

Modernity and habitat in Bogotá (1949-1972):

A critical look at 15 cases of collective housing^[1]

Modernidad y hábitat en Bogotá (1949-1972):

Una mirada crítica a 15 casos de vivienda colectiva

Modernidade e habitat em Bogotá (1949-1972):

Uma análise crítica de 15 casos de habitação coletiva

Modernité et habitat à Bogotá (1949-1972):

un regard critique sur 15 cas de logements collectifs

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[1] This article presents the results of research entitled "Modern collective housing in Bogotá, 1949–1972."

Abstract

Although modern collective housing in Bogotá was key to urban transformation from the second half of the 20th century onwards, its legacy is insufficiently documented, limiting understanding of the socio-spatial challenges and contemporary housing crisis, exacerbated by subsequent models focused on profitability. Consequently, the objective of the research was to expand the record and critically analyze this housing to understand its evolution and the turning points that led to the current crisis. The research used a qualitative and comparative methodology in three phases: a literature review to select 15 projects, fieldwork with photographic surveys and interviews, and a theoretical-conceptual analysis. The results show a great typological diversity—closed, semi-open, and open forms—and the incorporation of innovations such as the superblock, which re-defined urban growth and community spaces. They also reveal subsequent transformations driven by residents, such as enclosures, extensions, commerce, and parking lots, which altered the original designs but also reflected flexibility and adaptability. In conclusion, this period constitutes both a benchmark for innovation and a warning about contemporary urban tensions, underscoring the need to promote adaptable, sustainable collective housing that is integrated with public space.

Keywords: housing, residential habitat, modern architecture, urban planning, urban space

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Resumen

Aunque la vivienda colectiva moderna en Bogotá fue clave en la transformación urbana a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo XX, su legado está insuficientemente documentado, limitando la comprensión de los desafíos socioespaciales y la crisis habitacional contemporánea, exacerbada por modelos posteriores centrados en la rentabilidad. En consecuencia, el objetivo de la investigación fue ampliar el registro y analizar críticamente esta vivienda para entender su evolución y los puntos de inflexión que derivaron en la crisis actual. La investigación utilizó una metodología cualitativa y comparativa en tres fases: una revisión bibliográfica para seleccionar 15 proyectos, trabajo de campo con levantamientos fotográficos y entrevistas, y un análisis teórico-conceptual. Los resultados muestran una gran diversidad tipológica —formas cerradas, semiabiertas y abiertas— y la incorporación de innovaciones como la supermanzana, que redefinieron el crecimiento urbano y los espacios comunitarios. También evidencia transformaciones posteriores realizadas por los residentes, como cerramientos, ampliaciones, comercio y parqueaderos, que alteraron los diseños originales, pero también reflejaron flexibilidad y capacidad de adaptación. En conclusión, este periodo constituye a la vez un referente de innovación y una advertencia sobre las tensiones urbanas contemporáneas, subrayando la necesidad de promover viviendas colectivas adaptables, sostenibles y articuladas con el espacio público.

Palabras clave: vivienda,, hábitat residencial, arquitectura moderna, planificación urbana, espacio urbano

Résumé

Bien que le logement collectif moderne à Bogotá ait joué un rôle clé dans la transformation urbaine à partir de la seconde moitié du XXe siècle, son héritage est insuffisamment documenté, ce qui limite la compréhension des défis socio-spatiaux et de la crise contemporaine du logement, exacerbée par des modèles ultérieurs axés sur la rentabilité. Par conséquent, l'objectif de la recherche était d'élargir le registre et d'analyser de manière critique ce logement afin de comprendre son évolution et les points d'inflexion qui ont conduit à la crise actuelle. La recherche a utilisé une méthodologie qualitative et comparative en trois phases : une revue de la littérature pour sélectionner 15 projets, un travail de terrain avec des relevés photographiques et des entretiens, et une analyse théorique et conceptuelle. Les résultats montrent une grande diversité typologique (formes fermées, semi-ouvertes et ouvertes) et l'intégration d'innovations telles que le superbloc, qui ont redéfini la croissance urbaine et les espaces communautaires. Ils mettent également en évidence des transformations ultérieures impulsées par les résidents, telles que des clôtures, des agrandissements, des commerces et des parkings, qui ont modifié les conceptions originales, mais ont également reflété une certaine flexibilité et une capacité d'adaptation. En conclusion, cette période constitue à la fois une référence en matière d'innovation

Resumo

Embora a habitação coletiva moderna em Bogotá tenha sido fundamental para a transformação urbana a partir da segunda metade do século XX, seu legado é insuficientemente documentado, limitando a compreensão dos desafios socioespaciais e da crise habitacional contemporânea, exacerbada por modelos posteriores centrados na rentabilidade. Consequentemente, o objetivo da pesquisa foi ampliar o registro e analisar criticamente essa habitação para compreender sua evolução e os pontos de inflexão que levaram à crise atual. A pesquisa utilizou uma metodologia qualitativa e comparativa em três fases: uma revisão bibliográfica para selecionar 15 projetos, trabalho de campo com levantamentos fotográficos e entrevistas, e uma análise teórico-conceitual. Os resultados mostram uma grande diversidade tipológica — formas fechadas, semiabertas e abertas — e a incorporação de inovações como o superquadrado, que redefiniram o crescimento urbano e os espaços comunitários. Eles também evidenciam transformações posteriores impulsionadas pelos residentes, como fechamentos, ampliações, comércio e estacionamento, que alteraram os projetos originais, mas também refletiram flexibilidade e capacidade de adaptação. Em conclusão, esse período constitui ao mesmo tempo uma referência de inovação e um alerta sobre as tensões urbanas contemporâneas, ressaltando a necessidade de promover habitações coletivas adaptáveis, sustentáveis e articuladas com o espaço público.

Palavras-chave: habitação, habitat residencial, arquitetura moderna, planejamento urbano, espaço urbano



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et un avertissement sur les tensions urbaines contemporaines, soulignant la nécessité de promouvoir des logements collectifs adaptables, durables et articulés avec l'espace public.

Mots-clés: logement, habitat résidentiel, architecture moderne, urbanisme, espace urbain

Introduction

Modern collective housing in Bogotá played a decisive role in the urban, architectural, and social transformation of the city from the mid-20th century onwards. This period marked the materialization of the principles of the modern movement, with an emphasis on functionality, the integration of green areas, and zoning. The urban plans of Sert and Wiener (1948–1953) consolidated the notion of neighborhood unity and underscored the centrality of housing in the urban structure (Schnitter Castellanos, 2003).

State intervention was fundamental through the Instituto de Crédito Territorial (ICT) and the Banco Central Hipotecario (BCH). The ICT responded to the housing crisis generated by rural-urban migration since the 1950s (Sánchez Holguín, 2023), coordinating actions with CINVA and hemispheric programs such as the Alliance for Progress. These alliances facilitated the adoption of modern principles in housing complexes aimed at working-class sectors, promoting standardized typologies, prefabrication, and industrialization as the basis for mass production.

The period was marked by urban and architectural experimentation, the articulation between housing and public space, constructive innovation, and the search for domestic flexibility (Goossens & Gómez-Meneses, 2015). Projects such as La Fragua, conceived under the principle of productive housing, demonstrate the incorporation of spaces for economic activities and the capacity for adaptation over time. Despite deterioration and transformations, these complexes remain relevant as design references.

However, their assessment requires going beyond a view focused exclusively on the built object. According to Montaner (2015), the success of these models depends on their capacity for transformation. Therefore, the research differentiated between the concepts of 'housing' as a physical unit and 'residential habitat' as a complex system that integrates social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Inhabiting implies processes of appropriation and re-signification where everyday life modifies the original forms. From this perspective, a critical approach is proposed that incorporates dynamic variables to understand the socio-spatial effects of these models in the face of current profitability logics.

Despite their relevance, most of the projects from this period lack systematic documentation. The available information is scattered and concentrated in a few widely publicized cases, while numerous works remain largely unstudied. This situation has limited the recognition of their urban and architectural values and has favored dependence on more accessible international references, restricting a discussion situated on local collective housing.

The end of this cycle coincided with the consolidation, in the 1980s and 1990s, of a production model dominated by private developers, aimed at maximizing profitability and reducing costs. The progressive withdrawal of the state and the adoption of market policies (Cuervo Ballesteros and Jaramillo González, 2009) reinforced an approach focused on quantitative deficit. As Haramoto (1998) warns, this led to segregation

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and qualitative deterioration, relegating design and its impact on everyday life. The result was accelerated peripheral expansion and deepening socio-spatial segregation, with disconnected clusters of employment, services, and facilities.

Given this situation, the study was limited to the period 1949–1972 in order to expand the record of modern works and conduct a critical review of their evolution and relevance. The aim was to identify the turning points that transformed the dynamics of housing production and contributed to current problems.

The research generates a framework of knowledge that, from a contemporary perspective, draws useful lessons for the current design and management of collective housing. By linking this legacy to contemporary debates on residential habitat, it provides a historical and pedagogical basis for exploring future alternatives. The findings provide an understanding of the interaction between design and everyday life and offer conceptual foundations for guiding more comprehensive architectural practices that are contextualized and sensitive to changes in living.

Living and Forms of Residence: A Complementary Perspective

The research focuses on critically identifying architectural and urban transformations, as well as the morphological and socio-spatial implications of modern collective housing in Bogotá, understanding architecture not only as a formal discipline, but also as a product and driver of social and cultural processes that shape the habitat. In this sense, a theoretical framework is defined that allows these projects to be approached from a comprehensive perspective, encompassing both morphological analysis and the sociocultural dimension.

The research adopts Martí Arís' analytical method (2000), set out in his book *Las formas de la residencia moderna* (The Forms of Modern Housing), which is a key tool for understanding how urban forms evolved and adapted to new needs and contexts. Similarly, Pallasmaa (2016) proposes the concept of 'dwelling' as fundamental to understanding architecture. He understands space not as an inert container, but as an experience structured by meanings and values, configuring an existential space interpreted by memory. This perspective enriches the study of collective housing by considering how designs are transformed and reinterpreted by lived experience and human appropriation.

Likewise, Carlos Niño Murcia (2003) highlights the sociocultural values of collective housing built during this period, pointing out that it responded to the housing deficit with proposals that prioritized quality of life and constructive permanence, beyond quantitative urgency. These works were consolidated as lasting contributions to urban society, offering solid structures and dignified spaces oriented toward comprehensive well-being. In parallel, Silvia Arango (2013) identifies two generations of Latin American modernity: the progressive, with social commitment and state support, and the technical, focused on industrialization and efficiency, configuring housing as an instrument of urban modernization.

Finally, this theoretical framework underscores the idea that architecture, and specifically housing, is a dynamic field where theory meets practice and where physical forms are shaped and transformed by social, cultural, and political processes. The interaction between modern ideals, everyday realities, such as security and privacy, and the subjective experience of living, shapes a deeper understanding of how spaces are produced, transformed, and appropriated. In this way, it emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that transcends the purely morphological and constructive to encompass the complexity of the human experience in space.

Objectives

The objective of the research was to expand the record and critically analyze modern collective housing in Bogotá to understand its evolution and the turning points that led to the current crisis. To this end, three specific objectives were set. First, to systematize 15 emblematic projects, characterizing their original architectural and technical attributes to mitigate the invisibility of local references in comparison with foreign models. Second, to analyze the physical and social transformations driven by residents in order to evaluate the transition from housing as an object to 'residential habitat', defined as a complex experience that articulates physical, social, economic, and cultural factors over time. Third, to contrast this legacy with current profitability and logics, identifying lessons on spatial rationalization and public integration that guide housing management toward a social and qualitative purpose.

No.	Name	Year of construction	Client	Architects	Typological classification
1	Muzú neighborhood	(1949-1963)	ICT	Jorge Gaitán Cortés	Closed
2	Quiroga Neighborhood	(1951-1962)	ICT	Josep Lluís Sert - Álvaro Ortega	Closed
3	La Fragua neighborhood	(1958-1961)	ICT	Germán Samper	Closed
4	C.U.A.N Antonio Nariño Urban Center	(1952-1958)	ICT	Rafael Esguerra, Enrique García Merlano, Daniel Suárez, Juan Meléndez, and Néstor Gutiérrez	Open
5	La Sabana Residences	(1963-1966)	BCH	Roberto Rodríguez Silva	Open
6	Hans Drews Arango Unit	(1962)	ICT	Hans Drews Arango - Arbelaez Pombo	Semi-open
7	Calle 26 Complex Phase 1	(1962-1965)	BCH	Arturo Robledo	
8	Calle 26 Complex Phase 2	(1962-1964)	BCH	Luis Esguerra - Ernesto Herrera	
9	Kennedy City				
9.1	Block 1 Kennedy Experimental	(1961)	ICT	Not specified	Semi-open
9.2	Superblock 2	(1961)	ICT	Not specified	Semi-open
9.3	Superblock 7	(1961)	ICT	Not specified	Semi-open
9.4	Banderas Residential Complex	(1970-1972)	ICT	Alberto Moreno, Luis Acosta, Pedro Mejía, Jaime Castell.	Semi-open
10	Christian Housing Foundation "Jesús María Marulanda"	(1963)	ICT	Rogelio Salmona - Hernán Vieco	Open
11	URC Colseguros Residential Unit	(1964-1967)	ICT	Arbelaez and Pombo - Drews and Gomez	Open
12	Timiza Neighborhood Unit	(1966)	ICT	Gómez Londoño - Emesé Ijjasz de Murcia - Pedro Mejía - Hernán Vieco - Rogelio Salmona	Open
13	Paul VI	(1967)	ICT	Fernando Jiménez - Eduardo Londoño - Gabriel Pardo	Semi-open
14	Carimagua neighborhood	(1967-1973)	ICT	Esguerra Saenz y Samper	Closed
15	El Tunal Experimental	(1972)	ICT	Carlos Vargas, René Carrasco, Germán Calvijo, Hector Ramos, Antonio Tutazá, Colombia Suarez Eduardo Dorada	Closed

Table 1. Selected modern collective housing projects in Bogotá

Note: The typological classification corresponds to the categories defined by Martí Arís: closed, semi-open, and open forms.

Source: Own elaboration.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a qualitative and comparative approach in three phases. The first phase included a review of the literature and documentation on modern housing in Bogotá (1949–1972), consulting plans, institutional archives, and specialized journals. This analysis made it possible to compile a list of 15 projects representative for their architectural value and typological diversity (see Table 1).

The second phase consisted of fieldwork, with visits to the selected complexes to compare the original project with their current state and use. Photographic records and interviews with residents were used to gather socio-cultural information and information on spatial appropriation. This approach was essential in order to move beyond an analysis based on the concept of 'housing' to the complexity of 'residential habitat'.

SELECTED PROJECTS OF MODERN COLLECTIVE HOUSING IN BOGOTÁ: 1949-1972

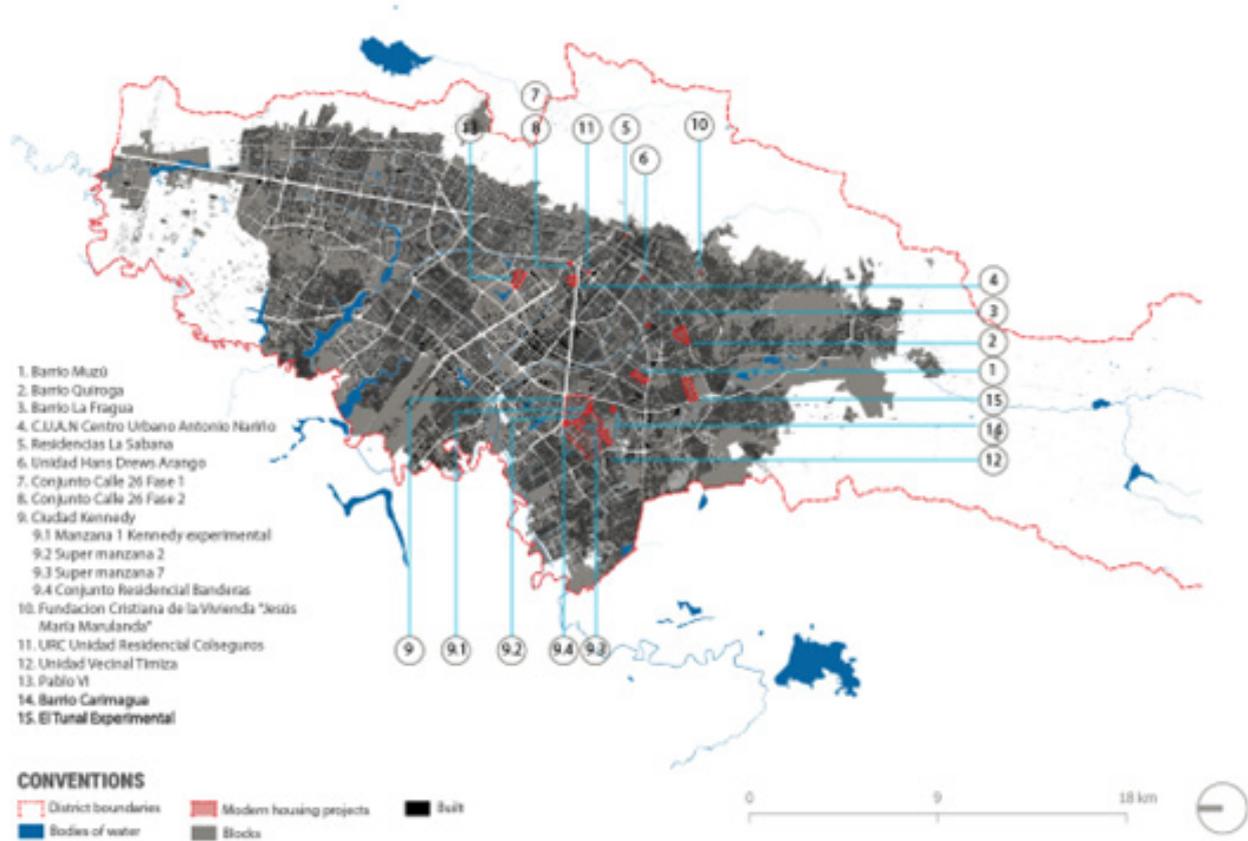


Figure 1. Location of selected modern collective housing projects in Bogotá: 1949-1972

Source: Own elaboration.

The third phase involved theoretical and conceptual analysis, aimed at a qualitative and comparative synthesis of the findings. Martí Arís's (2000) method was used to classify 15 projects according to their morphology: closed, semi-open, and open forms. Analytical diagrams supported the reading of typological evolution and spatial rationalization.

Territorial and Morphological Impact of Modern Collective Housing: From Peripheral Growth to the Superblock

A territorial analysis of modern collective housing in Bogotá shows that its location was a determining factor in the urban transformation of the city (see Figure 1). Although some projects were located in relatively central areas—such as the Antonio Nariño Urban Center (CUAN), Pablo VI, or the Calle 26 Complex—most were

developed on the outskirts of the city at that time, especially to the south and west. Land was cheaper there, although urbanization conditions were poorer. This location made it possible to absorb the rural-urban migration of low-income populations and, at the same time, drove the city's expansion into former rural areas.

Until the mid-20th century, Bogotá maintained a relatively compact structure, inherited from its colonial layout. However, from the late 1940s onwards, there was rapid growth that incorporated land from former estates. In this context, although macro-territorial proposals such as Le Corbusier's Pilot Plan were not implemented, large-scale residential developments did materialize, transforming the urban structure (see Figure 2). Among the most significant are the CUAN, the Muzú Neighborhood Unit, the Quiroga neighborhood, Ciudad Kennedy, Timiza, Pablo VI, and Carimagua. These complexes introduced new forms of urban organization and residential grouping typologies that transcended the traditional block.

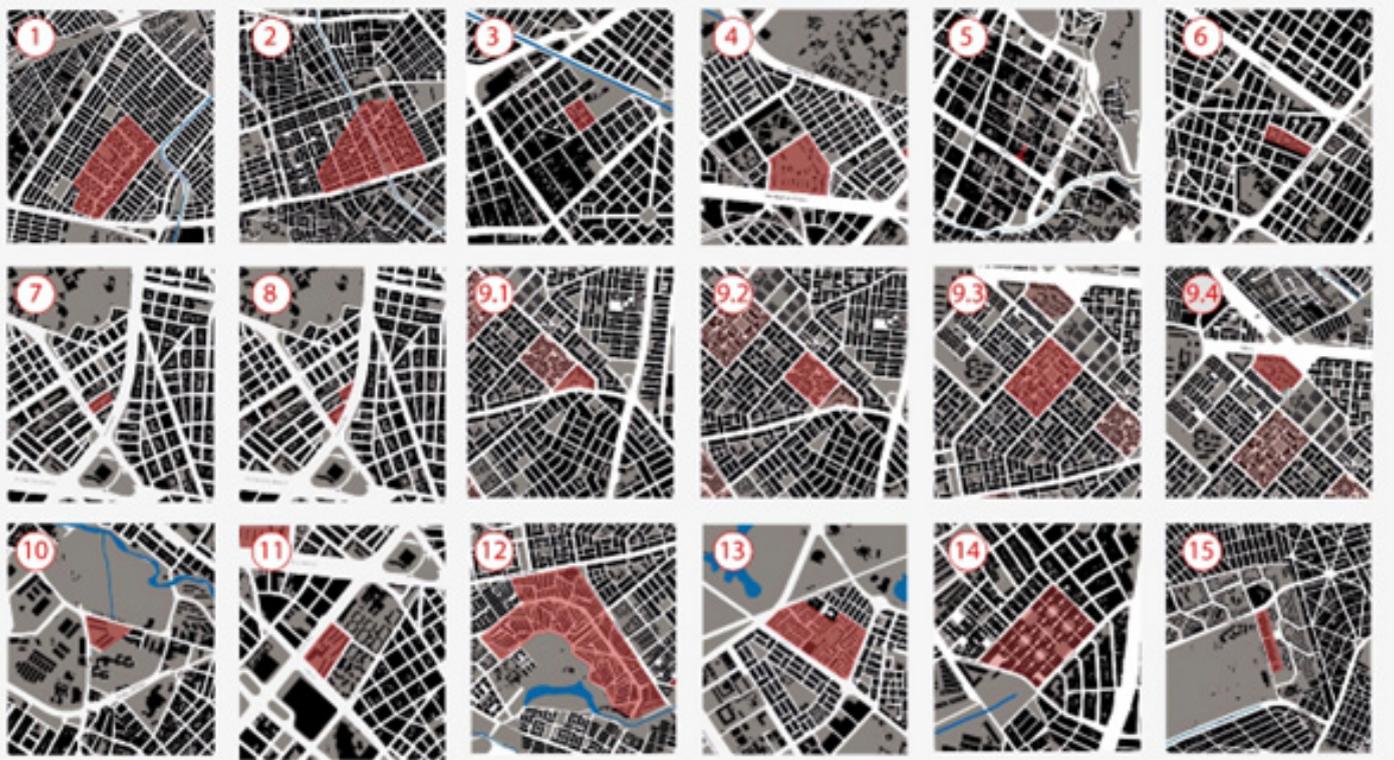


Figure 2. Comparison of projects. Urban situation.

Note: All projects are shown to the same scale and orientation: 1. Barrio Muzú, 2. Barrio Quiroga, 3. Barrio La Fragua, 4. C.U.A.N Antonio Nariño Urban Center, 5. La Sabana Residences, 6. Hans Drews Arango Unit, 7. Calle 26 Complex Phase 1, 8. Calle 26 Complex Phase 2, 9.1. Block 1 Kennedy Experimental, 9.2. Superblock 2, 9.3. Superblock 7, 9.4. Banderas Residential Complex, 10. Jesús María Marulanda Christian Housing Foundation, 11. Coleseguros Residential Unit, 12. Timiza Neighborhood Unit, 13. Pablo VI, 14. Carimagua Neighborhood, and 15. El Tunal Experimental.

Source: Own elaboration.

Alongside these large-scale operations, small- and medium-scale projects were developed which, although more specific, consolidated an innovative urban fabric from a morphological and constructive point of view (see Figure 2). Examples such as La Fragua, Residencias La Sabana, the Hans Drews Arango Unit, the Calle 26 Complex (phases 1 and 2), the Tunal Experimental, and the Christian Housing Foundation demonstrate the diversity of design approaches. Together, these developments expanded the repertoire of modern residential solutions in the city.

A key contribution during this period was the introduction of the superblock concept, which redefined the urban residential structure. This model went beyond the traditional layout of closed blocks and perimeter roads, proposing an organization that favored internal pedestrian routes, the presence of collective green areas, and the incorporation of community facilities within the urban fabric. The superblock created spatial gradients between the public and private spheres through intermediate spaces that encouraged neighborhood interaction and a sense of belonging.

These intermediate spaces—squares, paths, internal green areas—were essential in projects such as Muzú, La Fragua, and El Tunal. Their neighborhood scale allowed them to function as spaces for meeting, recreation, and everyday appropriation. Over time, they have demonstrated their ability to adapt to new demands for security, mobility, and vehicular access. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, these spaces took on renewed value, offering controlled outdoor environments that facilitated social interaction and permanence under lockdown conditions.

The morphological configuration of these complexes also favored forms of community organization. In sectors such as La Fragua, the interior location of common areas, away from high-traffic roads, together with their reduced scale, has encouraged residents to collectively take on the care and maintenance of shared spaces. Security and control of permeability do not depend exclusively on physical enclosures, but on the urban structure itself and the social dynamics it enables.

Overall, modern collective housing not only responded to a housing need but also introduced profound transformations in the territorial scale and urban morphology of

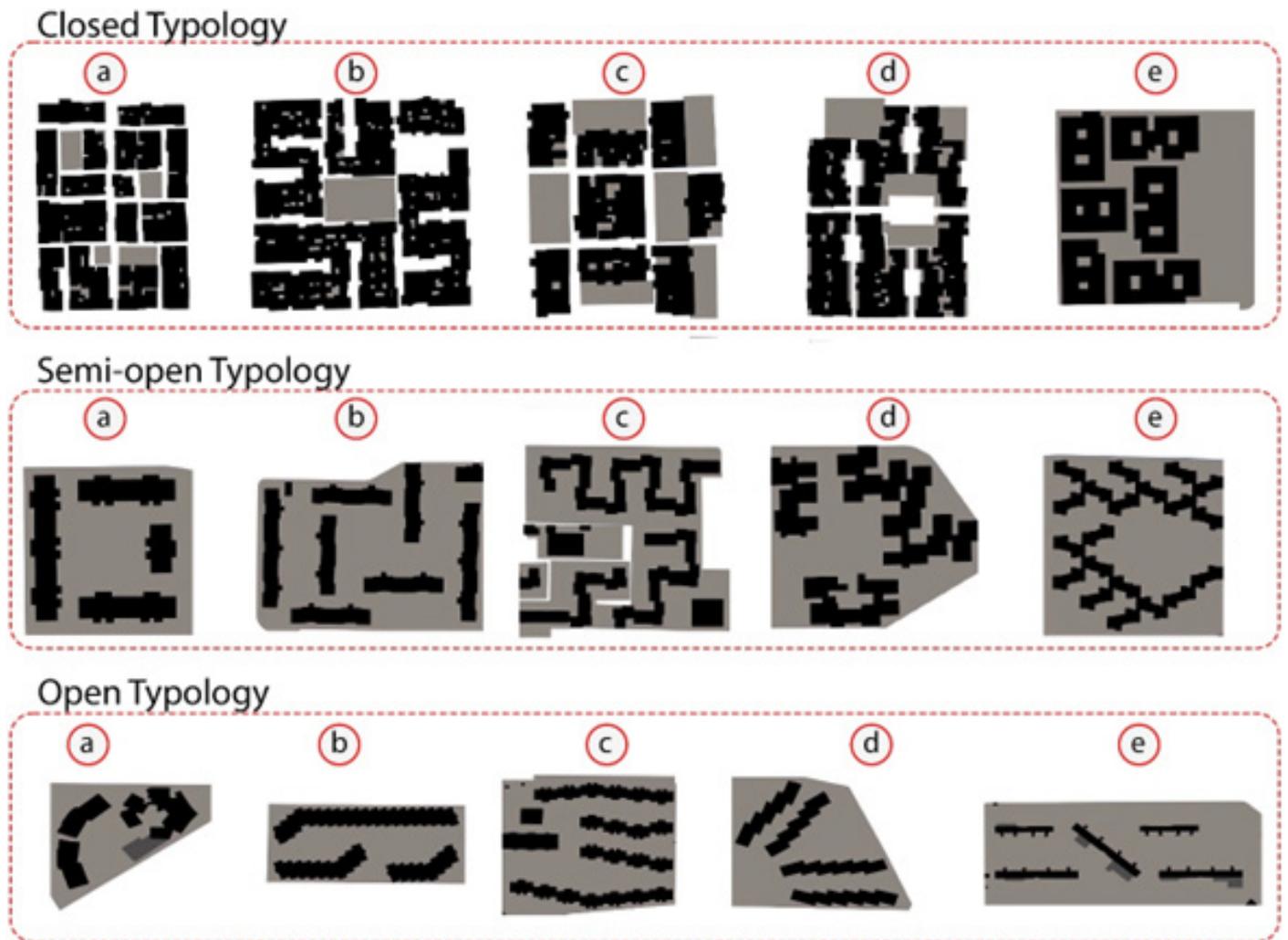


Figure 3. Typological transformation of collective housing projects in Bogotá

Note: Closed forms at the top (a. La Fragua, b. Quiroga, c. Muzú, d. Carimagua, and e. Tunal), semi-open in the middle (a. Hans Drews Arango, b. Pablo VI, c. Kennedy Supermanzana 2, d. Kennedy experimental, and e. Banderas) and open at the bottom (a. Calle 26 phase 1, b. Calle 26 phase 2, c. Colseguros, d. Fundación Cristiana, and e. CUAN).

Source: Own elaboration.

Bogotá. From peripheral expansion to the consolidation of the superblock, these projects redefined the relationship between housing, public space, and community, leaving a legacy that continues to influence the way urban growth and collective living in the city are conceived.

From Closed to Open Forms: Typological Diversity in Collective Housing

The analysis of these fifteen projects revealed a wide variety of forms and types in collective housing solutions. To this end, we applied the analytical method of the concept of transformation in architecture proposed by Carlos Martí Arís, incorporating his categories of 'closed, semi-open, and open forms' (see Figure 3). This enabled a comparative analysis of the case studies and thus catego-

rized the projects according to their spatial configuration and their relationship with the urban fabric. In addition to these typological categories, the analysis integrates other cross-cutting variables that allow for a more specific analysis of morphological similarities and differences and their impact on the residential habitat.

In this sense, the relationship with the perimeter and the property is evaluated to determine the degree of coincidence or independence between the building and the boundaries of the land, as well as the density and occupancy through the relationship between the number of units, the height of the blocks, and the percentage of built-up land compared to open space. Similarly, permeability and access are analyzed as the design's ability to manage pedestrian and vehicular traffic with the city, the rationalization of space through the use of modular repetition and efficiency in the layout of the blocks, and finally, the articulation with public space through the presence of

green areas, facilities, and active edges that connect housing with urban life.

The analysis showed that modern principles were reinterpreted and appropriated in the local context, giving rise to a progressive typological transformation. There was a transition from variations of the traditional block (closed typology) to configurations that still retain their morphological footprint but with greater formal openness (semi-open typology), until reaching schemes that abandon it completely through freer and more diverse blocks (open typology) (see Figure 3).

Although this process was not strictly linear or chronological, the formal variations had both favorable and problematic effects on the configuration of the residential habitat, which were analyzed comparatively in the study.

In projects related to the 'closed forms' typology, their morphology is directly related to the traditional shape of the block; their edges coincide almost entirely with the perimeter of the property. In many cases, these projects are high-density, low-rise developments and, therefore, have a high occupancy rate.

In the case of Muzú (see Figure 4, Number 1), its closed superblock configuration allows for a series of variations in the layout of the volumes: in some sectors, they are located next to the road, while in others, they are set back toward the interior. This dynamic generates blocks connected by green areas and pedestrian walkways, separated from vehicular traffic. Green spaces, vehicle bays, and front gardens act as connectors between the different blocks, allowing for the creation of pedestrian paths and improving collective spaces. In addition, the neighborhood incorporates community facilities in a clearly defined central area, thus consolidating itself as a functional urban unit.

In Tunal Experimental (see Figure 4, Number 2), the closed configuration allows the group to build a characteristic traditional block edge, configuring a central vehicular access in the superblock that connects to the parking lot and several pedestrian walkways. Likewise, by varying the shapes of the blocks, some more square and others elongated, they create a rhythm and dynamic that configures a large number of open micro-spaces, generating a dynamic of intimacy and discovery that is amplified by the configuration of external staircases that connect to the upper levels.

In Carimagua (see Figure 4, Number 3), the closed configurations allow for controlled permeability through defined vehicular accesses and clearly structured pedestrian paths. Likewise, the arrangement of block centers on different scales allows for the creation of more intimate

open spaces, the result of setbacks that transform simple circulation areas into places to linger, complemented by other more public spaces.

In 'semi-open' projects, there is evidence of an initial transformation of the traditional urban form based on the block, but still generating continuity to varying degrees with the shape of the property's perimeter. Likewise, a relative spatiality is proposed in which the intention of relating to the exterior begins to alternate between the view confined to the interior and the considerable openings that allow for a controlled horizontal relationship between the interior and exterior of the project. Finally, it is evident that free space is increased and the building's footprint is reduced. Blocks in this typology often bordered a central space.

For example, the Hans Drews Arango Unit (see Figure 4, Number 4) is organized around a layout close to closed forms, although with the corners freed up. This operation generates well-defined interior free spaces, but with greater diversity of views and routes. In this way, a collective space is configured whose scale is consistent with the height of the buildings, arranged in elongated blocks that border the central area, interrupted by smaller volumes and common facilities.

In block 2 of Ciudad Kennedy (see Figure 4, number 5), a layout is created that further frees up the edges of the block and generates a diverse and complex interplay with S-shaped forms of varying lengths and connections, adjusted according to their location on the site and the needs of pedestrian and vehicular access. This creates variety and richness within the block, where green open spaces of many scales and shapes are configured. This creates a space away from outside pollution and configures a wide variety of pedestrian routes within the block.

Finally, Pablo VI (see Figure 4, Number 6) is an example in which semi-open shapes form clearly defined square or rectangular spaces, but decidedly based on linear buildings. Although this project has several stages with buildings of different characteristics, it maintains a recognizable order and configuration. Configured as a superblock, it proposes controlled vehicular accesses that create a much more varied dynamic of routes and road layouts inside than the traditional square grid, generating a variety of green open spaces with different scales and where a wide variety of facilities are implemented in an articulated manner.

In open-form projects, the presence of partially or totally linear forms is evident, which represent a definitive departure from the traditional block form. They also generate a freer and more diverse block morphology. This



Figure 4. Modern collective housing projects in Bogotá
Source: Own elaboration.

creates a more indeterminate open space, a configuration that demarcates the perimeter in a way that is not necessarily physical, making the relationship between open space and building more relative and generating a more marked modular repetition. Finally, the configuration is more clearly read by blocks that move further and further away from the perimeter of the site and allow for increased density in height.

For example, the Antonio Nariño Urban Center (CUAN) (see Figure 4, Number 7) is configured in a completely open and linear form, where the buildings are located more freely within the property, but with a strict orientation towards sunlight conditions. The blocks are located away from the perimeter of the site, creating total permeability from the outside in the original design and defining only a few bays for vehicular access. This, added to the low occupancy rate, means that the predominant feature within the group is free, open, green space, which is currently defined by laborious gardening work that delimits the areas for staying and walking. Within this internal area of the superblock, there are currently

facilities such as a theater, a kindergarten, a primary and secondary school, a carpentry workshop, a laundry, a supermarket (which is accessed from the outside), and vegetable gardens managed by the residents themselves.

The Timiza Neighborhood Unit (see Figure 4, Number 8) is a macro-project that, although not fully developed, is mainly characterized by the creation of a radial road layout within the project that creates dynamics very different from the traditional grid. Within this layout, there is a wide variety of single-family and multi-family building types, configured by high and low linear blocks, with Lake Timiza as the compositional center. This creates a configuration in which blocks of single-family houses alternate with tall four- and five-story blocks that are arranged more freely on the site, responding to the radial configuration.

Finally, the Colseguros Residential Unit (see Figure 4, Number 9) consists of thirty blocks that are clearly configured in an open and linear fashion, although with an undulation that makes the interior space feel more defined.

Typology (Category)	Morphological and Technical Characteristics	Emblematic Projects Analyzed	Relationship with the Urban Space and the Property
Closed Forms	Morphology linked to the traditional city block. It has high density at low height and a high percentage of occupancy.	La Fragua, Muzú, Quiroga, Carimagua, and Tunal Experimental.	The edges coincide with the perimeter of the property. It uses block centers and free micro-spaces to create intimacy.
Semi-Open Forms	Transformation of the block with the release of corners and edges. Alternate confined views with horizontal openings to the outside.	Hans Drews Arango Unit, Pablo VI, Kennedy superblocks 2 and 7, and Banderas.	Maintains partial continuity with the perimeter, but increases the interior free space. The blocks usually border a central collective space.
Open forms	Definitive independence from the block. Marked use of modular repetition and linear blocks or towers.	CUAN, Colseguros, Fundación Cristiana, Calle 26, and Unidad Vecinal Timiza.	The building moves away from the perimeter of the site, allowing for greater density in height and a more indeterminate and permeable open space.

Table 2. Typological Diversity of Collective Housing

Source: Own elaboration.

Added to these are two tall fifteen-story blocks arranged on a platform that creates an urban ground floor with shops, administrative offices, and other facilities. This combination would be even more evident in projects such as El Conjunto Calle 26 and Residencia la Sabana, which take up the idea of a closed form in the low blocks, but without an interior void, and configure what we know as the Tower-Platform typology.

This solution is effective in that it allows for a closed form on the lower floors, which controls permeability and access and provides an active edge to the city, while offering the freedom to arrange the upper floors in an open form, allowing for more flexible orientation of the blocks and increased density.

Physical and Social Reconfiguration of Collective Housing

All the projects analyzed have undergone significant transformations to a greater or lesser extent over time. Therefore, the analysis of the cases in this section was carried out under the following variables with the aim of tracking the modifications promoted by the residents to adapt the original design to contemporary realities.

First, enclosures and security are examined, observing the appearance of fences and walls in response to security demands. The study observes how this variable alters the original 'spatial fluidity', transforming the relationship with public space from 'total permeability' to 'zero permeability'. It also addresses mobility and parking to understand how the growing demand for parking spaces has forced the appropriation and enclosure of public space or green areas for vehicular purposes. On the other hand,

physical growth and flexibility allow for the evaluation of height extensions or lot densification, demonstrating the 'adaptability' of the design in the face of changing family needs. Finally, economic activity or productive housing is analyzed, identifying the suitability of the first floors for commercial uses, which transforms housing into a space of economic profitability in the face of low levels of employability. This variable highlights the consolidation of 'active streets' and spontaneous social integration.

These variables allow the study to conclude that, although these interventions may detract from the initial aesthetic design, they are also evidence of a living habitat that is more resilient than current rigid real estate models.

One of the most common and obvious transformations in many projects is the appearance of bars. Although closed projects, due to their configuration, are those that have managed to remain open without the appearance of these enclosures, there are some semi-open and open projects that have managed to overcome the pressure of the appearance of railings and are now functional without them or with partial enclosures, but open to the public, this is the case of the Ciudad Kennedy Supermanzana 7, Pablo VI, and Tunal experimental projects.

These projects have in common that, despite not rigidly configuring their perimeter through buildings, they have reached an intermediate solution between total openness and total closure, creating open areas with controlled access alongside others that are completely closed. This has made it possible to generate an internal dynamic that can be effectively controlled at its edges and allow people to enter more freely.

In other cases, the installation of fences not originally planned had negative urban effects, drastically altering the relationship between housing, streets, and public

Transformation Variable	Description and Socio-spatial Impact	Relevant Case Studies	Contrast with Original Design
Enclosures (Bars)	Response to security demands. Can generate 'zero permeability' or intermediate controlled access solutions	CUAN (total), Pablo VI, Kennedy 7, and Tunal (partial/controlled)	Failure of modern 'spatial fluidity' in the face of the current perception of insecurity
Mobility (Parking)	Appropriation of public space and green areas for vehicle parking due to their absence in the initial design	Muzú, Quiroga, La Fragua, Carimagua, and Tunal	The original design prioritized pedestrian routes, which were overwhelmed by the increase in the number of vehicles
Physical growth (expansions)	Densification and increase in height without regulatory compliance, affecting lighting, ventilation, and seismic resistance	Muzú (lot densification) and Quiroga (height growth).	Evidence of the flexibility and adaptability of the original design in response to changing family needs
Productive Housing (Commerce)	Adaptation of first floors for commercial premises. Generates active streets, security, and social integration through constant presence	La Fragua (planned and spontaneous), Quiroga (spontaneous)	Transforms housing from an 'inert container' to a space for economic profitability and sustenance

Table 3. Comparison: Physical and Social Reconfiguration of Collective Housing

Source: Own elaboration.

space. These enclosures created hard edges and residual areas of little use, both inside and outside the projects. Although they respond to legitimate security demands that the initial design did not resolve, they demonstrate the inability of certain modern approaches to manage the transition between public and private. The case of CUAN is representative: conceived as an open space, today it has a completely fenced perimeter and controlled access. The consequence is the elimination of spatial permeability and the creation of outdoor environments that are perceived as unsafe and inactive.

Similarly, neighborhoods that restricted access to housing to pedestrians only—such as Muzú, Quiroga, La Fragua, Carimagua, and Tunal Experimental—were overwhelmed by the growing demand for parking spaces, which were non-existent in the original design. This situation led, in many cases, to owners making modifications that involved not only transformations within their properties, but also the appropriation and enclosure of public space for use as parking. In other cases, vehicular accesses were even improvised from public roads, not provided for in the initial layout, which ended up affecting both communal space and green areas.

Another relevant process was the unplanned expansion of housing. Although some projects allowed for growth margins, the extensions carried out by owners, often without regulatory control, created problems with lighting, ventilation, and structural vulnerability. In gated communities, these interventions blurred the original design. In semi-open and open typologies, the transformations were even more drastic. The densification of lots in Muzú

and the growth in height in Quiroga demonstrate both the initial flexibility and the intense domestic appropriation in response to changing needs.

Similarly, significant transformations were evident in dwellings located on higher-level roads, where the incorporation of commercial uses was consolidated. The case of La Fragua is illustrative: conceived as productive housing, it integrated workspaces and commerce from its inception. Over time, the first floors were adapted as commercial premises, gradually forming a productive typology. These modifications responded both to the economic potential of locations undergoing urban consolidation and increased density, and to the need to supplement income in contexts of precarious employment, highlighting the relationship between domestic space and subsistence strategies.

The emergence of these businesses consolidated active streets within neighborhoods, generating dynamics that, in addition to exploiting their economic potential, contributed to security and social integration. The conversion of the first floors into commercial premises in neighborhoods such as Quiroga and La Fragua reflects, in this sense, the integration of the concept of 'productive housing', in which housing also becomes a space for work and commercial activity.

Discussion

The research shows that the period between 1949 and 1972 functioned as a laboratory for experimentation where modern ideals were reinterpreted to respond to the particularities of Bogotá. Applying Martí Arís' method, it can be seen that the sophistication of the morphologies (closed, semi-open, and open forms) was not only an aesthetic exercise but also a search for rationalization of space to address rapid urban growth.

However, analysis reveals a critical tension between the original planning and the actual appropriation by the inhabitants. While modern designs advocated for 'spatial fluidity', contemporary realities of insecurity have imposed the use of bars and enclosures, especially in open-form projects such as CUAN. This transformation demonstrates that, in many cases, the original design was insufficient to anticipate future social dynamics, turning spaces that were supposed to be permeable into residual and inert areas toward the city.

On the other hand, the research validates Pallasmaa's perspective on 'dwelling': residents have re-signified the inert container through their everyday experience. Transformations such as the conversion of first floors into commercial premises in Quiroga and La Fragua—a form of spontaneous productive housing—demonstrate that the deliberate flexibility of some original designs has allowed these complexes to survive and adapt to economic crises and low levels of employability. In contrast to the rigidity of current real estate models, this modern legacy possesses remarkable resilience and the ability to absorb social change.

Conclusions

The study of this historical process (1949-1972) leads to the conclusion that the contemporary housing crisis is not only quantitative but also qualitative, derived from models that prioritize profitability over community life. To move toward a comprehensive residential habitat—one that goes beyond the simple physical dimension of housing—the following design and management lessons are proposed.

Flexibility and Urban Scale

It is imperative that current design recapture the capacity for expansion and controlled densification seen in neighborhoods such as Muzú, regaining adaptability to avoid the obsolescence of the rigid units that dominate the market today. In this sense, the Supermanzana concept remains the most effective tool for prioritizing pedestrians

and generating social cohesion through transitional spaces. Likewise, the tower-platform typology is emerging as an optimal solution for reconciling high-rise density with active and commercial edges facing the street.

From Provision to Community Care

Public and private management must integrate the promotion of productive housing through the provision of workspaces and commerce from the initial design stage, with the aim of combating socio-spatial segregation and ensuring the economic sustainability of families. Likewise, participatory management of space is essential, as the long-term success of projects such as La Fragua lies in community organization for the maintenance of green areas; this suggests that the safety and care of the environment depend more on social appropriation than on the imposition of physical barriers.

In short, modern collective housing in Bogotá is a benchmark for innovation and, at the same time, a warning about the need to reconcile regulations with lived reality. Current architectural practice must abandon the construction of 'inert containers' and move towards the creation of resilient spaces that are articulated with the urban structure and capable of evolving alongside their inhabitants.

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