisation of Universities and how the government is not helping to create a more equal education system. While we are discussing the university system, JD, who is in his last year of secondary education, starts saying colours in English. I ask him if his English has improved at secondary school. He starts laughing and answers *"not at all".* Surprised I ask why this is the case and he explains:

"Look, the problem is that we do not do anything. I mean every year in English we do the same; Numbers, months and colours. That is all, every year […] but it is also like this because the teachers don't know much more."

I knew that my Colombian friends from higher social classes were able to speak more English, suggesting that the private education institutions they attended employed teachers who actually spoke English. Daner from Pozón was able to speak basic English with me. I asked him how he learnt his language skills. Daner explained he had visited an English language school, financed by his parents. He is one of the young people in Pozón who is from a better off household, in comparison to the other Pozoneros of my study. Normal public schools in the barrios populares rarely however provide young people with the opportunity to acquire important English language skills.

Health care facilities in Pozón are also poor. The majority of good quality medical facilities are close to the city centre, and young people from La Popa assert that even public health facilities in their immediate neighbourhood are of good quality. In Pozón, however, the medical facility was criticised as being in a bad condition, and lacking funds to provide good medical assistance.[65] This became a topic of the film the Pozón youth made. The young people decided to take inside and outside perspectives of their barrio as the broad theme for their short film. We went to La Popa and asked people what they thought about Pozón in terms of security, culture, and education and health care quality. People from within the barrio were more critical over these issues than outsiders like the youth from La Popa. With regards to health care, people from Pozón answered the young people's questions in highly critical terms. James' father for example said 'the medical center in the barrio is a disaster.' Others described situations where people had to bring their own medicines and water with them. The situation was much like that described in Musterd and Anderssons' (2006) literature review, which describes situations where people have less access to quality local services because of the location of their barrio.

It is Thursday night, 1 am. I can still hear salsa from the bar on the corner. It won't stop until 3 am. The music is loud and earplugs are only of limited use, but I normally fall asleep nonetheless. Tonight however there is another sound. It is hard rain drumming on the roof and the ground. The rainy season has arrived. The rain is so strong that I have to get up and pull my things deeper into my room. I don't have a real door and the rain is so strong that it enters my room. I pull the bed back to keep my head dry.[66]

Rain is a major issue in Cartagena. After heavy rains Cartagena consists of rivers not of streets and people have to walk through the dirty water. Rainy seasons can last a couple of days or for weeks, but they are always between September and November. The rain affects barrios differently in the city depending on where the barrio is located and what

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[65] I was not able to find indicators, e.g. number of nurses or doctors, to support or confirm this at the barrio level.
[66] Fieldnotes entry from 26.09.2013, Getsemaní, Cartagena

the infrastructure in the barrio is like. Getsemani, the place I lived during most of my fieldwork, is the colonial part of the city. It is not the very wealthy inner colonial part, but the area is in transition to become a centre for tourists and more and more houses are being converted into hotels. There is a mix of lower quality housing, renovated houses, and hotels and hostels for foreigners coming to the city. The streets have however not been repaved for a long time, and when it rains they are flooded with water.

In the two barrios of my study the situation is different. In La Popa the rain builds rivers that follow the streets down the hill and create floods of water and mud in Torices and Santa Rita. Houses in La Popa are built on high foundations to keep rainwater out of their rooms. Traffic on La Popa's streets is affected severely. Buses need more time, colectivos cannot easily enter the streets and passengers have problems getting to the colectivos themselves, as they almost have to swim across the streets. Moto-taxis usually stop their services while it is raining and resume when it stops. Even then using a moto-taxi is difficult, and mud gets everywhere. The young people who do not live on paved streets find their houses flooded with mud and dirt. La Popa is however less affected by the rain than Pozón because, as mentioned in the section before, the young people can reach most of their valued places and spaces on foot. Yet this does not change the fact that social life stops when it starts raining and people are reluctant to leave their houses.

In Pozón most of the streets are flat and unpaved, especially those where the young people in my study live. While buses still drive the route to Pozón along the paved road and enter just into the barrio, it is difficult for the young people to get out of their neighbourhood, as the streets immediately around their houses are not passable. Rain in Pozón is usually stronger than in the city centre. Sometimes there were days when it was dry in the city but wet in Pozón. Spatial mobility within the barrio was thus severely limited when it rained, and the young people preferred not to leave their houses if they could avoid it. Those who had employment or needed to go to university had a difficult journey to make during the rainy season, and sometimes they preferred not to make the journey at all, and to stay at home. Many of my sessions together with the youth did not happen because of rain. Many times I made the journey to the NGO to meet the young people there and they did not show up. They were surprised when I would call them and ask why

they had not come - they explained that they had assumed if it was raining our session would not be taking place.

Picture 15 – A street in Pozón one day after the rainfall

The rain also caused health problems in the barrios, particularly in Pozón. Santiago, a young boy from Pozón who lives in the back part of the barrio, 20 de enero, took a picture of a hole in the ground filled with water (see picture 16). At first I thought that he had taken the picture to illustrate the bad infrastructural conditions in the barrio. However, Santiago explained that such water holes lie all over his sector of Pozón and are breeding places for mosquitos that transmit dengue. He said three children had died of dengue in his immediate neighbourhood in the last couple of months. Therefore in addition to limiting their ability to travel by blocking the streets, the rain can also affect young people's health, keeping them bed bound for days or weeks, or worse.

Picture 16 - Picture of water hole in Pozón

While rain is a problem that is linked to the infrastructure of the neighbourhoods, another environmental factor that has less to do with infrastructure is noise. Cartageneros and, in particular, the inhabitants of the barrios populares, enjoy loud music. On Sundays particularly people living in the barrios bring out big speakers, place them in front of their houses, and listen to music while sitting and enjoying a drink with their neighbours.

Streicker (1997) argues that barrios populares use music as a way of marking territories and of marking belonging to particular territories in the city. The use of loud 'Champeta' music creates 'audio boundaries'. 'Champeta' music is music related to African culture and is the preferred genre in the barrios populares, where most of the people are of Afro-Colombian descent. Both groups of young people in my study are affected by loud music, during the weekends in particular. The majority of times I met the young people in their barrios they did not seem to be bothered by the music, but the majority frequently

mentioned in the interviews I did with them that they wanted to live in a quiet place in the future. Lenard stated that he had problems concentrating and studying for exams at university, as there was what he described as *'noise pollution'* throughout the night in the barrio. With the music playing so loudly and so often, Lenard did not feel he was able to study very well. Perhaps more seriously, when some people get drunk at their parties, barrios populares are thought to become unsafe, as a lot of fights happen. The statistics on homicides in the city show that the most murders happen on Sundays, which is when the most parties take place in the barrios (Goyenche González et al., 2013).

In summary, the immediate environment of young people's neighbourhoods affects them in three different ways. First, in the rainy season the infrastructure of the neighbourhoods, and in particular of Pozón, limits the young people's spatial mobility. Secondly, in Pozón, rain and the lack of good infrastructure results in water holes forming that becoming breeding sites for mosquitos. These mosquitos carry diseases that affect the health of young people. Thirdly, noise levels and alcohol consumption have an impact on the young people's ability to study well, and to move safely around their barrios.

The discussion of alcohol-induced fights at the end of this section introduces the last issue regarding mobility that I will cover in this chapter. Security is an issue that impacts on young people's mobility, social and spatial, in different ways. While neighbourhood conflicts can affect young people's safety, issues related to gangs and general crime are much bigger security issues to them.

6   "You ask me where I spend my time when it is dark? Here, exactly here in this place…" (Karla, Pozón) – Spatial Mobility and Insecurity

The young Pozoneros walk with me through their barrio. We are at the last stage of the participatory filming project. Miguel has a camera in his hand and I am walking next to Maja who also has a camera in order to film our activities. I look around and realise I know this part of the barrio from a tour a couple of weeks ago. I realise we are in a gang area. At the same moment I see a boy in a blue shirt with designer headphones sitting in the grass. He looks at Maja and me and sees the camera Maja is carrying in her hand. The boy moves

and I recognise the danger of the situation. I am not the only one who sees it. Larson comes to me saying: *'let's go fast to this house, this is the house of a friend of mine.'* We enter a wooden fenced garden and then a house constructed from reclaimed wooden planks. People in this area of Pozón live mostly in conditions of extreme poverty. A big man stands in front of me. He smiles and says with a loud voice that his name is Petete and that I am welcome. He makes jokes about me coming here, looking as I do and with all the film equipment, when the barrio is 'caliente'. 'Caliente' means 'hot' and is used to describe the times when gangs are particularly active in the area, terrorising residents and fighting each other. Outside the house the gang gathers together. There is a lot of tension, inside the house everyone is nervous, and I am afraid. We take the memory cards out of the cameras we have with us, so that if they are taken we will not lose the data as well. Petete goes outside to get his gun and one of the gang members tries to enter the garden. But Petete shouts to the boy: 'come closer and you will see the lead flies low today.' We stay inside, talking to Petete and his wife, who is guarding the field where the gangs are from the window. We cannot move for now and decide to interview Petete for the short film. Petete is well known in Pozón. He organises events in the neighbourhood, sings and drives a moto-taxi. He has lived in the area for a long time and does not want to leave. Gangs have been fighting less recently, and the field is more often used for playing football. After an hour the gang leaves because another rival gang arrives. The rival gang does not know we were in Petete's house. Petete takes us to the patio, which is connected to the house of his mother, and provides a way onto another street. While the gangs are occupied with each other Petete leads us to the other street. From there we almost run to the centre of Pozón.

Insecurity, crime and violence. These are topics that people may connect with Colombia in general. I briefly described Colombia's violent past in Chapter 2. Violence and insecurity has been part of people's lives in Colombia for a long time. The kind of insecurity that is present in barrios populares is also common in many other countries in Latin America. Gang fighting, sicarios (contract murderers conducted from a motorbike), "cleansing" activities by government, (cf. Moser and McIlwaine, 2004), regular robberies, and gender

based and domestic violence, all take place in the poorer areas of many South American countries. Media sensationalises the violence and in so doing maintains and transforms it into something that makes it routine and part of everyday life (Winton, 2005, Rodgers, 2009). Rodgers (2009) argues in relation to Central America that the segregation of cities, and the exclusion of the poor from the rich parts of a city is one of the main reasons for gang violence taking place in poorer residential areas, while richer neighbourhoods remain safe. A similar concentration of violence in poor areas is observable in Cartagena. It is one of the safest cities in Colombia, but the poorer areas are nonetheless extremely violent.

The young people in my study mapped the city and the barrios where they live in my first group meetings with them. First I asked girls' and boys' groups to make maps of their barrios, and mark important places. This activity was designed to provide me with an overview of their barrio. In Pozón in particular points to do with security were marked on the maps. Both groups, boys and girls, marked dangerous parts of their barrio, such as the area of the 'terraplem', 'la union', and the football place, 'la gallera', where gangs fight. The girls marked the dangerous places in red and explained that they do not pass these areas because, even though they are from the barrio and known there, these places can be very dangerous - or 'hot' (caliente). They explained that the gangs throw stones at each other, and residents can be caught in between. The boys marked dangerous places with sad faces on their map, and these areas matched the dangerous places the girls marked on their map. In addition to gang activities the young people of both barrios commented on the dangers of getting robbed, especially when it is dark (sunset is always between 6 and 7pm) and of fighting between neighbours and families when they get drunk.

Danger and insecurity affect young people's spatial mobility and how they think and act. They internalise the tension of living in constant danger in their habitus. The embodiment of these dangerous spaces affects how the young people move in their spaces and places. The incident with the gang at Petete's house, for example, would have played out differently if a number of things about our group had been different. My presence, and the presence of the filming equipment worsened the situation. The gang would not have paid much attention to the male participants had they been alone, while my female participants rarely go to this part of the neighbourhood, and were only there when we hid in Petete's

house because of the filming project. Girls are in general limited in their mobility in the neighbourhood because of security reasons and tend to stay at home.

Map 9 and 10 show the maps of Pozón of the girls and boys groups. They show the main streets, the only paved ones in the barrio, several important places and the locations of the homes of some of the young people and their friends. Peligro means danger and dangerous areas are marked on the map with a sad face on the boys map and marked red in the girls map. The sad face positioned at the curve is one of the places the girls also marked. It is called the 'dangerous curve' (curva peligrosa, the girls explained). The other sad face is located at the sector La Union, next to 20 de enero, and to the field where Petete lives. Areas of extreme poverty are marked with a 50 pesos (£0.01) coin. The girls marked these places with the words 'pobreza extrema' and the colour brown.
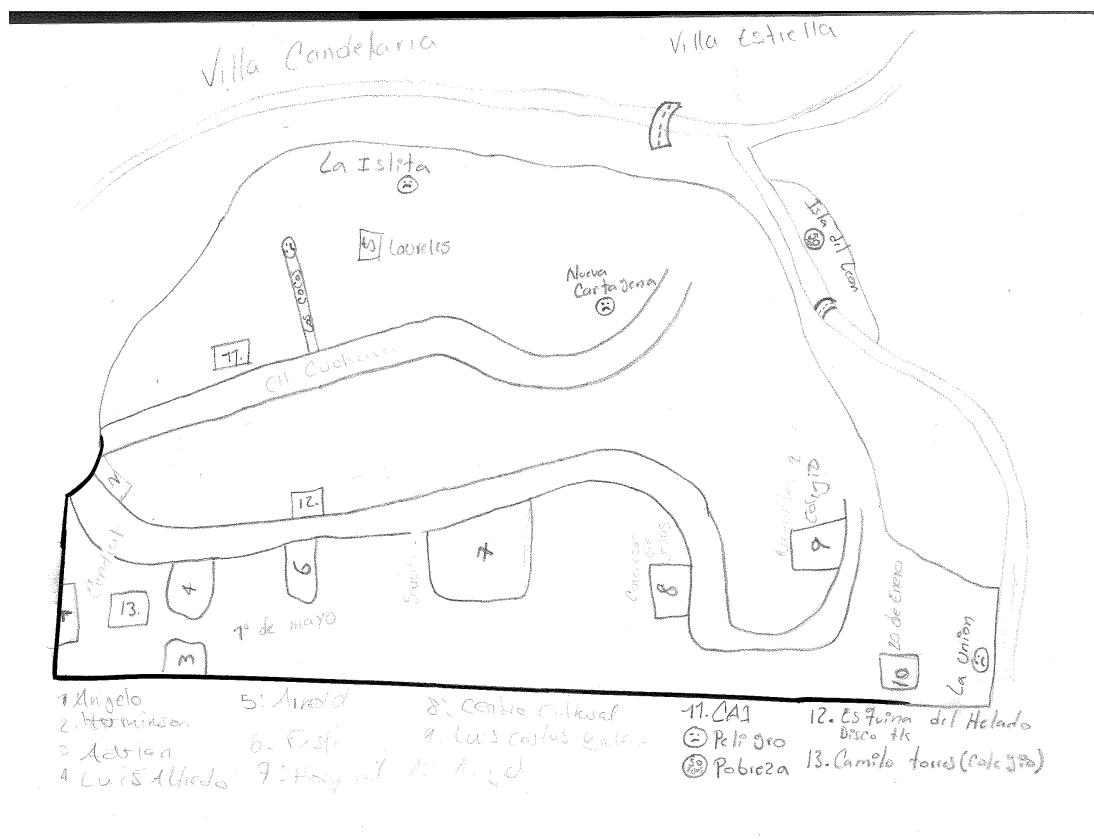
Map 9 – Map of Pozón made by boys group
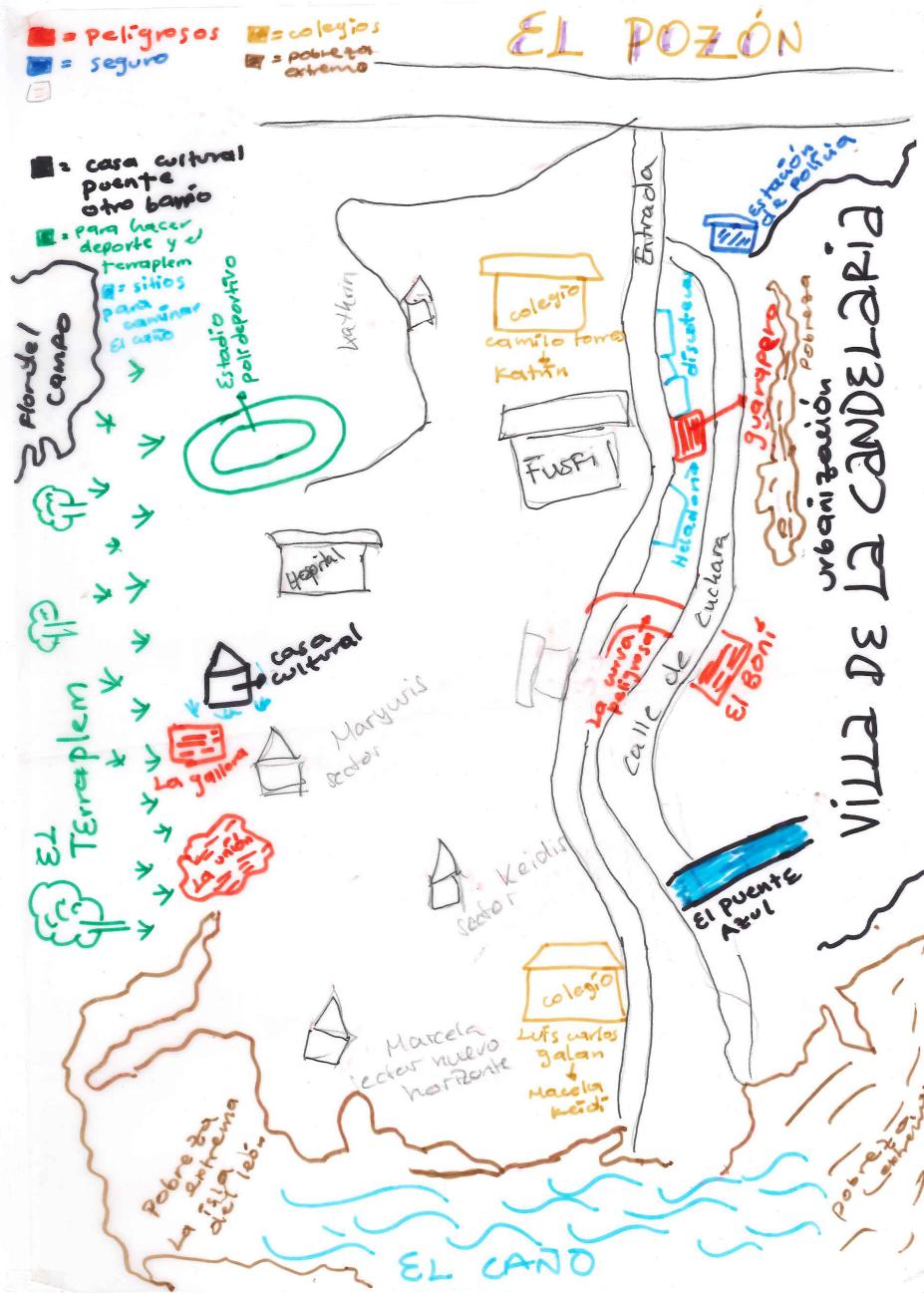
Map 10 - Map of Pozón Girls Group

The young people of both barrios are constrained in their mobility for reasons of security. This is true to a greater extent for the youth of Pozón than those of La Popa. When I asked Karla, from Pozón, what she did late in the day, and in the evenings she explained to me:

"You ask me where I spend my time when it is dark? Here, exactly in this place I am sitting in this chair in front my house looking at people passing by."

She further elaborated that once it gets 'hot' in the barrio and the gangs start fighting it becomes difficult to leave the house at all, as gangs pass through her street throwing stones all day. At these times she explained residents hide to keep themselves safe.

This insecurity, gang activity and other criminal activities such as sicarios and robberies, limits the movement of the young people in their neighbourhood. This means that Karla and other young people are often not able to participate in events outside their immediate neighbourhood, especially after dark.

Santiago and I sit in the Plaza de Torres. There is an event taking place as part of the Independence Day celebrations and a famous singer is on stage. Santiago enjoys the night. He got the opportunity to come here through the local NGO and one of its employees, Oscar, who decided to take him with us. Santiago and I sit next to each other and we talk a lot about the event and the beauty queen contests taking place this year. I ask him how he will return home. He looks at me with a cheeky smile and says he is not sure yet. Santiago and I have a very good relationship. The cheeky smile flashed because he is from the worst sector in terms of security in Pozón. At first when we talked Santiago was embarrassed about this and defended his home sector. But since we have got to know each other better he admits there are problems with gangs in his sector, and tells me about them quite freely. It is already late and we are at least a 30 minutes bus drive away from Pozón. I am worried about how Santiago will arrive home safely. I ask him again how he will get home, and he explains that he cannot go home now. It is too late - 10PM - and he is alone. It is too dangerous for him to go home tonight, even though he is well known in his sector. The next morning he tells me he stayed with Oscar.

When it gets dark, security issues are even more serious in the barrios. Spatial mobility across the whole city is severely limited in the hours after dark, apart from in areas of estratos five and six housing. Both groups of young people marked dangerous areas in the city on a map of Cartagena. Even though the Pozón youth believed there are several areas

that are a bit less dangerous than others, overall they still marked the entire city as dangerous. In addition, they explained that being known is not always a guarantee of safety, even though some of them later said this was the case in interviews. JD from La Popa summarised the problem, explaining the difference between security during the evening and night hours, and during the day. He stresses that even in evening hours it is important to be known:

JD: *"There exist certain hours at night when you are at risk that they rob you as well. For instance, there at the corner we had a case of rape. So at night time it is dangerous but if you are from here and pass here in the evening it is fine."*

Thus in some cases the young people's place identity and their learned behaviours allow them to navigate themselves around their neighbourhoods. But they still experience certain limitations.

Other problems the young people reported to me were sicarios and the limpieza that are executed by special police forces. Limpieza are the 'cleaning' of barrios. Sicarios are a phenomenon that originated in Medellin. Two people ride on a motorbike, the passenger shooting a target. These murders are often done for less than 100,000 pesos. On one of my first days in Pozón I went with Andreas and Oscar to the NGO building. Oscar left us in front of the NGO to pick up the keys. When he came back, he told us that just a few streets further along from the NGO a man sleeping in his car had just been shot by a sicario. Cartagena is one of the last cities in Colombia where two men are allowed to ride on a motorbike together because of the power moto-taxis possess.[67] The cleaning of barrios, called 'limpieza' is managed by special police forces and intended to clean barrios of supposedly dangerous people. They create a list with names and people are asked to stay in their houses after 10 pm, when the special troops enter the barrio (see also Moser and McIlwaine, 2004).

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[67] Moto-taxis are officially forbidden in Colombia. However in Cartagena the number of people generating income through moto-taxis is very high and they are a united community. For example, when a bus hit a moto-taxi the moto-taxistas burnt the bus (this happened during my fieldwork).

Miguel (Pozón): *"So they are doing something that is called 'la limpieza', which is killing the biggest gang members and criminals, let's say it is like this. So they made a law that nobody could leave the house after 10 pm."*

The spatial limitations created through insecurity issues in Pozón explain why the young people spend a lot of their time at home or at the local NGO. Winton's (2005) analysis of Guatemala argues that most young people prefer to stay home as gangs take over recreational spaces to fight in them. The situation was similar in Pozón. Spatial boundaries existed in both barrios and for the majority of young people. During a tour with some of my participants through the barrio Pablo Sexto II, they explained to me the invisible boundaries and borders of the barrio where they would not move beyond because of the dangers involved in doing so. Certain corners, streets and houses mark these territories and it is only possible to know the borders if you know the barrio well. JD explained:

JD: *"This barrio is a lot affected by drug trafficking and all these things and gangs of course, therefore we also have this conflict of invisible borders that delimit spaces and limits where you can go and which location you can pass. This provides distinct types of confrontation in the barrio and between people here."*

The young people experience danger from their earliest years on they grow up with a consciousness of the danger around them. Hannes told me a story about his younger youth, the time when his cousin was killed by a group of young boys. Hannes was twelve years old at the time. He witnessed the murder and it affected him badly. He began to go out a lot, started drinking and explained that he lost his path:

Hernan: *"Yes, they killed him, and this was hard, I was twelve and it was something I did not expect. One thinks that the bad things never come to us and this was something that marked my life. From this moment on I started seeing things differently. I started going out, I started drinking and things like this. However, thanks to god I overcame these things and now when I think about it, it does not make me that sad anymore and at least now I know that one has to continue to enhance their life."*

Hannes became friends with people who took drugs and got drunk a lot. He contracted Hepatitis C during the years that he spent drinking. He explained that one day he realised

that the next step on from drinking would be to take drugs. He turned to the church to become Christian[68]. He explained that he changed his life, stopped drinking alcohol, and became serious about his studies. He told me he wanted to move in the future so his children would not have to experience the same problems that he had experienced growing up. Hannes' experiences, or in Massey's words, his 'routes of the past', influence his contemporary plans for his desired future self.

7   Concluding Remarks

I started this chapter with a vignette about my journey to Pozón in order to provide an introduction to the issues which have to do with spatial mobility in Cartagena that I have touched on in the chapter. I explained how I understand neighbourhood effects as a concept; a combination of geographical effects intersecting with other factors such as ethnicity and class that reproduce inequalities in the young people's everyday lives. Comparing the two barrios, La Popa and Pozón, I demonstrated how their respective locations within the city of Cartagena affect the young people and their spatial mobility. As Pozón is a long way from the city centre, the youth living there are less able than those in La Popa to travel to the places and spaces that would provide them with the resources necessary to achieve social mobility. Pozón is also more affected by rain than La Popa and has less developed infrastructure, further hampering the ability of its young people to move around. Their navigational capacity to achieve a good life is limited by their spatial mobility or, spatial immobility, as they are not able to leave the barrio easily. The La Popa youth are, in contrast, much more mobile and can walk to important places in the city. These places include education institutions and shops, and businesses where they can find employment. The ability to hang out and to move through places other than their own immediate neighbourhoods provides the young people with important social capital. Those youth who are more spatially mobile have better chances of creating networks that might

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[68] When the young people referred to someone as a Christian, this person is religious and perceived a good person.

result in opportunities for employment and a stable income, one of the main drivers behind social mobility and the achievement of a good life.

Lastly, I discussed the effect of insecurity on the spatial mobility of the young people in my study. The segregation of the city into rich and poor areas shifts gang activity and other crime into poorer residential areas. Again, the effects of this are felt more by Pozón youth's, as the La Popa neighbourhood lies closer to the richer barrios of Cartagena. The La Popa youth live in a relatively advantageous place in this respect, one that offers them the opportunity to move more freely. But the La Popa youth still encounter limits - as they explained to me as they pointed out the boundaries of certain safe and dangerous sectors in the neighbourhood. Being known is important but many of the young people still do not feel able to go out later at night in their own sectors. The dangers of crime may influence young people and their behaviour. Most perceive the behaviour of gang members and people on the street as bad. Hannes is one example of a young person who experienced violence in the past and having been coping with it with drinking and partying. If he had not changed this behaviour he probably would not be at university studying right now and not be able to create his path towards a good life.

The social-spatial effects of the barrio are of high importance when analysing the young people's navigational capacity and the influences on it. While the former chapter included an intrinsic view of how structures are internalised, and may determine behaviour towards pursuing desired future selves, this chapter has mentioned some of the extrinsic influences on the young people's navigational capacity. What neighbourhood effects are, and how they reinforce inequalities is always context specific. In this chapter I have shown how spatial mobility affects the young peoples' ability to obtain information, reach employment, get education and enjoy recreation. It affects their ability to create *palanca* too, and to be able to study, All this affects the young people's ability to achieve upwards social mobility.

Chapter 7: Social Mobility and Opportunity Structures in Cartagena

1   Introduction

"What are your plans for the future in terms of education and work?" I ask.

Miguel looks at me and says:

"Well, short term I think, well I don't know, entering a company where they need someone who does all these things about aluminium carpentry. But I always liked to do something that is in relation to construction sites. I guess I have that in my blood from my father and uncle who are constructors themselves. I like carpentry but I would prefer architecture. This is a more serious career than acting and it offers more opportunities in terms of income. But my principal goal is being an actor in the future; that is for sure. My second choice would be architecture and my third choice working in aluminium carpentry because this would provide me with the necessary financial resources to pay for the architecture studies. And with architecture I could find a stable job to earn enough money to be able to study to be an actor, which is my passion."

Miguel and I sit in his house at a table in the front room. Miguel does not perceive himself as somebody who has a lot of ambitious desires for the future. He perceives himself as a practical person, aspiring to do things he enjoys and that seem reasonable to him to aspire to. We talk about his current educational status and he explains to me that he studies carpentry at a state technical vocational centre called SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje), with a specialisation in work with aluminium. SENA offers a wide range of courses: weekly ones, short courses of 40 hours, and longer technical programmes like the one Miguel does, which lead to professional qualifications. It is a tertiary education centre, and its programmes are aimed at people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in particular. The majority of courses are free (SENA, 2015). Miguel has already finished the theoretical classes on his carpentry course, but is yet to finish the practical component. In addition to the practical classes he takes at SENA, Miguel is supposed to gain experience through an internship, which he has to find on his own. Miguel explains he can get his degree without the internship, but that his employment opportunities will be much higher

if he is able to gain practical experience with a company while he is doing the SENA course. Miguel goes on that if he can find an internship he will only receive 75 percent of the normal salary for a carpenter. This difference in salary between an apprentice and a qualified carpenter is designed to create an incentive for companies to employ SENA students. Even though Miguel is very positive about his chances of finding a company to employ him, he tells me he has sent many applications without receiving an answer in response.

A couple of weeks later Miguel asked me if I might have time to look at his CV and the application he has been sending out. He was getting concerned because he had still not received an answer from any of the companies he had applied to and was worrying about the quality of the application. Both of the documents looked correct to me, and I was surprised that none of the companies he had written to had answered him. The situation suggested the importance of '*palanca*'; the importance of social capital to professional employment. Even though Miguel had done everything right, as far as I could see, he was not being offered an internship because of his lack of contacts.

Miguel accompanied me to Larson's house a couple of days later. I had an appointment with Larson's mother to do an interview with her. Miguel was still looking for a carpentry internship to add to his studies at SENA, and his optimism was ebbing. As we entered Larson's house Miguel's attention was immediately caught by some metal panels in the living room. Miguel asked Larson's mother why she had the panels. She explained that her son was working on a building site somewhere close by, and was storing the panels with her. Miguel thought for a moment, and then asked Larson's mother if she could tell her son that he would be available to help, should he need more workers, and that he is urgently looking for a job. Larson's mother smiled at Miguel, saying she would tell her son, but her smile was only polite and I saw in Miguel's face that he did not have much hope that Larson's brother would have some work for him. Miguel was taking chances where he found them, even if they were remote.

After a couple more weeks had passed Miguel and I talked again about his employment situation. He told me he was earning some money with a friend of his father, but only working a couple of hours per week. He had still not received an answer from any of the

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companies he applied to for an apprenticeship, and was considering changing his plans. Instead of looking for employment after studying at SENA Miguel explained that he was thinking of applying for university. He could continue to work on an hourly basis for the friend of his father in the meantime. When I left Cartagena Miguel was still unemployed, waiting for the university entrance exams to begin.

The last three chapters have looked at aspirations and young people's mobilities. I started by describing the subjective perceptions the young people in my study had of a good life. I discussed how an understanding of social mobility needs to consider more than just changes in material situation and social class, but also factors like safety, harmonious, comfortable relations with family, and stability. Aspirations are linked to social mobility and achieving a good life. I have treated them not just as aims in themselves, but also as strategies, means to achieve a good life. Educational and occupational aspirations have been a particular focus. A sense of belonging, the subject of chapter five, influences aspirations and the navigational capacity to achieve them. A sense of belonging involves the internalisation of a set of structures that give the young people a sense of themselves. In so doing they also delimit the scope of their aspirations and their ability to navigate towards them. Chapter six looked at how the neighbourhood itself, its physical features, also influenced how young people are enabled and constrained in achieving their aspirations.

Miguel's story demonstrates another influence on young people's social mobility in Cartagena - the opportunity structures in the young people's social contexts. In this chapter I am interested in looking at the young people's navigational activities in relation to upcoming or existing opportunities. The chapter discusses how the young people's ability to take educational or occupational opportunities leads to their upward or downward movement in society. In doing this the chapter provides an overview of the education and employment opportunities the young people in my study have in Cartagena and Colombia as a whole. I also look at the shifting and volatile social environment they have to navigate within. I suggest that educational and occupational opportunity structures in Cartagena limit the young people's ability to access or use these drivers of high social mobility. This is despite the fact that they are doing all the 'right' things,

according to the neoliberal aspirations literature. I show below that the young people in my study see that doing the 'right' things is not enough; they have to be inventive and flexible in their navigational strategies. It is only by being so that they will ultimately be able to live the kind of good life described in chapter 4 of the thesis.

In the following sections I link the concept of social navigation (Vigh, 2006) to the young people's behaviour - their creation of future plans and their pursuit of them. I discuss how the young people are embedded in a social context that Beck (1986) would describe as a 'risk society', where reflexivity and flexibility are demanded of the young people as social conditions frequently change. I continue the chapter by presenting the education and employment situation in Cartagena and Colombia, analysing the opportunity structures the young people must try to achieve their ideas of a good life within. I discuss some further examples of young people's stories, and how they navigate themselves within the structures, before briefly comparing how these structures are different to those of their parents youth. I suggest some connections between the differing aspirations of the young people and their parents, and the different opportunity structures they have sat within respectively. I comment briefly on what this comparison suggests about how social mobility opportunities have changed in Cartagena over the past 20 to 30 years. Finally I conclude by summarising the main contemporary barriers in the city that require the young people to adopt the kind of flexibility Miguel demonstrated.

2   A Social Navigation Perspective

Miguel's story suggests how difficult it can be for a young person from Pozón or La Popa to successfully navigate upward social mobility. It shows how young people in my study are performing what Vigh (2006) calls social navigation. As a methodological approach social navigation is defined as

> "…attentiveness to the way in which agents seek to draw and actualise their
> life trajectories in order to increase their social possibilities and life chances in
> a shifting and volatile social environment (Vigh, 2006: 11)."

The concept includes an implicit aspirational aspect and suggests that these cannot be achieved through following a linear path, as the social contexts through which people navigate often change. Young people plot their desired futures from their experiences in the present and past, aware of the fact they may need to adjust their courses to these futures, based on changes in their social surrounding.

Miguel adjusted to constraints by when he decided to try to undertake further studies at university when he failed to get a job as an apprentice carpenter. Education, in Miguel's case, did not function as a driver of social mobility in and of itself. Education does not always open a route to better employment and entry to a professional class in Cartagena, and the young people's stories show the promises it carries of social mobility are often false. Education more often became a stop-gap solution. In Miguel's case education was not so much a driver of social mobility but rather something that would simply keep him occupied, and which only offered a slim chance of mobility in the future. It was in this respect also a face saving mechanism as, even if he could not access employment in the future, he could at least not because of not trying (Threadgold and Nilan, 2009, Brown, 2013b). Other studies have suggested similarly that education does not necessarily result in better opportunities but is something that is used as a means to avoid being completely immobile or unemployed. Participants in studies of youth (im)mobilities in Zambia and Ghana described this state as 'just sitting'. It was a term used by the youth of both countries to describe those who are perceived as inactive but are looking for new possible pathways to their desired futures (Hansen, 2005, Langevang and Gough, 2009, Locke and te Lintelo, 2012).

Miguel's story highlights the need for social capital, '*palanca*'. Because Miguel did not have social capital he was unable to get an internship or enter employment in the area he was trained to work in. He did not have any contacts in companies, and Larson's mother could not provide him with the beginnings of a network to get employment locally.

This chapter argues along with the previous three chapters that the argument of the neo-liberal post-welfare discourse, that social mobility is an individual responsibility and that aspirations themselves prompt mobility, is too simplistic. This chapter is concerned with the opportunity structures that need to be present for young people to be able to attain

their aspirations. Young people from La Popa and Pozón suffer from the unequal distribution of resources in Cartagena, and it is this inequality, rather than a lack of aspiration, that limits their achievements (Threadgold and Nilan, 2009).

Furlong and Cartmel (2007: 1) argue that young people in industrialised societies have experienced changes over the last two decades, in relationship to family, leisure, education and employment. The labour market has increasingly demanded educated workers, with a higher degree of specialisation, and young people have as a result often ended up dependent on their parents for longer than in the past. The circumstances require young people to negotiate a different set of challenges than their parents did in their youth. Furlong and Cartmel base their analysis of Britain's young people and their social mobility on Beck's concept of risk society 'Risikogesellschaft'. Beck (1986, 1992) maintains that industrial societies are replaced by a new modernity, with a new set of risks and opportunities. The risks caused by new forms of war and environmental problems, amongst other things, demand new forms of negotiation in everyday life. Young people, Beck suggests, have to be more reflexive about their choices. The way young people navigate themselves in their social context is linked to habitus and the capitals available to them. Threadgold and Nilan (2009) argue that more privileged youth are more experienced at being reflexive; their habitus provides them with an advantage in negotiating future risks and maintaining a stable and secure lifestyle. The ability to be reflexive may be linked to wealth or class, although Miguel was for example, very reflexive towards the future, and the ability to be reflexive may define young people's ability to navigate towards their aspirations. But the opportunity structures they navigate within must also be considered. Young people must be able to convert habitus and capitals into real opportunities. Those young people from more privileged households tend to obtain, in addition to a habitus that equips them to be reflexive, greater access to opportunities.

While Latin American countries are not on the same development trajectory as Western societies, a significant shift towards neoliberal political and economic forms has challenged individual's ability to navigate towards upward social mobility. In the 1980s the Latin American debt crisis led to structural adjustment and neoliberal reforms across the region. These changes resulted in null or negative economic growth, high unemployment and an

increase in informal work. Wages declined in real terms, and public spending on education was reduced (Torche, 2010: 87). Most Latin American countries ended up with higher inequality after the crisis and adjustment programs, inequality from which they still suffer (Torche, 2014). Colombia itself suffered from the effects of decades long internal conflicts between government, left wing guerrillas and drug lords. Many people migrated to cities because of these conflicts, placing pressure on the economies and infrastructures of these urban areas. Cartagena was one of the cities that received many of these internal migrants. These are the broader contexts and histories that are the backdrops to struggles the young people in my study had as they tried to navigate towards a good life. Colombia's economic and political history set up a set of opportunity structures within in which young people have to be flexible if they are to move towards upward social mobility.

In the following section I set a more specific context by referring back to the structures of educational and occupational opportunities in Cartagena (discussed in chapter 2), and Colombia as a whole, based on the narratives of my participants, and data from the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estatistica (DANE).

3   Opportunity Structures in Cartagena and Colombia

I sit in Vero's house. She is Andreas' mother and we have known each other for many years. I usually visit her house whenever I visit Pozón. Andreas studied industrial design, which cost Vero a lot of money; she tells me she worked hard to allow Andreas to follow his dream. Andreas has told me that he loves industrial design and would like to run a design company of his own in the future. Perhaps it could be the best in Colombia. But Andreas finished his studies a year ago and has still not been able to find a company that will employ him. Sometimes he works in a big supermarket chain to earn some money to contribute to the household's income. He lives alone with his mother in a two room flat, the second room being both the living room and his mother's bedroom. The flat composes the upstairs part of a house owned by Vero's family. The downstairs floor has another four rooms in which Andreas's grandmother, aunt and two other families live with their children. I sit upstairs on Vero's bed in front of the window to catch some of the wind that

is circulating in from outside. Vero gives me some food and asks me about my work. I ask her how Andreas is doing. Hearing his name he comes out of his room and sits next to me. I ask him about his job at the supermarket. Andreas answers that at the moment he is waiting for them to call him, he has not heard from the manager for a while. I want to know what else he is doing. He looks at me and says that he has difficulties finding a job related to his degree. Vero interrupts and says to Andreas that he needs to call an acquaintance of hers who has contacts in the Mamonal, the main industrial area of the city. She tells Andreas he should ask her friend if he can get him some work there, maybe at Ecopetrol. Andreas says he will call his mother's friend but then he goes on by telling me that he is thinking of studying something else. I am surprised as I thought his studies at the University of Bellas Artes had qualified him for a job; why then invest more money in further studies? Andreas also wanted to start his own company at one point (described in chapter 4) but all seemed to have changed now. Andreas explains to me that the institution where he wants to continue his studies is a technical school and would be more affordable than university. The course would complement his university qualification, and hopefully help him get a stable job.

A couple of months later I talk to Andreas again. I ask him about his current situation. He tells me he is finishing studies in data network management and is looking for internship opportunities at companies in Cartagena. I am surprised that he is now studying a topic related to Internet security; it doesn't seem related to industrial design. Andreas tells me that he wanted to be an industrial designer, but he could not find a further course that would complement his former studies, and could not find a job related to industrial design either. So he decided to start a new career instead at the technical state college SENA. I ask if he likes the course. He explains that he enjoys it, and is excited by the prospect of his career; he feels a lot of new technology would soon emerge, driving up demand for people with his kind of qualification.

Through his education Andreas tried to position himself so that he might achieve a good job in the future and, as a result, a good life with a stable and secure income. Brown (2013b: 681) explains that social mobility can take place in two ways, first as absolute mobility and second as relative mobility. Absolute social mobility occurs when social

movement within a society's hierarchy becomes possible because of changes in class and opportunity structures. This can occur when, for example, the demand for middle-class jobs is higher than the number of middle class youth available to take them. The jobs thus become available for youth that are from lower classes. Relative social mobility occurs when opportunities arise independent of changes to larger occupational or class structures (Brown, 2013b: 681). Therefore, while absolute social mobility measures the absolute number of people who move upward or downward in society, relative social mobility is concerned with the chances or prospects people from different social backgrounds have to attain different social positions. Relative social mobility is a ranking of movements of people in a society in relation to each other. Absolute and relative social mobility can even take place in reverse; while someone may have moved upward in terms of absolute social mobility, by achieving a better status job than for example his or her parents, his job can still be ranked lower than the average job of the relevant comparison population (Breen, 2010). Miguel and Andreas both moved upward in terms of absolute mobility by achieving higher educational degrees. But as there are more Cartagenians who now achieve these degrees than did in the past, their relative mobility is much lower.

3.1   Looking for a Job and Entering the Labour Market

Santiago, one of the young boys from Pozón, wrote me a private message on Facebook in August 2015, about a year after I had returned from fieldwork. He asked me how I was doing and how my PhD was going? Happy to hear from him I asked in reply about how much progress he had made towards entering university and studying? He had explained to me when I had been in Cartagena that his aim of studying law was a compromise for him; he really wanted to study medicine. He said he had always known that medicine was something of a dream, as he could not see how he could afford to pay for medical studies. Even if he could get some money and perhaps a student credit, he explained he would still have had to do the entrance exam, and that only those who rank very high in the results' tables are able to enter the public university's medical course.

When Santiago answered my message on Facebook he told me that he was not doing anything, and waiting for an opportunity. He wrote that he got accepted, and started studying, but had to stop because he could not pay the fees. His plan was to receive a scholarship but *'this went wrong'.* He wrote that he would now have to reorganise his life. He did not tell me what went wrong with the scholarship.

Santiago was one of the young people in my study from the most marginalised part of Pozón. His household is poor even by the standard of the barrio, and is spatially marginalised in an area that regularly floods during the rains. It is also dangerous at night. When we exchanged messages on Facebook Santiago was struggling to work out what to do to improve his social condition, and work towards his aspiration of becoming a doctor. He had run out of options and was waiting for new ones to appear. He was, similarly to some of the young people of Langevang and Gough's (2009) study of youth in Ghana, 'just sitting'. Although they try to avoid it, many young people in Cartagena end up 'just sitting'. Many of them eventually try to earn money through informal work or start driving moto-taxi to earn money.[69] Some of them may change their plans for good and look for jobs where tertiary education is not a requirement.

There are a couple of important economic sectors in Cartagena, in which young people often look for work. Cartagena is well known for its tourist industry; it has its historical centre, the beaches of Bocagrande and is relatively close to many attractive destinations in the Caribbean. Many foreigners and nationals spend their holidays in the old colonial city. Cartagena is also the location of one of the most important ports on the Colombian Caribbean. One of the biggest oil refineries in Colombia is situated in the city's industrial area, Mamonal. While many young people mentioned to me they would like to work at Ecopetrol, they did not express much desire to work in the tourist industry. According to DANE however, the majority of employment opportunities in Cartagena are in the commerce sector, in particular in restaurants and hotels. In 2015 30.7 percent of the Cartagenian population was working in these sectors (with a decline of 1.9 percent in comparison to the 2014 figures). 24.2 percent was working in community services and the

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[69] Information is from an interview with one of the professors at the public University of Cartagena.

public sector (this number increased by 9.4 percent in comparison to 2014). One of the sectors that is offering more employment is the construction sector, in which 8.9 percent of the Cartagenian population were working in 2015, a rise of 10.3 percent. Miguel and James, who desire jobs within the construction sector, chose courses of further education accordingly. Miguel's struggles to find employment can therefore be better explained as a lack of *palanca* - social capital. The figure below presents the distribution of the employed population of Cartagena, across economic sectors, 2014-2015.
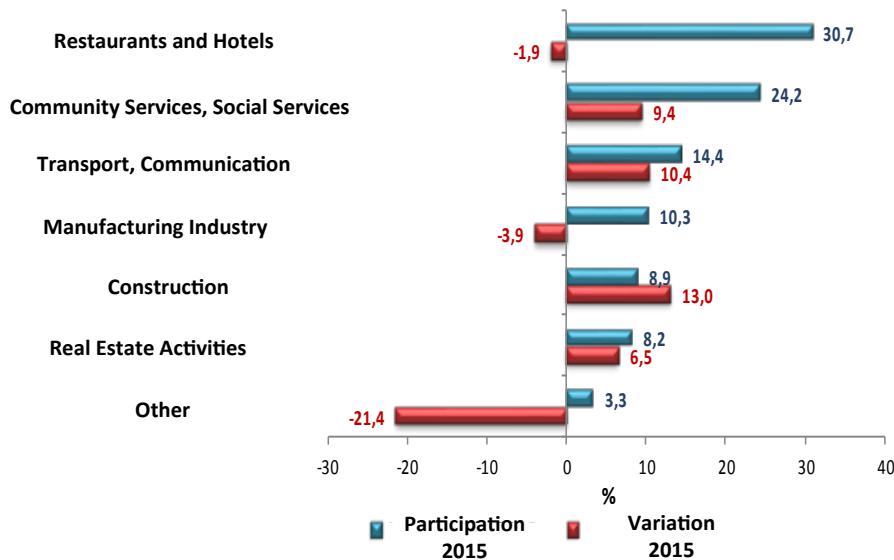
Figure 5 Distribution of the employed population. Cartagena[70]

Therefore opportunities for young people without tertiary education degrees lie mainly in the tourism industry. However, De la Hoz et al. (2013) claim that in 2010, 28 percent of unemployed young people search for jobs in the construction industry (mainly young men rather than girls). Young people in their study often only mentioned the tourism industry as something of a last resort. Only 8 percent of young people looked for jobs in the sector; there was a mismatch in other words between the demand for and the supply of occupational opportunities in the youth labour market in Cartagena.

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[70] Source: DANE - GEIH 2015

The young people in my study were reluctant to enter the tourism industry with a bachelor qualification. They rather aspired to study at a higher level and seek out professional employment. This aspiration may be connected to the doxa that higher education degrees are necessary to find successful employment, devaluing degrees that are not university degrees. Yorlanda from La Popa told me that she believed a technical degree would not provide her with many job opportunities. She did a technical degree but then changed her plans and entered university. She studied Spanish language (Castellano) there and was aiming to become a teacher when I was doing my fieldwork. She explained:

"Well, before, when I finished my bachiller I wanted to study social communication (media degree) or something similar. But economically the resources of my parents were not sufficient. So there was the opportunity to study early child development, which is a technical career. I finished it and I spend two years without studying and I started to work, until now. Now I went back to study for two and a half years because I am in the fifth semester. So I thought I study again as I studied in a technical institute which is not really of much value here. If I had studied from the beginning what I am doing now I would be finished by now and would have a job. That is why I think I lost a bit of time but it also helped me as I worked already but I would have a job already in what I am studying."

Yorlanda explained that her opportunities changed in the past, and that this shift was closely connected to the economic situation of her family. She referred to the technical degree as being of less value, even though she has already some work experience and believed a professional degree would provide her with more employment opportunities in the future.

In Cartagena the doxa and the actual labour market situation are mismatched. This mismatch between the supply of work opportunities and the kind of jobs young people want, is also connected to race and the way that race interrelates with social status. Having a tertiary university degree and working in a professional job places the young people in what, in Colombia, are high status positions. In those positions they are perceived as 'mas claro' (more white) and less likely to be stigmatised because of their race. Service jobs in the tourism industry - waiting and cleaning for example - are low

status jobs associated with the Afro-Colombian population and classifying people as 'mas oscuro' (more dark or black).[71]

The young people I met who did aspire to work in non-professional jobs, did not aim for the main tourist sector in Cartagena. Marci is 15 years old and lives in Pozón. When I asked her what she wants to do when she is older she listed a variety of different occupations, two of them non-professional jobs. She started by saying she wanted to have her own businesses *"I want to have my own business, a fashion shop and a restaurant. […] and I want to study medicine. Forensic medicine."*

This list of different, apparently unrelated occupational desires for the future suggests two things. First, thinking from a social navigation perspective, it seems likely that Marci is aware of the need to be flexible, to change her plans according to changes in her social environment and the opportunities it presents. Second, and relatedly, Marci lives in one of the poorer, more dangerous sectors of Pozón; her geographical mobility is restricted and she rarely leaves the barrio. Her desires to own a clothes shop and a restaurant were aspirations she wanted to realise in Pozón, or at least close to Pozón. While commercial shops and restaurants for tourists are listed as places of work for many Cartageneros currently, Marci's desire however was not specifically targeted for the tourist market. She said her desire to open a restaurant is the desire that people can taste the food of her aunts, as she believes it is very good. The form of her aspirations could be connected to her immobility, and not having the information about opportunities within the tourist sector. Still regarding her age, these aspirations may become more context related in the future and change when she needs to decide how to continue after having finished her secondary schooling.

4   Social Mobility and the Past Experiences of Adults

An intergenerational comparison between the young people and their parents' social mobility and opportunities can provide insights into the way young people's absolute and

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[71] From my own observations in hotels and restaurants in the historical centre and Bocagrande

relative social mobility has changed; it provides a way of appreciating how opportunity structures have changed. What do the young people's parents think about young people's opportunities today in comparison to those of their youth? How have life chances and opportunities changed within a generation? I cannot do a comprehensive analysis of intergenerational mobility, but in what follows I do try to give a sense of how life may have changed in Cartagena over the last two or three decades. It is important to emphasise here that what follows is based on the subjective views of the people I talked with during my fieldwork; relevant secondary quantitative data referring to Cartagena in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s is not available. I look at the stories parents and adults told me about their youth and how they perceive changes in the opportunity structures. My sample of parents and adults is also too small to be representative for all adults in Cartagena.

I asked Cassandra, a mother of three living in Pozón about her social mobility in the past. Cassandra grew up in a rural area close to Cartagena and her family moved into the city when her father died. Cassandra worked as a servant in the home of a rich family in the city. She said her brother had mental health problems and could not do anything to support the family. Although Cassandra's mother encouraged her to study, when she became 18 and graduated with her Bachiller, her family did not have the financial means to send her to the public university. Cassandra was able to study at SENA at 25, then with the support of her church she was finally able to go to university.

"When I graduated I was 18 but I did not study until I was 25. There was only the university of Cartagena and you needed to pay per semester, plus the transport. My mother had not the income for that and entering SENA was only possible if you had the contacts that time. I applied two times at SENA and my results of the exam were very good but apparently there was a problem with my name and they declined me. At the end I could enter SENA and I did many courses. One of the professors then helped me to matriculate in a technical degree and I became later a secretary at SENA. Later then I did some social services with the church and they paid then later my university. Therefore I applied at university and passed the exam the first time and they paid my fees."

Cassandra's statement suggested that the need for *palanca* existed in the past as it does in contemporary Cartagena. Yet Cassandra also said there was only one university, the public

one. There were not the numerous private universities that provide those who can afford it with more educational opportunities in Cartagena today. The number of places available at the public university was low in Cassandra's youth, just as was the case when I was doing my fieldwork. The mother of Alessandra, from La Popa, told me that she had also wanted to study when she was young. Yet she could not enter university because there were not enough places. She therefore did a technical degree instead. Today her aspiration is that Alessandra can finish her studies of social work at the university of Cartagena successfully.

In terms of changes in opportunity structures, Magda's mother, from La Popa, told me that she believes young people have more opportunities to study and to work in contemporary Cartagena, but that they may just not be aware of them.

"Of course, today young people have more opportunities but I am not sure to what extent they can see that. For example, here at the hill we have many gangs and these young people take drugs. Their mothers send them to schools because here we have now many schools free of tuition fees. But the young people are just not interested in education. There are even possibilities to receive some financial help for studying at university, therefore those who are interested can obtain help but in reality there are not many young people here who are interested."

Magda was one of the few students from a barrio popular who successfully entered the public university to study medicine the year I was in Cartagena. I was doing an interview with her the day that she got accepted, and her neighbours came into the room to congratulate her because it was such a significant, rare achievement. Her mother told me she had always supported her daughter; she believes that those young people that want to succeed are able to. Yet Magda's mother seemed to have subscribed to the neo-liberal discourse of aspirations, missing the fact that limited places make it highly unlikely that many other young people could follow her own daughter's path. While Magda is an exception, it seems her mother believe all young people are able to achieve what her daughter did. However, this is not the case. Just because there exist now more Universities than before and because there are more financial support systems does not mean automatically that the young people have access to them.

Of the eight adults I interviewed in La Popa, three were able to study at university, one of them, Yoelis, having just entered university part time. The other five however had obtained only a technical degree. In Pozón, of the 13 adults I interviewed, only one, Cassandra, had obtained a university degree. Many of the other parents and adults obtained a Bachiller but only three have a technical degree.

This difference between Pozón and La Popa is not surprising given that Pozón originally developed as a series of illegal settlements founded by internal migrants. La Popa is in contrast an older area of settlement, and the infrastructure for education has been more developed for a longer period of time. As I wrote in chapter six the positions of the barrios also mean more educational facilities are available to people in La Popa than people in Pozón. This has been true for a number of decades.

The narratives of the adults in my study suggest that absolute mobility has improved through the provision of more educational facilities and financial aid in Cartagena. Studies of intergenerational mobility in Colombia and Latin America suggest that young people with high-educated parents are more likely to achieve themselves high educational outcomes (Savage and Egerton, 1997, Stromquist, 2004, de Barros et al., 2009, Benei, 2010, Torche, 2014). The neighbourhood effects and mobility literature includes the educational level of parents as a facet of the social environment through which intergenerational inequalities are reproduced (Wilson and Wilson, 1987, Musterd and Andersson, 2006, Reynolds, 2013). Yet, the number of parents I could talk to and the sample size of my study in general did not let me make any representative conclusion about the intergenerational aspect of mobility.

Certainly, at the time I was living in Cartagena there were more companies and educational facilities in the city than there were when the young people's parents' were young. SENA developed into one of the major technical and technological institutes providing free education. Entering SENA relies less on students' *palanca* than some of the private institutions. Additionally, the rise in the tourist industry and the development of the port and the Mamonal industrial area has provided more occupational opportunities. However, the fact that the population of Cartagena has grown in the period as well relativises the effects of these educational and industrial developments.

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Looking at absolute mobility, class structures and contextual barriers have to be included in the analysis and in this case absolute mobility still contains many structural barriers that I discussed in the former chapters such as the disadvantage of being from barrios populares and labelled as such. Also barriers in terms of economic capital hinder the young people to enhance their upward social mobility successfully as private institutions are not affordable and places in public ones are limited. As described in the context chapter before, Cartagena is a segregated city and offers different opportunities for different people. It is a post-colonial city, which reproduces colonial structures in everyday life. This is visible in the population and the correspondent estratos as well as when one looks at companies and the tourist industries and who is in charge of what in the city. Miguel, Andreas, Yorlanda and Alessandra are good examples in this chapter of young people who could take advantage of the relative mobility effects and enter educational systems to enhance their capitals and acquire resources such as cultural capital. However, gaining knowledge about work opportunities and acquiring the right social capital, a requirement to obtain a good employment, appears to be better distributed in higher social classes.

5   Concluding Remarks

When I left Cartagena after my fieldwork Miguel and I stayed in touch and talked over Facebook every couple of weeks. He told me that he continued to have difficulties finding a job and told me about several different plans to study something related to construction, as long as it was cheap. When I went back to Cartagena a year after my first fieldwork visit, in January 2015, Miguel had started studying construction technology, part of a civil engineering degree. If he continued his studies he would eventually obtain a technological degree. I was interested in the reason he had chosen the institute he had, and not one of the bigger Universities in the city. Miguel told me that the major Universities were too expensive - both in terms of the fees, and the amount of money it would cost him to travel to them. The institute he chose is much closer to Pozón, and it had provided him with a student credit to study.

In addition Miguel obtained a scholarship for studying arts and acting at the University of Bellas Artes. However, the university sent him the confirmation through email and Miguel missed the confirmation date, as he had no own computer and could not access the Internet in the necessary timeframe to confirm the scholarship. As a result he lost the scholarship. He wanted to try for the scholarship again next year, reluctant to give up his dream of being an actor in the future.

Colombia may not have changed in form of a transition from a welfare state into what Beck (1986) calls a risk society. But Colombia is still a 'risk' environment where young people cannot be certain of future life chances and need to negotiate changing educational and work opportunities (Beck, 1986, Threadgold and Nilan, 2009). The young people in my study face the barriers of a neoliberal political and economic environment, combined with barriers of racism and class left over from the colonial period. In chapter 2 I provded information of how education has been privatised to a high extent and thus was for the majority of the young people in my study unaffordable. Yet higher education and in particular university education, was perceived by the young people as the main driver of social mobility. In practice however, the unavailability of university education turns it from being a social mobility driver to a placeholder. They choose to study more at universities or other higher education institutions but they lack the *palanca* - social capital - to enter the sectors they desire to work in. Although other employment opportunities could be possible pathways, especially in the tourist sector, the young people - who are eager to develop a professional career - may not always decide for these jobs, as some of them are perceived as being of low status. Although it might not lead to social mobility, employment in the tourist sector would guarantee some income and serve to fulfil some of the facets of a good life, as defined by young people in chapter 4. While the employment market may offer the young people certain work opportunities, their aspirations often do not match these.

Brown (2013b) argues that absolute mobility depends on class structures, but also on the demand from the employment market. When the supply of middle class youth is exhausted, occupational opportunities become available for youth of lower classes. It

positions the young people in Cartagena in a situation where they have no choice but to choose (Threadgold and Nilan, 2009: 51) and where they need to socially navigate (Vigh, 2006) themselves according to opportunities that become available (see for example Miguel). There do not exist enough opportunities in Cartagena for lower class youth to participate in the economy, at least in the sectors they desire to work in. The doxa of higher education does not match the opportunity structures poor youth in Cartagena sit in.

In this way, this chapter links back to Bourdieu and his theory of how social reproduction occurs. The young people of my study prepare themselves, they try hard to acquire the necessary capitals and follow the neoliberal discourse of aspiring high and acting accordingly. Still, as long as opportunity structures create this exclusion, upward social mobility can only be achieved by very few of them.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the introduction to the thesis I wrote about Maja and Santiago, two young people from the most disadvantaged and marginalised sectors of Pozón. They had spent all their lives in Pozón, disconnected geographically from the centre of Cartagena, and other important places. Poor infrastructure has further isolated them; travelling to places outside their own neighbourhood is only possible when it is daylight, the rains are not heavy, and there is enough money available at home. In most cases their families could not provide them with such financial support, or financial support for much. Neither did Maja and Santiago have much in the way of social capital, *palanca*, in their families. Maja and Santiago are of African-descent and have experienced exclusion as a result. Their Afro-Caribbean identity intersects with their class, or socioeconomic background, further stigmatising them in Cartagenian society.

Yet they despite being in these positions, both aspired to a better life, a good life. Santiago aspired to become a medical professional; he only shifted his aspirations towards other possible university degrees when he realised he will not be able to obtain the funds needed to complete medical studies. Maja aspired to study social communication, and to an independent lifestyle. Maja and Santiago cannot really be described as having low aspirations. Even when Santiago switched his plans, his aspirations remained relatively high. When he did this, Santiago, like other young people in the study was trying to negotiate a pathway towards achieving a good life, within the opportunity structure he found himself in (Vigh, 2006).

In contrast to the Western neoliberal approach to aspirations (Brown, 2013a), Maja and Santiago, and the other young people in my study, demonstrate that social mobility and the achievement of a good life relates to much more than simply having high aspirations for the future. All my participants provided statements about their desired futures that were, according to the dominant aspiration-social mobility discourse, high aspirations. Indeed, they not only developed high aspirations but also a capacity to plan how to navigate pathways towards achieving them. The actual achievements of the young people

in my study, with a couple of important exceptions, like Magda who qualified to study medicine, were quite low. But all showed a large degree of resilience and flexibility, readjusting, and changing their plans as opportunities dictated, remaining focused on finding a good life in the end.

Through a Bourdieusian lens, using concepts of habitus, capitals and space (field), in combination with theories of neighbourhood effects, social navigation and Appadurai's understanding of aspirations as a cultural and navigational capacity, I have attempted to capture the complexities of how social and physical contexts both serve to drive and limit the young people's opportunities for social mobility and the achievement of their aspirations and a good life. My analysis focused on intersections of belonging, stigma and spatial immobility, connected to disadvantaged place. The thesis reveals how local and broader structural factors (such as education and employment structures) all work together, reinforcing each other as they delimit the lives of the young participants in my study.

The following sections of the conclusion suggest how the main themes in each of the chapters are interconnected. I continue with a critical review of my conceptual framework, and then offer a summary of my contributions to theoretical and methodological debates. I finish the thesis by identifying possible future research areas, giving the last word to the participants who have been at the centre of this thesis throughout.

1   Aspirations and Mobility

There is a discourse in the aspirations and social mobility literature that perceives aspirations as drivers of social mobility; they act as a means and a motivation for people to alter their social condition. (Appadurai, 2004, Brown, 2011, Brown, 2013a, Kintrea et al., 2015). Aiming for higher educational and occupational opportunities results in moving up a society's social hierarchy (cf. Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011, Allen and Hollingworth, 2013, Gale and Parker, 2015). The neoliberal view in this understanding of aspirations has in some places become a doxa, particularly with regard to higher education. This was the case in Cartagena. This doxa, a focus on aspirations as *the* medium to raise education

attainment and employability leads to the achievement of a good life being seen as the sole responsibility of the individual. A 'lack of aspiration' becomes an easy explanation for poor educational and occupational outcomes and hides structural inequalities.

Work on habitus, capitals and field suggests how the structures and contexts people live in affect the formation of their aspirations and their ability to achieve them. Individual effort to achieve aspirations is certainly an important factor but intersecting structural influences of the places and spaces young people move in in their everyday lives and the opportunities to acquire capitals influences young Cartagenians' life chances. This is where habitus plays a crucial role in the understanding of aspirations and their achievement. Stahl (2015: 25-27) claims that habitus allows researchers to conceptualise aspirations beyond goals, motivation or choice. Habitus connects aspirations to experiences, connections I evidenced looking at the young people's trajectories or histories. When habitus and field do not correspond to each other, young people are likely to fail in achieving their aspirations as their habitus is not the one required and they lack the capitals necessary to succeed in a specific social space.

As well as introducing the way their individual aspirations are connected to their social contexts, chapter one also suggested that what the aspirations-upward social mobility discourse conceives what a good life might be is too narrow. Rather than just being limited to educational and occupational achievements, the young Cartagenians in my study saw a good life as going beyond these things. Money, education and employment in the future were important, but only in terms of that they might help the young people and their future families to be safe, comfortable and financially stable. Young people did not aspire to luxury. The chapter emphasised the subjective nature of the good life as a concept. In contrast to the aspirations-upward social mobility discourse, money is rather perceived as means to the end of a good life.

2   A Sense of Belonging

Habitus, as a set of internalised dispositions, acquired through socialisation processes determines to a large extent what social spaces a person feels comfortable and accepted

within. While the young people in my study are aspirational and aim for high educational and occupational outcomes, my analysis of their sense of belonging shows that the young people's habitus may constrain them in achieving those aspirations. In relation to a sense of belonging habitus provides one with the knowledge of what to do, when and how in certain places and spaces, and makes one feel comfortable moving within them (Bourdieu, 1977, May, 2013). A sense of belonging is then influencing in particular the navigational capacity to achieve aspirations. Through the internalisation of structures, and providing one with a feeling at ease in certain spaces and places a sense of belonging influences the young people's mobilities and creates of what Bourdieu refers to as 'a sense of place' (Bourdieu, 2010 (1984): 466). This sense of place works as a distinction tool based on habitus and defines who does belong to a space or group, of people and who does not. As a result it causes people to feel like they belong, but it also works to make others feel the other way around and people who do not belong feel they are distanced (Bourdieu, 1989).

I argued that stigma works in relation to this tension over belonging. Chapter five showed that the young people are often stigmatised as dangerous and violent. A sense of belonging to the barrio provides the young people with a feeling of safety in the spaces and places they move in, because they are known (Visser et al., 2014). Being known enhances the physical mobility of the young people. However, while they need social networks to feel safe within their own neighbourhoods, belonging to their neighbourhoods associates them with crime and criminal behaviour in the eyes of other groups in Cartagena. They are stigmatised through association to discourses about violence and crime in the media, and amongst Cartagenians in general. As a result then of the feeling of belonging to the barrio, the young people may exclude themselves from places and spaces of higher education and professional employment, or be excluded by others (Threadgold and Nilan, 2009, Stahl, 2015).

3   Mobility and the Neighbourhood

As Prince (2013) argues, physical environment plays a crucial role in the development of the possible future selves of young people. Neighbourhoods themselves have been

identified as influencing aspirations and their achievement. For example, infrastructure and immediate environmental effects such as noise and security issues influence the young people's mobilities and their opportunities to acquire the kind of capitals necessary to achieve a good life. Looking at physical neighbourhood further shifted my analysis of aspirations away from individual effort.

In chapter six I looked at the physical context of La Popa and Pozón within Cartagena, and the physical context within each barrio; suggesting the ways in which both of these influenced the lives of the young people in my study. I described how Pozón is one hour's bus drive away from the city centre, limiting the young people's spatial mobility to a high extent, relative to the youth of La Popa. Universities, places of employment and of recreation are all concentrated in the city centre. Both La Popa and Pozón suffer from gang activity within their boundaries. Although 'being known' in their respective barrio keeps the young people safe a lot of the time, in some sectors and at some times, like when gangs are fighting, they are still limited in where they can go. The rainy season also limits the young people's movements in both barrios. These aspects of their neighbourhoods in relation with their situation within Cartagena, and their internal dynamics, influence to a high extent the young people's social and physical mobility, and thus their access to possible social mobility drivers like education.

4   Opportunity Structures and Social Navigation

The majority of the young people in my study are able to react to changes. They navigate themselves along alternative routes by acquiring new capitals, often in the form of further education, when opportunities emerge. Whilst skilled navigators, they can only move where opportunities are available. While many of the young people react to challenges and barriers by undertaking further education, the education system in Cartagena and Colombia excludes most young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds from quality education. Thus young people tend to choose technical and technological educational institutions. These institutions may serve as a 'placeholder' rather than a driver to upward social mobility as qualifications from them often do not actually result in

employment. Without '*palanca*' (social capital), educational qualifications, even from private universities, are of limited use.

Many employment opportunities are offered in the tourist sector in Cartagena. Most of these do not require a tertiary qualification. The young people did not however aspire to these jobs. They sought careers that would result in a status change and a stable income, neither of which was guaranteed by service work in the tourism sector.

While the young people in Cartagena tried hard to prepare themselves to achieve a good life, to enter a profession associated with higher classes, they were limited in their opportunities to acquire the necessary capitals to realise these aspirations. Combined with the absence of the necessary corresponding habitus and their spatial immobility, the lack of education and employment opportunities limited the choices young people could make. It was not a lack of aspiration that restricted the young people's social mobility, but a lack of supporting structures and opportunities.

5   Contribution to Knowledge and Implications for Future Research Areas

This research makes multiple theoretical and methodological contributions. It contributes to discussions and debates in youth and development studies that are concerned with young people's aspirations and social mobility outcomes. It furthermore adds to debates around issues regarding youth in Latin America and their life chances. The topics of aspirations and how young people navigate towards attaining them have rarely been explored in Latin America and the literature is particularly thin for Colombia. Theoretically I developed a framework based on Bourdieu's ideas on habitus, fields and doxa. The framework drew on other concepts and frames through the thesis, the most important of these being belonging, neighbourhood effects and social navigation. Methodically, I have contributed to an emerging literature and research practice that focuses on combining participatory and traditional methods and subject participation.

5.1   Theoretical contributions

Bourdieu's concepts, in particular habitus, have been widely employed in research on young people's aspirations. However the majority of research on aspirations that uses a Bourdieusian lens is on the Global North (MacLeod, 2009, Bok, 2010, Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011, Hart, 2012, Zipin et al., 2013, Kintrea et al., 2015). Research on aspirations and social mobility in Latin American contexts is still rare and predominantly quantitative (see for some recent research for example Altamirano et al., 2010, Del Franco, 2010, Dercon and Singh, 2011, Crivello, 2015, Dalton et al., 2015). This is especially true for Colombia.

From a development studies' perspective, aspirations play a crucial role for young people in enhancing their life chances. As Appadurai (2004) argues, aspirations can act as triggers to alter young people's social conditions. Still, a singular focus on aspirations conceptualised in this way, misses social context and its role on their formation and achievement. In the Global North and South, young people face restrictions on achieving upward social mobility. While most Western countries have a wide range of channels along which young people may be able to navigate themselves towards upward mobility, in Cartagena's barrios populares, such channels are more restricted. They are also more likely to shift. The limits of opportunity structures in the barrios populares means there is a high risk of young people navigating themselves towards illegal activities to gain economical capital. The young people of my study did not tend to choose illegal ways to achieve social mobility. Still in Latin America and Central America young people do regularly navigate themselves into violent lives. The work of Winton (2004, 2005, 2014), Moser and Moser and McIllwaine (2001, 2004, 2004, 2006, 2014) illustrates how structures of inequality and exclusion create cultures of violence. My study of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Cartagena contributes to this literature by providing insights on why young people may choose illegal and violent channels for social mobility. Therefore looking at how young people are enabled or constrained by their social context when they try to navigate themselves to achieve social mobility is also of interest for studies of young people with different life paths than those of my young participants. While the young people of my study did not choose illegal pathways, if opportunity structures are restricted

and access to resources is limited young people may choose differently and become for example gang members to obtain some sort of social mobility.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus provides a theoretical instrument for analysing young people's life chances. Habitus describes the way young people think and act, and connects these thoughts and actions to past and present experiences, in their social contexts or fields. Habitus is always in relation to the social space (field) young people move in, influencing the capitals they acquire. It connects their agency and the structures they exercise agency in. One important point my research adds to current work is that social mobility is influenced by the structures of young people's social context, even though these might be embodied and appear as individualised in the lives of young people.

I developed the Bourdieusian framework through the thesis, showing how his work links up to other concepts and theories concerning aspiration and mobility. These included concepts of belonging, neighbourhood effect, and social navigation. I also looked at Beck's idea of a risk society in the last chapter (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Set against Bourdieu's theories, what these other concepts have all helped to indicate is the way that the inequalities that the young people in my study faced could not be overcome exclusively through their individual efforts. These concepts might be perceived as being theoretically detached from each other, used in in different fields and disciplines and not usually combined into one framework. I have however shown that they can speak to each other. The framework in my thesis developed through an iterative process of dialogue between data and theory, the complexities of the data prompting the combination of the theoretical lenses that I have used. Together they have allowed me to analyse the complexities of aspirations and their attainment as I have in the thesis.

5.2   Methodological Contribution

In terms of methodological contribution, I used an ethnographic approach, combining traditional and participatory research methods. Beginning by using interviews and focus groups to establish key knowledge about the young people's aspirations and the influence of their social contexts on their lives, I was then able to examine those social spaces directly through 'hanging out' with the young people. The young people were included in

the research process through the use of participatory instruments. Using techniques such as photographing and filming within research with young people is a recent innovation (Langevang, 2007, Crivello et al., 2008, Franks, 2011). My research provides examples of how multiple methods can be used to conduct research with young people to draw out their views, experiences and knowledge. The young people were able to shift the research topic through their participation. They chose what to photograph and what topic their short film should be about for example. Their mapping and the tours they gave me of their neighbourhoods indicated to me what was important to them. These ideas influenced my theoretical framework and, as a result, the arguments I have made in the thesis. It was, for example, the participation of the young people in the research process that has enabled me to write about their subjective perceptions of a good life. My perspective was not excluded in the research, as I discussed in chapter 3, but the use of participatory methods created spaces within the research where the young people's preoccupations or concerns could be discussed, and perspective challenged.

5.3   Future Research Implications

Research on young people's social mobility and aspirations in Latin American countries, in particular from a qualitative perspective, is still scarce. Therefore I suggest that my research opened up issues from which further research can take place. Further research should lead to the articulation of policies that will assist young people to achieve upward social mobility. In particular research that includes a focus on the structural components and their relationship to young people's aspirations and mobility will be important. For example, more research is needed into how access to educational institutions may enhance young people's social mobility in Colombia. Particularly where young people belong to neighbourhoods in cities that are undergoing processes of neoliberal socioeconomic change, it will be important to analyse young people's opportunities beyond education, as my study has shown that limited employment opportunities mean that education may often only be a placeholder for young people, rather than a driver for social mobility. A key question that arises is what kind of education offers the opportunity to realise aspirations?

On a related point, my research was not able to accompany the young people long enough to examine this aspect of aspiration and mobility in depth. In order to get a better understanding of social reproduction processes it will be helpful to include a longitudinal component into future research. Also comparing young people from different social classes over a long period of time would provide insights into the specific differences between how young people's spaces and places enable or constrain them.

Future research should also take into account that young people's perception of a good life is subjective. In development studies there may be a danger that researchers may ascribe young people's aspirations to them, rather than letting young people express them themselves. In terms of my own research, the young people's reluctance to enter into employment in the tourism sector, which would have provided them with some income and security, highlighted the fact that young people are not just motivated by material needs. They did not just take any job, despite their poverty. They were willing to sacrifice some material gain and pursue much more unlikely careers in professional sectors.

6   Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I have explored young Cartagenians' aspirations and their attainment within a complex social, political and historical environment. I argued that social structures in Cartagena exclude young people from lower social backgrounds, and that as such the formulation of aspirations and their attainment cannot be perceived as simply the outcome of individual effort. In Cartagena, shifts to include its barrios populares in development projects, the education system, and in professional labour sectors are necessary if young Cartagenians are to move upward in the social hierarchy in their city, rather than being mobile only in their own barrio. The young people in my study demonstrate they are ready for this shift in the kinds of aspirations they have. They are also resilient; counteracting the structures of exclusion and inequality they face everyday. But they will only achieve more success in reaching their aspirations if opportunity structures in Cartagena change to allow them better possibilities to navigate towards their ideas of a good life.

I want to finish my thesis by giving voice again to one of those young people who have been the focus of it. I want to end with Magda, and a very positive example of how young people in Cartagena are able to counteract the disadvantaged contexts they find themselves in, and achieve social mobility. Magda was not able to participate much in my research until near its end. This was due to her having been accepted at the Medical school at the public university, her studies at which took up most of her time. Magda lives in La Popa and the following narrative she offered me shows how young people from barrios populares can realise desired future selves and counteract the structures limiting their life chances.

"My cousins and brother, they actually were part of gangs. I also suffered from depression and was taking medicine for twelve years. My relationship with my father was also very bad. At the end my mother and I left and moved to this house. Today everything changed and I am happy. I do not need medicine anymore and feel not depressed […] Now I want to start studying next year and become a great medical professional, a great psychiatrist. I do not have many aspirations with respect to family and these things, only my mother who did everything for me. I want to help her to be happy […] It is really difficult to enter medicine (at university). There are only 40 places available per year, 15 places are allocated for communities (certain ethnic communities she means), 5 places are allocated according to each ethnicity. I presented as part of the black community and achieved to be the first out of 21 […] however, at the end I would have been accepted also if I did not have presented myself as part of the black community (as she ranked very high in the entry exam in general). I want to open my own practice. At the moment I study nursing and I don't like to take orders, I want to be independent. I always knew what I wanted and fought for it hard. I presented three times at university and now I finally achieved it.'

II   References

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III   Appendices

Interview Schedule for Young People

These are questions that I referred to during my interviews. They are, however, rather topics than a strict followed interview question and interviews may cover all of them, most of them or even ask different ones that emerged during the interview.

Interview schedule:

Neighbourhood:
Date:
No. of Interview
Age:
Pseudonym:

1. Occupation:

2. Where in the suburb living?

3. What is that for a section? How is it characterised?

4. Living in that suburb for how many years?

5. Parents come from?

6. With whom you are living?

7. How many people in the household work and contribute to this income?

8. What do your parents do for living?

9. Would you perceive yourself better of than others or worse off?

10. Do you live in an owned or rented house?

11. How would you describe the condition of your house?

12. Would you prefer to live differently? What would be your ideal residential area?

13. Can you let me know a bit about yourself?

14. What do you think about Pozón/ La Popa?

15. In comparison to other suburbs in the city?

16. Would you prefer to live another suburb?

17. What level of education have you achieved or do you want to achieve?

18. What are your occupational aspirations? Why? What occupation do hope to have in the future?

19. Apart from occupational aspirations do you have other aspirations? Why?

20. Do you have non material aspirations? Why?

21. What of these do you expect to become true or become reality? Why?

22. How do you think can you achieve your aspirations?

23. How do you think can your non material aspirations come true?

24. What level of education do you think is necessary to have a good life?

25. What do you think is a good life?

26. What is necessary for people to have a good life?

27. What are things you believe hinder you to achieve your aspirations? / What do you perceive are the biggest challenges in achieving your aspirations?

28. Do you think that opportunities are different for different people in Cartagena? Why?

29. What do you think are the biggest challenges to achieve a better life in Cartagena?

30. If you could change things what would that be?

31. How do you see yourself in 5 years?

32. How do you see yourself in 20 years?

33. How would you like to be reminded after you die?

Interview Schedule for Adult Participants

Neighbourhood:

Date:

Age:

Pseudonym:

1. Occupation:

2. How do you perceive Cartagena as worse or better off places than others?

   a. What are the problems?

3. Would you prefer to live differently? What would be your ideal residential area?

4. Where in the suburb living?

5. What is that for a sector? How is it characterised?

6. Living in that suburb for how many years? Where from and why moved to this suburb?:

7. How does sector, suburb and city changed in the past?

8. What needs to be changed in future?

9. Can you tell me about your childhood experiences and where you have been to school and how long? Any special Events?

10. In your childhood what have been your aspirations?

11. What have been your challenges when you were younger?

12. How are these different to the challenges young people face today?

13. What are your future aspirations now?

14. What are you worried about could happen or not happen in future?

15. What level of education do you think is necessary to have a good life?

16. What do you think is a good life?

17. What is necessary for people to have a good life?

18. What role does play being rich or having money for a good life?

19. What skills do you think do young people need nowadays to achieve a good life?

20. Do you think there exist racism and/or classicism (clasicismo) in Cartagena? Why do you think that?

21. If you could change things what would that be?

22. Are there problems which need to be solved in your suburb? In your personal life? In general in Cartagena or Colombia? From most to least important?

23. How do you see the young people in 5 years?

24. How do you see the young people in 20 years