Place and Power in Downtown Asunción

The effects of intersecting power structures on La Chacarita and its residents

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MSc. Development and International Relations, Global Refugee Studies

10. Semester Thesis

May 2021

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Abstract

The squatter settlement La Chacarita in Asunción, Paraguay is located by the river Paraguay. During the annual flooding, its lower-class residents literally move up to higher ground in the city centre surrounded by the higher institutions of state, security, education, church and history. Exploring how place and space interact in downtown Asunción, I challenge Michel de Certeau's ideas of fixed place and hierarchy of agency (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015). Analysing the overarching structures and applying them to the micro-politics of three specific events in downtown Asunción, I argue that the intersection of power structures leads to the hierarchy being flipped with residents from La Chacarita becoming the main disciplinary system, shaping place and subjects - including state actors - thus implying empowering effects of place.

Introduction

Barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada is the oldest neighbourhood of Asunción (La Nación, 2020b). The capital of the landlocked South American country Paraguay was founded by Spain in the 16th Century by the river Paraguay where trade flourished (Smith, 2017, p.64). The neighbourhood that is commonly known as La Chacarita was established during the colonial era throughout the 18th Century (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24). It got its nickname from the residents' small subsistence farms that lasted until the end of the 19th Century (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24). When the War of the Triple Alliance (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay) against Paraguay ended in 1870, the neighbourhood was formally established and started growing steadily (La Nación, 2020b). Due to repeated damage caused by flooding, the city had turned its back on the river in the 19th Century, opening up the floodplains to poor migrants who gladly took residence on free land close to employment opportunities downtown (Smith, 2017, p.64).

The first people that had come to settle in La Chacarita were marginalised groups like members of the indiginous Guaraní and coloured people (Smith, 2017, p.65). But in the

1980s, the neighbourhood experienced a real boom with people moving in from the country's interior regions (La Nación, 2020b). This demographic explosion led to the populous neighbourhood La Chacarita is today, although the state cannot give current clear demographic figures, but a census of 2002 noted 10,455 inhabitants, and a 2019 report mentioned 3,147 residents in the upper zone (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.59; La Nación, 2020b).

In 1971, La Chacarita was affected by a huge flood and its residents were pushed further up (La Nación, 2020b). Unlike other neighbourhoods in Asunción, La Chacarita did not undergo the changes implemented in the urban renewal of the capital in 1821 which involved the straightening, widening and leveling of the streets to avoid damage by flooding (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24). So as the riverbank settlement grew, a class division became visible in its geography: the poorest and most marginalised stayed in the lower zone of the floodplain, whereas residents with a higher social ranking - due to either Spanish roots and/or a longer history in La Chacarita - occupied the upper zone that doesn't get affected by flooding (Smith, 2017, p.65; Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019).

The barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada is located along the Bay of Asunción and reaches up to the city centre in downtown Asunción with the neighbourhoods La Encarnacion and Catedral. More precisely, it borders the Plaza del Congreso and Plaza de Armas where the different important institutions can be found: The Congress and Senate, the Cultural Centre of the Republic (El Cabildo) with a statue of the Spanish conqueror, the main cathedral and the Catholic University, and the national police department. At the centre of this square, with the Column of Independence at its heart, residents from La Chacarita set up their wooden houses every year when they leave their neighbourhood as the river Paraguay floods their homes in the floodplain (Smith, 2017).

And it is exactly that setup that got me interested in La Chacarita to research power structures in place. A persistent annual migration of residents from the lowest ranks - not only in social class, but quite literally, the lowest point of the city by the river - to a place higher up, surrounded by the highest institutions and power houses: the state, the Church, the conqueror, the police. The Column of Independence at the centre of it all, the people from La Chacarita

seemingly unmoved in the face of power, made me wonder who actually holds the power and if perhaps one's locality had a hand in this.

Because of the symbolism I perceived in the built environment, the positions on the grid that makes up a place, I wanted to dig deeper into the role of place in power relations. This led me to formulate my research question as follows:

RQ: How do place and space interact in downtown Asunción?

When looking at the research question, place refers to the (built) environment and space also encompasses subjectivities that move in it. Using three illustrative events that took place in La Chacarita, on and around the Plaza de Armas, and in between the two, I research the question through the lens of de Certeau (1988) who argues that place is fixed and that there is a hierarchy where power structures in place shape the subjects in them, limiting their agency to space (Vermeulen, 2015).

Research into the favela has traditionally revolved around its precariousness and how it can be repurposed or set for urban development. The general angle tends to be in line with Foucault's governmentality which can be tied with de Certeau's perspective (De Certeau, 1988, p.45). De Certeau's idea of hierarchy can be perceived in his description of a practice of strategies where a subject (the government) with will and power is isolated in place and from thereout manipulates power relations with an exterior, 'other' or its environment (La Chacarita) (De Certeau, 1988, p.36; Vermeulen, 2015). I choose to depart from de Certeau's perspective in order to build the basis of my argument that means to challenge it.

De Certeau's view of place being fixed has been challenged before. For example by Henrik Vigh's (2006) concept of navigation which he discusses in the context of social becoming of urban youth in West Africa. In that particular research he speaks of subjects' actions in relation to a moving social terrain (Vigh, 2006, p.52). This motion exists in one navigating the social environment of the present while planning their movement into an imagined future terrain with its attached possibilities for social change (Vigh, 2006, p.52). Place is moved in the sense that it is imagined in the future, and the imagined experiences of that place constitute a change in space. And Henri Lefebvre, hesitant to use the term 'place' as

Vermeulen notes, saw space as fluid, constantly changing and conceiving of and moving place in its synthesis as a solid framework - so, unlike de Certeau believed, not as the fixed or permanent place directing space, rather space as a flow with place as a temporary destination (Merrifield, 1993, p.525; Vermeulen, 2015). However, I take it further, arguing that place cannot only be moved, but also changed and this due to the hierarchy of power being flipped.

Smith's (2017) research on community and place attachment in La Chacarita offers a first rare and important approach to the place as rather than looking at it from the previously mentioned concept of governmentality, it shifts the perspective to that of its residents. Having more research from within the community would be extremely valuable. However, with my particular research I will broaden the perspective by looking into both governmentality and community aspects and what results from their intersection.

Therefore, I build my argument challenging de Certeau's views using La Chacarita as a case study. Taking on both governmentality and community lenses, I will further discuss de Certeau's (1988) ideas on borders, environmentality practices based on Huxley's spatial rationalities (2006) and Foucault's governmentality, and the notions of place attachment and community as researched by Rivlin (1982), Smith (2017) and Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018) as power structures in and of place. Finally, noting not only the previously mentioned perspectives, but focussing on framing and stereotypes in connection to Brighenti's (2007) visibility theory too, I look at how the intersection of these power structures affect the hierarchy of agency and power in place.

Method

Starting from the idea that place in itself is a power structure that shapes the subjects that move in it, I consciously decided to limit my data derived from direct human interaction. I wanted to read as much of the relation between place, space and subjects as possible from the built environment.

For this reason, I decided on an observational approach. In her guide on *Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method*, Kawulich notes Marshall and Rossman's definition of observation as a description of events, behaviours and other elements in the chosen setting (Marshall and Rossman in Kawulich, 2005, under 'Definitions'). These observations would support a basis of literature review.

I conducted my fieldwork in the downtown area of Asunción, Paraguay in February and March 2021. I started with my observations in the area including Plaza de Armas, Loma San Jerónimo and La Costanera. However, my observations of the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, known as La Chacarita, were cut short and limited to its outer boundaries, as (violent) protests against the government broke out on 5 March. The protests took place in downtown Asunción and La Chacarita could no longer be accessed. The demonstrations continued for several weeks during which a nation-wide lockdown was announced from 18 March 2021 in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As I was at the centre of the initial protest that Friday 5 March, I decided to change my approach and address my problem with a case study through a combination of landscape and participant observation, and a literature review of secondary sources ranging from news articles to research papers. The literature review allowed for broader context and history of the barrio Ricardo Brugada and an expansion of illustrative events for my case study.

This event-based approach for the analysis was inspired by Gluckman, although I did not choose to proceed with an actual situational analysis. I liked Gluckman's idea that larger societal structures can be analysed through smaller specific events (Kapferer, 2005, pp.93-95). Drawing inspiration from this, I instead went on to do a case study on two levels: first looking into the broader structures, then applying those findings to three smaller events that took place in Asunción, Paraguay.

A case study is one of the earliest kinds of qualitative methods and therefore can be described by many different definitions, as Adrijana Biba Starman (2013, p.29) explains in her discussion of the particular research type. A combined definition applicable to this specific research would be that a case study describes and analyses events in order to explore "an individual, a group or phenomenon" (Sturman in Starman, 2013, p.31). And to "identify

structures and interactions" between subjects in the specific events (Mesec in Starman, 2013, p.31). The latter ties in with the inspiration I took from Gluckman: analysing larger structures through smaller events. These events can happen within a certain time frame and place, and their interconnection builds the case which offers the necessary context for the analysis (Starman, 2013, pp.31-32). Finally, in her discussion of case studies, Starman argues by referencing Stake that rather than being a method, a case study is actually more of an encompassing research type to which different research methods can be applied: the case can be studied in various ways, eg. analytically (Stake in Starman, 2013, p.32).

I chose to analyse the broader disciplinary structures related to place and space through the theoretical lenses of de Certeau's (1988) practiced place, Foucault's governmentality combined with Huxley's (2006) research on spatial rationalities, and Rivlin's (1982), Smith's (2017) and Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu's (2018) work on place attachment and community (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020). I then tied these greater theoretical analyses related to place, space and subjectivities to the micro-politics of three specific events that make up the case study for downtown Asunción:

1. An event located in barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada. On the night of 24 December 2020, Christmas Eve, more than 100 residents of La Chacarita lost their homes in a fire (HOY, 2021a).
2. An event located on and around Plaza de Armas, downtown Asunción, outside of La Chacarita. On Friday 5 March 2021, thousands of demonstrators gathered in front of the Congress on Plaza de Armas to protest the Paraguayan government (ABC Color, 2021b).
3. An event located in the border space of downtown and La Chacarita. On the night of the initial protest of 5 March 2021, Alejandro Daniel Florentín Paredes was killed by stabbing on a staircase leading to La Chacarita, near the Cabildo building on the Plaza de Armas.

The specific localities of these three events allow for the analyses of the relation between place, space and subjectivities in the following chapter.

Because of the nature of my research, focussing on place, space and subjectivities, I approached the data collection in line with the type of observation described by Merriam in Kawulich's guide (2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations'). Her approach implies taking field notes on different elements ranging from elaborate descriptions and context of the physical environment, over descriptions of subjects in the place, to their activities and interactions within that place (Merriam in Kawulich, 2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations'). The latter would be minuted in even more detail, considering whether activities were planned or not, nonverbal communication, subtle behavioural changes, who speaks, who listens, who reacts when and how, etc. (Merriam in Kawulich, 2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations').

So I added to my initial place observations with firsthand data from participant observation on the ground during the protest. This includes immediate comments and reactions of acquaintances, bystanders and demonstrators. I documented my observations with research notes for future reference. This data collection helps build a sense of how the residents of La Chacarita are both perceived and construed. Adding to this my analysis of the (built) environment and use of space in downtown Asunción, sets out the basis for the further analysis of the relation between place, space and subjectivities in and around La Chacarita.

However, I only collected data through participant observation in the downtown area of Asunción - prior to, during and after the protest of 5 March - but specifically excluding La Chacarita. Certainly, the neighbourhood being closed off due to the event of the protest, prevented me from conducting proper fieldwork inside the favela. But even without this unexpected turn of events, I would have decided to mainly rely on secondary sources unless for descriptions of the built environment, and this for the two following reasons:

Firstly, regardless of the protest, La Chacarita is not freely accessible by outsiders. The neighbourhood can only be entered if one is accompanied by a permanent resident of La Chacarita (Smith, 2017, p.67). In her guide, Kawulich expands the definition of basic observations with Bernard's views on specifically participant observation. In that definition, Bernard notes that the participant observer needs to be able to blend in with the community to allow people to behave naturally in his presence (Bernard in Kawulich, 2005, under 'Definitions').

So due to being an outsider and only allowed in if guided by a resident of La Chacarita, even if the events had not prevented me from entering the neighbourhood, I would not have been able to conduct participant observation as freely as desired, as it would have been directed by a guide. There would be no blending in, there would be no figuring out how to move in the place on my own accord - something I did manage in the downtown area of Asunción excluding the favela.

Second, in order for data from participant observation to be credible, it should be collected over an extended period of time. In her guide on participant observation, Kawulich mentions prolonged engagement as an important factor to gather trustworthy data (Lincoln and Guba in Kawulich, 2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations'). Spending more time in a community allows for more observation and participation opportunities and a wider range of activities to take part in (Kawulich, 2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations'). Those opportunities would help build a more accurate set of data describing the community and environment, which makes the findings more credible to the reader (Kawulich, 2005, under 'The processes of conducting observations'). In order to conduct valuable participant observation, the researcher needs to be able to take part in daily activities and also have informal conversations (Kawulich, 2005, under 'Summary').

Only being allowed to enter La Chacarita with a guide, meant visiting the neighbourhood could only happen within a set timeframe which would be too limited to be deemed as credible as data gathered from participant observation in larger Asunción society. Moreover, it would make informal, natural conversations impossible. I lived in downtown Asunción, in Tacuari, for a month in February-March 2021. This allowed me to participate in larger society in everyday activities that were not always directly related to the problem I was researching. I got familiar with the language and could pick up on small remarks. Through the variety of daily activities, I could have informal conversations with outsiders and paint a clearer picture of their perception of La Chacarita and its residents, and I could take note of people's behaviour in different circumstances to get a better understanding of how outsiders move in the place that is downtown Asunción in relation to La Chacarita.

Due to these limitations of participant observation, I could not rely on the method as the sole basis for my whole analysis. Data collected through participant observation for this research, could only serve to understand the way the residents of La Chacarita are perceived by outsiders, to give more context regarding the events that took place outside of the favela, and to depict the behaviour and movements of outsiders in downtown Asunción in relation to (residents of) La Chacarita, as well as residents of the favela moving outside of the neighbourhood's boundaries. Only that data can be regarded as truly credible and can thus solely be used to strengthen the basis of my body of data that consists of further observations of the built environment and document analysis.

Place and space: disciplining the disciplinary system

The following analysis looks at how place and space interact in downtown Asunción, Paraguay. Three events make up the case study: one in downtown Asunción excluding the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, one in between both places and one inside La Chacarita. After a detailed account of the three events, I will take a step back to analyse and present the broader structures of and in place. First, place and space are analysed through the lens of de Certeau (1988) who argues that place is fixed. This view has been challenged before, for example by Henrik Vigh's concept of navigation which refers to subjects' actions in relation to a moving social terrain (Vigh, 2006, p.52). And by Henri Lefebvre who didn't see place as static either, but explained it as a temporary destination for space which is continuously moving (Vermeulen, 2015).

I will also challenge the view of a fixed place, moving on to build my argument, analysing environmentality practices based on Huxley's spatial rationalities (2006) and Foucault's governmentality, and the sense of community and place attachment in La Chacarita as researched by Rivlin (1982), Smith (2017) and Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018), while touching on aspects like Reese's (2001) and Derrida's (1979) framing and Brighenti's (2007) visibility. These larger ideas are tied throughout by example of the three events. Finally, by illustrating the overarching structures through the micro-politics of these smaller events, I

look at how environmentality practices and community intersect and not only affect place, but taking it a step further, also the hierarchy of power structures in downtown Asunción.

Mapping out the events

Outside La Chacarita: #EstoyParaElMarzo2021

"You know how I told you that March is always a heated month in Asunción?", my acquaintance said the morning of Friday 5 March. Only the previous night did citizens start calling for a demonstration against the Paraguayan government on social network Twitter under the hashtags #EstoyParaElMarzo2021 (I'm for March 2021) and #QueSeVayanTodos (They all have to go) (ABC Color, 2021b). People would gather in front of the Congress that Friday 5 March at 6 PM to protest ongoing corruption, but mainly the health situation in the country and the lack of response by the Ministry of Health in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (ABC Color, 2021b).

This frustration had built up over the past year, I was told. Currently, the country seemed open: bigger cities like Asunción had a 12 AM curfew, mask and other general sanitary measures in place, but shops, beauty services, restaurants and bars had all reopened. That happened as a reaction after media reports of government officials or their relatives hosting parties during the first tight lockdown of the country. Other accounts mentioned a shortage of medicine supplies or vaccine rollout which was not answered to by the Ministry of Health. President Mario Abdo Benítez reportedly answered the question about where the missing medicine went, saying: "How should I know?"

The National Police announced they would be on alert from 12 PM that Friday 5 March anticipating a possible demonstration based on social media activity. According to ABC news in Paraguay the police said some streets would be fenced off in the downtown area of Asunción as would some neighbourhoods be covered, though the forces would be unarmed to avoid escalating violence (ABC Color, 2021b).

The afternoon of Friday 5 March in downtown Asunción was a quiet one. As the taxi drove along the Costanera towards the riverbank neighbourhood Loma San Jerónimo there was little to no traffic. La Loma, one of the oldest barrios of Asunción which by 2013 was redeveloped into the capital's first tourist area, was pretty much deserted (Revista AIA, 2018). Some children were playing football on a fenced terrace in the narrow streets leading up to a rooftop bar where music played for nobody but a single couple. Walking back into downtown Asunción via the parallel avenues Estrella and Palma in the direction of 14 De Mayo - the street leading straight to the Plaza De Armas with the Congress - but remaining two blocks away, the streets were empty. My acquaintance checked Twitter and noted messages of people being scared of joining the protest - either due to COVID-19 or police related fears. We believed the demonstration was off the table, hence the downtown area being pretty much deserted only an hour before the anticipated start at 6 PM.

However, the demonstration did take place. In front of the Congress in downtown Asunción. The Congress is situated by the Plaza de Armas which is further flanked by the Cultural Centre of the Republic - El Cabildo - with a statue of the Spanish conquistador, the main cathedral and Catholic University, and the national police department. At the centre of it all: the column for national independence and the wooden houses of people from la Chacarita. During the annual flooding of the river Paraguay, inhabitants of the capital's favela move to this square.

More than 7,000 people gathered by the Congress in a peaceful protest. Around 7 PM the street I found myself on, Juan E. O'Leary was being barricaded by demonstrators, some of whom were waving Paraguayan flags. The protest had escalated. People came running from the Plaza De Armas down the parallel avenues of Estrella and Palma. "Don't go up there", they said, their faces covered and pointing in the direction of 14 De Mayo, "there's teargas." A couple of blocks further along that street, people were still running down the avenues. "We can get cover in this building", a woman said while looking at the crowd coming down the street, "I work here." The police were firing rubber bullets, horses were darting through the streets to disperse the crowds. Some people were wounded. Near the four united squares Plaza de los Héroes, Plaza Juan E. O'Leary, Plaza de la Libertad and Plaza de la Democracia the Treasury was set aflame. Protesters were talking to reporters holding their cocido

thermos. Cocido is hot maté tea, while tereré is the cold version - the traditional tea stands for unison and a sharing ritual, visualising a daily Paraguayan scene without it, is unthinkable.

Another acquaintance left his house by car in the Las Mercedes neighbourhood located upward by the bay of Asunción next to the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada - La Chacarita - to find me downtown. He got into two collisions: one with a journalist who was also rushing downtown to report on the event, and a second one closer to Plaza de Armas. At the latter, cars got stuck in the crowd that was being chased down the avenues by police horses.

During that first night of protests, one person was killed, 20 people were injured and 25 vehicles were damaged (ABC, 2021). "Those looters and rioters are from La Chacarita", my acquaintances reacted. Later that evening, the police started waving white rags as a sign of surrender.

At 10 PM, the president addressed the people with a televised speech. His shirt was slightly unbuttoned, his sleeves rolled up, as if to say - my acquaintance noted: "I'm like you and with you." Earlier that Friday, the Minister of Health, Julio Mazzoleni had already resigned, but in his evening address, Abdo announced he would reshuffle his cabinet including the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Civil Affairs. He also stressed the right to protest, the need for unison in the fight against the pandemic and he apologised for the police violence (GEN, 2021).

The demonstrations calling for Abdo's resignation continued every evening for a fortnight and remained peaceful until the thirteenth day when the ruling party's headquarters were set aflame - one day before tighter measures including an 8 PM curfew would start. Those measures were announced ten days after the first demonstration in the context of the escalating pandemic.

In between places: Killing of a protester

On the evening of the 5 March protest, Alejandro Daniel Florentín Paredes was killed by stabbing (ABC, 2021). An initial report stated that the crime was unrelated to the

manifestation and located the event in the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, in a corridor between the Cathedral of Asunción and the Catholic University (HOY, 2021b).

This was corrected in a later report, which specified that Florentín Paredes had in fact participated in the protest with friends. After having some drinks, the victim is said to have gone down the staircase by the Cabildo building on the Plaza de Armas where the manifestation had originally taken place (ABC, 2021).

There, the 32 year old resident of the barrio Santa Lucía de Lambaré suffered three fatal stab wounds from the suspect - a minor from La Chacarita (ABC, 2021).

Inside La Chacarita: Christmas Eve fire

In the late hours of Christmas Eve, 24 December 2020, a fire in barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada on the streets Florencio Villamayor and Río Jejuy destroyed the homes and all the belongings of 105 families and damaged the cultural centre of El Cabildo (La Nación, 2020a).

As a temporary solution, the affected residents of La Chacarita would be housed on the site of the former Cervecería Paraguaya in downtown Asunción for 90 to 120 days (HOY, 2021a). During this time, the Ministry of Urbanism, Housing and Habitat (MUVH) would work on relocation plans for the victims with the construction of new permanent housing (HOY, 2021a).

This permanent solution is in line with the statement of the mayor of Asunción, Óscar Rodríguez, that he would not allow the return of the victims of the fire to La Chacarita, referring to information about "a possible collapse" (La Nación, 2021). Because of this, the mayor started talks about future projects to develop the community of La Chacarita with the former chair of Senavitat (now the MUVH) Soledad Núñez and with the current chair of MUVH, Carlos Pereira (La Nación, 2021).

The government was reportedly looking at sites within a 10 kilometre perimeter, because the affected residents had expressed the wish to stay in the vicinity of La Chacarita (La Nación,

2020a; HOY, 2021a). The new housing units are planned to be rented out to the families at a social price (HOY, 2021a).

Place carving space in downtown Asunción

Before I can zoom in on these different events to understand the relation between place, space and subjects in the area, I will have to zoom out and analyse the overarching and underlying structures. Where are these events located and what can that mean? What are the effects of the place on spaces and subjects? Can these be - and how then are they - used?

In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau makes a distinction between space and place. He defines place as the positioning of different elements within a certain order in such a way that prevents two things being in the same spot. A place, according to de Certeau, is a stable ordering of positions, like the whole of points on a grid (De Certeau, 1988, p.117; Vermeulen, 2015).

When we look at downtown Asunción, we can map out the different points on the grid like a static framework.
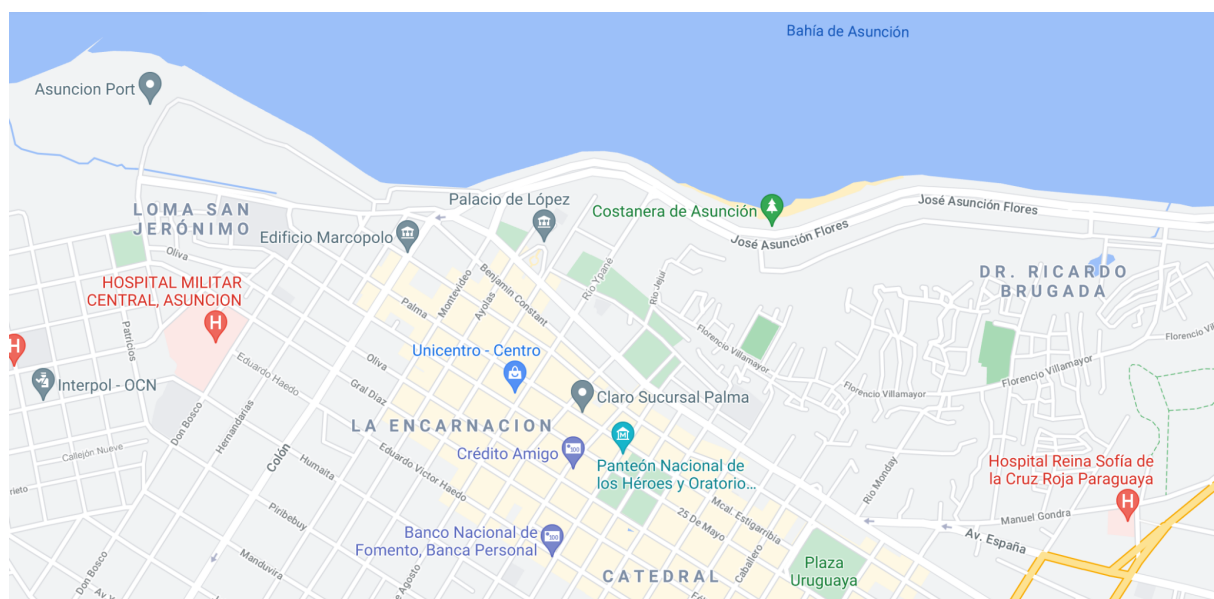
(Downtown Asunción, source: Google Maps)

The Bay of Asunción is a branch of the river Paraguay which forms the upper border of the grid along which several points of relevance to this analysis are situated. It starts at the port of Asunción and reaches till the end of the Costanera - the developed coastline of the city. Just below this line we find the until recently undeveloped neighbourhood Loma San Jerónimo, the presidential palace Palacio de López and the favela also known as La Chacarita, the neighbourhood Dr. Ricardo Brugada - these points are on the lowest level, closest to the river. Below that line on the map (but on higher ground) and flanked by both riverbank neighbourhoods, is the city centre made up of La Encarnacion and Catedral. Some streets making up the grid of these neighbourhoods are the previously mentioned parallel avenues Palma and Estrella, and the intersecting street 14 De Mayo. On that grid, we find other points of relevance such as the Plaza de Armas: a literal square of which each side is flanked by a specific point making up the place - the Congress and Senate on one side, the Cultural Centre of the Republic - El Cabildo - with a statue of the Spanish conquistador on another, the main cathedral and Catholic University, and the national police department on the remaining two sides. The Plaza de Armas is situated next to La Chacarita to which it is connected by staircases that literally lead you down. Going a few blocks down, the Treasury is positioned on the downtown grid, below which we find a union of four other squares: Plaza de los Héroes, Plaza Juan E. O'Leary, Plaza de la Libertad and Plaza de la Democracia.

If a place is stable, made up of static points on a grid, to de Certeau a space is the result of encounters of dynamic elements moving between the different points of the grid (De Certeau, 1988). This can be visualised as a street (stable, place) being navigated by pedestrians (dynamic, space): these pedestrians can go in different directions at a different speed and at different times, carving space. To say it with de Certeau's most popular line, "space is a practiced place" (De Certeau, 1988, p.117).

However, it is important to note that according to de Certeau's ideas, it is place that directs space - not the people navigating it. To clarify this, de Certeau also compares the relation between place and space to that of written to spoken word (De Certeau, 1988, p.117). The way we read and connect the different letters on the paper and pronounce them. In that sense, we could see place as a script and space as the enactment of it (Vermeulen, 2015). When reading a script, the actor has some flexibility, but it is limited. The scripted sentences can be

formulated in different ways, but the story should be the same (Vermeulen, 2015). You can only carve certain routes on a given map.

For de Certeau, place and space are not on the same level. He follows Foucault's line of thinking by which we can see place as a disciplinary system: the top level which houses different disciplinary forces that outline the social space (De Certeau, 1988, p.45). People are born within this system and shaped by it. The bodies wandering this place are sites of power and control that are subjected to the different (social, political and economic) forces attached to the place (De Certeau 1988; King 2004; Brighenti 2007). Their agency can only exist on the level of space. Place is fixed and cannot be changed (Vermeulen, 2015). Therefore, the movement of subjects in a place is pretty much scripted: the paradox is that space only exists through their movement, yet their movement happens within the limits of the space predetermined by place. Both space and subjects are initially shaped by the overarching place. Place directs space.

Systems of discipline in place and space

In the following chapters, I will dig deeper into and illustrate de Certeau's Foucauldian idea that places determine and/or hold various power structures (De Certeau, 1988, p.45). This forms the base of my argument that not only challenges - like others have done before - de Certeau's idea of a fixed place, but that - in the last leg of this analysis - suggests the agency hierarchy in place can be flipped, further exploring the relation between place and power.

First, I will look at place itself as a system of discipline, specifically at the meaning of borders or frontiers through de Certeau's lens: how places and spaces are separated, collide or intersect and what this means for the subjects moving within and between them (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). To analyse the latter, apply it on and illustrate it with the different events, I follow Brighenti's thoughts on visibility and social recognition and Joseph's research on social categories in urban spaces - arguing that the setup of a place defines and limits the possible practiced spaces, denoting social categories (De Certeau, 1988; Brighenti, 2007; Joseph, 2008).

Second, I will discuss the government as a system of discipline referring to Foucault's concept of governmentality, but applied in an environmental context. I refer to Henderson *et al.*'s research on the spatial distribution of development to understand Paraguay's possible interest in the place (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). Following Huxley's ideas connecting spatial rationalities to the concept of governmentality, and applying it to the different events relating to La Chacarita, I argue that this is a form of environmentality (Huxley, 2006, p.772). As Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez explain, environmental governmentality or environmentality, relates to a state using the saving, preserving or developing of the environment as a pretext for biopower (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020, p.2).

Finally, I will explore the symbiosis of a sense of community and place attachment and how this relates to what Henderson *et al.* note as 'persistence', a factor in spatial distribution of development - or how to understand the residents' interest in the place (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). I will analyse the different events in the area by using Smith's (2017) earlier findings about the sense of community in La Chacarita, Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu's (2018) writings on place attachment and community, and Rivlin's (1982) research on group membership and place meanings.

Borders

The borders of a place define the playground, but the boundaries within that space as well. According to de Certeau, spaces are organised through their frontiers which are based on place - the localities of the points on the grid. For example, the walls of a house help us to distinguish it as a home, our commute to work exists between our distinct home and office locations (De Certeau, 1988, p.123). The paradox of the frontier is that it exists as both a touching point and one of differentiation (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). In that sense, it allows for it to be set, moved or crossed. Interactions with frontiers - movements along them - can also lead to their intersections, for example when an established boundary is transgressed (De Certeau, 1988, p.123).

Because the frontier signifies an encounter of bodies, it is hard to tell who owns it. De Certeau argues that it is a space between spaces (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). Elements of place

make up the frontier, but it's the subjects navigating the spaces that meet, who articulate the limit, establish the border. They do that by communicating from their side who can cross over from the other (De Certeau, 1988, p.127).

When looking at a map of Asunción, the place literally looks like a grid. However, La Chacarita can quickly be distinguished as it lacks those straight lines and instead shows an ensemble of winding narrow streets and seemingly dead ends. The geographical borders of La Chacarita seem clear: there is the Costanera on the one hand and the avenues rasterising downtown on the other. But it's the police, the other citizens of Asunción and the residents of La Chacarita who will make them understood.

The zone above the intersection of the streets Brasil and Av. España was marked as a no-go by my acquaintances, because they deemed it a dangerous area. I was told not to move above that intersection, as it noted the edge of the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada. Instead of taking the shortest route along the frontier of the favela from my home on Tacuari to my acquaintance in Las Mercedes, I should walk along the avenues in the direction of uptown. Entering La Chacarita was an option, but only with a resident of the neighbourhood. In his fieldwork, Smith encountered similar hurdles where he was turned away at the formal entrances of the favela and informed that outsiders were not welcome if they weren't accompanied by a permanent inhabitant. Police guarding the entrances/exits of La Chacarita warned of both the danger and the requirement of a local guide in order to get permission to enter (Smith, 2017, p.67).

Different actors, both situated inside and outside the space that was attempted to be crossed into, established the frontier by communicating the message of the space which is directed by place.

Similarly to the frontier, de Certeau speaks of the bridge. It is another in-between space that allows for crossing from one space into another, that connects the interior to the exterior, the known to the alien depending on where one is positioned (De Certeau, 1988, p.128). It is yet another example of how spaces are brought together (bridged) or kept apart. As de Certeau puts it: the bridge can at the same time free someone from an enclosed space while removing their autonomy (De Certeau, 1988, p.128).

If we look at spaces as stories narrated by the subjects wandering places, a loss of narrative - of voice - implies a loss of space (De Certeau, 1988, p.123). According to Brighenti's ideas on visibility, it is exactly the moving into a certain space that can lead to the loss of control over one's narrative (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). Following Foucault's discipline theory, visibility and disempowerment are linked (Brighenti, 2007, p.336). When a body becomes visible, comes into existence, it does so in a certain system of discipline. That visibility is linked to the creation of subjectivity as the body becomes a site of power and control when it is subjected to different social, political and economic forces (King, 2004, p.30; Brighenti, 2007, p.336).

However, Brighenti sees a scale of visibility with a subjectivation to another's narrative only below and above the minimum and maximum thresholds (Brighenti, 2007, p.329). He argues that visibility and recognition are linked and affect the relation between minorities and the mainstream (Brighenti, 2007, p.329). Groups invisible to society cannot get recognition, while social visibility can help them achieve it (Brighenti, 2007, p.329). However, the connection isn't linear and depends on the level of visibility. If one finds themselves below the minimum threshold of visibility, this means social exclusion. But extreme or supra-visibility above the maximum threshold isn't desirable either, because being in the spotlight magnifies every action (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). As Brighenti puts it, if one finds themselves to have either very little visibility or to be extremely visible, this means they no longer control their own social image (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). In other words: these people are deprived of their voices, there is a loss of narrative.

These extreme forms of visibility (either below or above the minimum and maximum thresholds) can impact people's behaviour as they are subjected to the dominant system of the space they find themselves in (Brighenti, 2007, p.337). The loss of control over one's social image due to distorted visibility, can lead to distorted social representations (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). This may well lead to the creation or upholding of stereotypes that in turn can influence behaviour again: Different stereotypes come with different scripts of appropriate behaviour (van Ditzhuijzen and van Hartingsveldt, 2018). Supra-visibility ends up paralysing individuals and forcing them into social constraints associated with the group they supposedly belong to (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). The creation of stereotypes implies the group

being homogenised and its members being stripped of their individual histories, turning them faceless or - paradoxically - even invisible (Malkki, 1995). The group experiences the space it finds itself in - the space that either enhanced or diminished its visibility and therefore narrative - as a formless entity (De Certeau, 1988, p.123).

This can be clearly illustrated by the event of the protest on Friday 5 March 2021. The event took place in front of the Congress at the Plaza de Armas which is bordered by the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada. Near the Cabildo building along the square, there is a staircase that leads down to La Chacarita: a bridge that connects both spaces. In this example, however, the staircase is seen as a way out of the favela, both liberating its people from its enclosure - from the winding alleys to the downtown grid - and removing their autonomy due to overexposure.

La Chacarita consists of two parts: the lower section is the floodplain, closest to the river and the upper part is situated on a terrace just a bit higher than the annual flood zone (Smith, 2017, p.65). During the annual flooding of the river Paraguay, the lower section becomes inhospitable and its residents move to higher ground - not within La Chacarita, but outside of it, on the Plaza de Armas (Smith, 2017, p.65). That way, they enter a different space, alien to theirs. Due to the Plaza de Armas' location, surrounded by state institutions, historical monuments, religious institutions and the police, it is a highly visible space. By moving into this space, the dislocated residents of the lower Chacarita are subjected to supra-visibility.

As previously explained, this allows for the creation of stereotypes, a homogenising process, or group framing. When moving in this exterior space, their narrative is out of their hands. The presence of individuals from the favela within the city centre is perceived as a group presence. An example of this group framing and removed narrative can be found in media reports.

A first example: On the evening of the protest, Alejandro Daniel Florentín Paredes was killed by stabbing (ABC, 2021). An initial report on 6 March 2021, locates the stabbing in the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, in a corridor between the Cathedral of Asunción and the Catholic University (HOY, 2021b). The headline '*Muerte en la Chacarita fue en ronda de tragos y no tendría nexo con la manifestación*' (Death in La Chacarita happened over a round of drinks and would have no connection with the demonstration) immediately makes the distinction

between La Chacarita and the protest (HOY, 2021b). Arguably, subjects within La Chacarita find themselves below the minimum visibility threshold and can therefore not count on social recognition (Brighenti, 2007, p.330). I argue that due to the location of the stabbing, both victim and suspect, and the event of the killing are simply dismissed as not related to the protest, dimming the killing's importance.

However, in a report of the killing one day later, on 7 March 2021, the headline reads: '*Buscan a un niño de la Chacarita por el asesinato de un manifestante*' (Looking for a child from La Chacarita for the murder of a protester) (ABC, 2021). The stabbing is now no longer located in the favela, but linked to the place of the protest and the staircase - or bridge - leading to La Chacarita. The victim reportedly participated in the protest with some friends, finished his beer and went down the staircase by the Cabildo building on the Plaza de Armas. There, the 32 year old man suffered three fatal stab wounds. The suspect was a minor from La Chacarita (ABC, 2021). Despite being in the same place, there is a clear distinction between the suspect originating from the favela and the victim who - as again is stressed - comes from a different neighbourhood: only for the victim, the place by the Congress during the event signifies the space of the protest. The suspect from La Chacarita, moving in the same place at the same time, cannot experience that space. By crossing the bridge - literally, moving up the staircase - onto the Plaza de Armas, I argue that the suspect became subject to supra-visibility and thus a different set of social constraints, stereotypes, behavioural expectations linked to the homogenised group he entered. The supra-visible suspect originating from a different space, cannot assimilate in the other - the individual is just as alien as its group. Rather than the killing being dismissed as unrelated and unimportant, the suspect is now a person to be found and tried.

A second media example relating to the same evening of 5 March 2021: What was meant to be a peaceful protest escalated into violence, with the police firing rubber bullets, using teargas and chasing protesters down the streets with horses. Addressing the arguably disproportionate reaction by the police, the Paraguayan Minister of the Interior, Arnaldo Guizzio, blamed a group of infiltrators for the escalation (HOY, 2021c). On 6 March 2021, the news article reporting on the minister's press statement, headlined with: '*Grupo alquilado se infiltró a la manifestación en busca de muertes, cree Giuzzio*' (Hired group infiltrated the protest in search of deaths, Guizzio believes). The minister confirmed to the press that his

team had identified members of a group of infiltrators among the peaceful protesters, paid to have the protest escalate into violence - which unleashed the police's reaction. He acknowledged that the police response was perhaps excessive, but justified it by saying it was aimed at a group that was not part of the peaceful protest, but merely wanted to disrupt it (HOY, 2021c). In a later report, police commissioner Gilberto Fleitas was quoted mentioning the identification of fourteen hired infiltrators originating from several different cities, including La Chacarita, which seemed to be the only place actually located within the city of Asunción (ABC Color, 2021a). In that later news article, the group is accused of inciting the protest and the violence, attacking policemen, journalists and protesters - specifying that the blows to those victims were not given by the police (ABC Color, 2021a).

This aligns with the reactions of acquaintances and protesters running past us and reacting to the events in the streets that Friday evening: cars being looted, buildings and belongings set alight,... those were responded to and distanced from with "Those aren't protesters, they're Chacarita people". People that can easily be distinguished downtown are the street children walking around carrying wooden shoe cleaning boxes over their shoulders, offering their services to middle class citizens dining in fine restaurants. Or the men in fluorescent vests, offering to help with parking or car wash for a dime. The kids in rags ready to pickpocket. Definitely, there are individuals from La Chacarita working different, formal jobs in the city centre. However, due to the visibility of these informal workers in the streets, their poverty in clear contrast to other residents of Asunción, and most importantly their locality in proximity of the favela, it's those individuals that make up the stereotypes projected onto the entire group. So within the city centre, criminal acts are generally associated with residents from La Chacarita wandering those streets. A member of La Chacarita moving in that place, cannot be a peaceful protester. One is either part of the state, the people or La Chacarita. Or the way the Minister of the Interior put it, "*lamentó que la actividad cívica haya sido empañada por terceros*" (regretting that a civil protest had been tarnished by a third party): civility is opposed to the outsiders of the favela (HOY, 2021c).

In her analytical research on social inequality in urban space, Lauren Joseph writes that space can be a patchwork of different social categories (Joseph, 2008, p.32). Those different social groups can be found in different locations across the grid: certain areas become associated with certain classes or categories. Spatial boundaries in other words, can reflect inequalities

(Joseph, 2008, p.32). Based on these views and the previously outlined ideas of de Certeau, I argue that the setup of the place in which La Chacarita is located, affects how it is practiced. The lowest classes are literally found in the lowest part, on the floodplain by the river. Within the favela, the residents that are better off or have been in the neighbourhood for a longer time, live in the upper section (Smith, 2017, p.65). Moving further up, as I observed during my fieldwork, the city centre outside of the favela is again associated with a different class, this continues as one moves in the newest financial district of Asunción, uptown.

Referring to de Certeau throughout the past chapter, leads me to the statement that the setup of a place defines how it can be practiced and thus shapes space. A place also provides the basic elements that make up borders, although these frontiers are communicated by the actors of different colliding spaces (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). Analysing downtown Asunción by applying de Certeau's and related views on the specific events, I explained and argued throughout the previous section that a place can house different spaces: Borders can indeed be crossed, but a subject moving from one place to another, does not necessarily shed it's old space, neither does it move into another space specific to that other place. When the river floods, the residents move into the city centre - yet they are still residents from La Chacarita, even in this other place. When the water recedes, the residents return to their *homes* (space) on the floodplain - even if their actual *houses* (place) were washed away.

Environmentality

In their piece discussing the spatial distribution of development, Henderson *et al.* (2017) explain how different factors lead to population concentrations in certain places. The main ones are geographical: a place can be more suitable for food production and/or it can be apt for building trade relations (Henderson *et al.*, 2017).

Asunción was founded by Spain in the 16th Century and trade flourished along the river Paraguay (Smith, 2017, p.64). But in the 19th Century, because of the repeated and inconvenient damage caused by the annual flooding, the city turned its back on the river - literally, the palace entrance is now on the other side, so the building no longer seems to face the river but the inner city instead (Smith, 2017, p.64). This opened up the floodplains to poor

rural migrants moving to the city. The land was free and close to downtown where people could look for employment (Smith, 2017, p.64). It was the start of the squatter settlement La Chacarita, which developed throughout the 18th and 19th Century and boomed in the 1980s, its name referring to the small subsistence farms of its residents (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24; La Nación, 2020b).

Up to this day, the residents of La Chacarita enjoy its proximity to the city centre where they are employed in a wide range of jobs going from government workers, security, hospitality, administrative office work and garbage collection to informal jobs in parking lots and car washing (Smith, 2017, p.65). Because of the jobs' location downtown, the favela residents can simply walk to work, saving up on transportation costs (Smith, 2017, p.65).

Despite the city of Asunción further expanding outside of the downtown area, with recently a new financial district uptown, the government's focus on developing downtown remains (Smith, 2017, p.65). This can be explained by the previously mentioned factors for population concentrations in specific places. As Henderson *et al.* write, because of the development of agricultural mass production and the drop in transport costs over time, the geographical aspect of suitability for food production and proximity is no longer a factor for population concentrations in new settlements (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). However, the researchers note, the interest in trade has grown which has increased the importance and desirability of places with trade opportunities, such as seas, rivers and harbours (Henderson *et al.*, 2017).

The Paraguayan government most definitely has returned its attention to the river. It has developed the riverbank into the slick Costanera where urban residents go jogging or spend the day on the beach tanning. It also developed the old riverbank neighbourhood Loma San Jerónimo into the first tourist area of the city (Revista AIA, 2018) and the new ministry buildings are currently under construction along the same river Paraguay. Since the early 2000s the government has repeatedly shown interest in the urban development of La Chacarita as well (Smith, 2017, p.65).

According to Joseph, urban space is marked by a constant tension between a higher class of developers, investors, state actors who see the urban territory as a valuable object which can

be marketed, and the residents of the specific areas for whom the space is first and foremost a home (Joseph, 2008, p.39). The government has other ideas for how space should be used and the urban poor challenge this (Joseph, 2008, p.38).

This tension about use of space can be seen in the case of La Chacarita. Smith notes that squatter settlements and their residents tend to be associated with very low living conditions (Smith, 2017, p.64). The residents of La Chacarita have a below average life expectancy, low education and health problems (Smith, 2017, p.65). Such areas are assumed to be hubs for criminals and criminal activities (Smith, 2017, p.64). While residents do have access to formal employment in downtown Asunción, many work informally offering car wash services, as street vendors or beggars. Informal settlements like La Chacarita tend to have high unemployment which helps the perception of squatter settlements as economic drains (Smith, 2017, p.64). All of these aspects show how the urban poor challenge the government's ideas of proper use of space.

But if we consider Foucault's concept of governmentality, it is that image which allows governments to push forward with urban development plans. Such governmental practices as seen through Foucault's lens, refer to how the state seeks to control the behaviour of its subjects according to the government's goals (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020, p.2). The more recently developed field of environmental politics or environmentality explores the relation between subjects, space and power. More precisely, as Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez write in their overview of research developments on the matter of environmental governmentality, it deals with the use of biopower with regards to the environment: either under the pretext of saving it, preserving or developing it (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020, p.2). Environmentality tends to focus on the rise of environmentalism and its effects on governance, however, applying governmentality and Huxley's (2006) spatial rationalities to La Chacarita, I argue that the Paraguayan government's approach falls under the same umbrella: spatial causalities in de favela relate to environmental factors and the apparent aim is that of (urban) development.

Like Smith writes about the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada: the idea is that if the area is cleared, the social issues will be removed with it (Smith, 2017, p.71). When the residents of the settlement are relocated and the area is revitalised, it is suggested that this would attract the

interest of investors and real estate developers (Desai in Smith, 2017, p.71). As Smith refers to Desai in his research, such plans would supposedly not only help the city flourish, but give the settlement's residents a better outlook on life too (Desai in Smith, 2017, p.71).

For example, after a fire in La Chacarita on Christmas Eve 2020 destroyed more than 100 families' homes, the government announced relocation plans for the victims. This solution was presented as not only a temporary response to the fire damage, but as a permanent plan. The affected residents of La Chacarita would first temporarily be housed on the site of the former Cervecería Paraguaya in downtown Asunción for 90 to 120 days - the estimated time for the Ministry of Urbanism, Housing and Habitat (MUVH) to provide the new homes (HOY, 2021a). The government was looking at sites for the new housing units around a 10 kilometre perimeter as the affected residents had expressed the need to stay in the vicinity of the settlement. Furthermore, the new houses would be rented out at lower, social prices (HOY, 2021a).

In any case, the mayor of Asunción, Óscar Rodríguez, stressed that he would not allow the return of the victims of the fire to La Chacarita, referring to information about "a possible collapse" (La Nación, 2021). The mayor said he was talking about future projects to develop the community of La Chacarita with the former chair of Senavitat (now the MUVH) Soledad Núñez and with the current chair of MUVH, Carlos Pereira. The latter stressed that they were seeking permanent solutions to the problem of La Chacarita, referring to the intention of not only providing the residents with a secure living space, but attached to that, a secure job too (La Nación, 2021).

In other words, I argue that the fire is used to highlight the dire conditions of the neighbourhood and to push forward with urban development plans which involve the relocation of the community. These plans are presented as the only way to provide the community with a safe living environment and their relocation is also connected to secure jobs as opposed to the implied illicit activities that supposedly take place in the neighbourhood.

When looking at these cases through Foucault's governmentality perspective and Huxley's ideas on spatial rationalities, it can be argued that defining a situation as an environmental

problem is a strategic act. However, environmentality in these cases not only proves to be a system for the government to push forward urban development plans, seen from Huxley's (2006) spatial rationalities, it also refers to the production of disciplined bodies. She bases her ideas on Foucault's theory and notes that several governmental practices aiming to produce subjects with correct behaviour can be distinguished (Huxley, 2006, p.771). These practices, she says, are based on causal relations in and between spaces, the people moving in them, environmental and behavioural aspects (Huxley, 2006, p.772).

Huxley argues that urban spaces and the subjects moving in them can be problematised through different strategies that are based on spatial causalities (Huxley, 2006, p.774). In other words, environmental and spatial factors can be linked to subjects' behaviour. Insecure, chaotic, dirty, ugly areas make for unruly subjects, while safe, secure, clean, pretty, organised environments are assumed to foster equally secure and pleasing, well-behaved subjects (Huxley, 2006, p.775). As Huxley explains, the establishment of such a causal relation allows the government to correct problematic conducts of subjects through the fixing of the environment or space (Huxley, 2006, p.774). So specific locations are problematised, their abnormalities mapped out within spatial boundaries, to allow those areas to be corrected by ordering the space (Huxley, 2006, p.780). This is also in line with de Certeau's practice of strategies which distinguishes an interior of power and will and an outlined exterior subject to that power (De Certeau, 1988, p.36).

Taking the protest of Friday 5 March 2020 as an example, the unwanted behaviour of subjects is clearly situated within specific spatial boundaries. In spaces where alcohol flows, poverty grows and death reigns - or that is the presented relation in Huxley's analysis of spatial causalities in 19th Century England (Huxley, 2006, p.774). The event of the killing of Alejandro Daniel Florentín Paredes was initially situated inside La Chacarita and within those boundaries ruled a drunken fight, unrelated to the protest (HOY, 2021b). However, as Huxley suggests, subjects demonstrating unwanted behaviour and out of the state's control in disruptive places, can be perceived as a threat if there is a risk of it spreading into the rest of the city, beyond their spatial boundaries (Huxley, 2006, p.774). So when the story of Florentín Paredes' stabbing was corrected and therefore situated outside of the precarious neighbourhood, the victim was referred to as a protester, the killing this time related to the event (ABC, 2021).

The precariousness of the neighbourhood is stressed in the first story, feeding the constructed image of a problematic, unruly space that should be ordered, corrected: the government may not have control, but this helps them illustrate that in fact they should. At the same time, the risk of the unruliness reaching the rest of the city, allows for the implementation of disciplinary systems of policing and security to control the subjects where the state does have the power to reach them (Huxley, 2006, p.774). In preparation of the anticipated protest, the National Police announced it would cover certain neighbourhoods adjacent to the downtown area - a clear reference to the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada which is situated next to the square where the protest would take place (ABC Color, 2021b). And in the aftermath of the first day of the protest which escalated into violence, the Interior Minister Arnaldo Giuzzio said the police would remain vigilant in order to prevent the group of infiltrators from re-entering (HOY, 2021b). In the aftermath of the violent protest, 14 members of the hired group were identified and said to originate from different cities, including La Chacarita - which in this statement was not referred to as being part of Asunción. The targeted neighbourhood however, is again clear (ABC Color, 2021a).

Through the previously mentioned news reports about the Christmas Eve fire, I argue how the dire living conditions in La Chacarita are emphasised to present it as something that can be fixed. Within La Chacarita, as I read from the government's quotes in the articles, the residents are presented as victims (La Nación, 2020a; La Nación, 2021; HOY, 2021a). However, when those residents affected by the annual flooding choose to set up their plywood homes on the downtown square, they seem to be framed as intruders and criminalised: both apparent in articles referring to the violence on the night of the 5 March protest and in informal conversations with acquaintances and protesters (ABC, 2021; ABC Color, 2021a; ABC Color, 2021b; HOY, 2021b; HOY, 2021c).

Based on the analysis of the different events through the lens of environmentality in the previous sections, I argue that when residents build new houses to overcome the damage of the flooding in a place chosen by them, this is perceived as another sign of their unruly behaviour, out of the government's control - it is undesirable. Only when the space is corrected by the government - when residents are relocated to government-built housing units in a state-allocated location, both temporarily and permanently - can this lead to corrected

behaviour: order, surveillance and security are built in the revitalised space (Huxley, 2006, p.774).

While I suggest that this is what is attempted through environmentality practices in La Chacarita, I believe that the case of the renewed riverbank neighbourhood Loma San Jerónimo provides a completed example of spatial rationalities leading to urban development. The old, underdeveloped area was developed into Asunción's first tourist district (Revista AIA, 2018). The place before it's revitalisation is described on the government's website as not having decent streets, parts of the neighbourhood without toilets and limited water access. After it's development, it is communicated by the state as an architectural beauty and tourist hotspot, a pleasure for all visitors (Municipalidad de Asunción, 2020). I believe similar plans ring through in the post-fire communication by the government, noting conversations about permanent development projects for the community of barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada (La Nación, 2021).

Community

Apart from the geographical factors that lead to population concentrations in specific localities, Henderson *et al.* (2017) argue that history influences those geographical factors: when a settlement is established, it is likely to stay. That persistence to stay put, flows from different factors that were built in a place through time, going from capital to political power (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). Because of persistence, people will stay in a place even if the reasons why it was once established are no longer relevant to the present day (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). Throughout the following section, I will explain how this persistence came to exist in La Chacarita.

The first people that came to settle in La Chacarita were marginalised groups like members of the indiginous Guaraní and coloured people (Smith, 2017, p.65). As the riverbank settlement grew, a class division became geographically apparent: the poorest and most marginalised residents ended up living in the lower section which consists of the floodplain, while the residents with a higher social ranking - due to either Spanish roots and/or a longer history in La Chacarita - would occupy the upper section (Smith, 2017, p.65).

This can lead one to believe that the favela is divided and people lead more individualistic lives. Smith notes that because residents of informal settlements tend to only be passing through until they move on to better circumstances, it is believed that they usually don't get to connect to others in the area. It is generally assumed that there is no or very low social cohesion or group forming in such settlements (Smith, 2017, p.68). However, despite the geographically visible divide in La Chacarita, this doesn't seem to translate into a lack of sense of community or even a divided one. On the contrary, through his research, Smith (2017) found that La Chacarita has a strong sense of community and it is very much tied to place.

According to Smith, boundaries and a sense of belonging are two of the most crucial factors needed to build a strong community and both can be found in La Chacarita (Smith, 2017, p.67). He further explains that social and cultural boundaries are denoted by geographical boundaries. The former specific ways of acting are understood when entering certain spaces - defined by the latter (Smith, 2017, p.67). The reason why geographical boundaries are important to Smith (2017), is because they determine the space in which group activities take place. They help understand behavioural cues and denote who's welcome and who isn't (Smith, 2017, p.67).

As I confirmed through my own fieldwork and explained in the previous section on borders, the geographical boundaries of La Chacarita are clear and known to both the residents and outsiders: my acquaintances clearly stated that the area above the intersection of the streets Brasil and Av. España was a no-go, because those streets border the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada which is perceived as dangerous. I was told to take a detour when going from downtown to the neighbouring Las Mercedes. These borders were also made clear through the National Police's preparatory actions regarding the Friday 5 March protest, where certain neighbourhoods downtown were controlled (ABC Color, 2021b). And generally, police guarding the neighbourhood's entrances would warn of the same danger my acquaintances reminded me of, and stress the necessity of having an inside guide to access La Chacarita (Smith, 2017, p.67). This insider-only access gives it a sort of exclusiveness which, following Smith's findings, could add to the feeling of belonging to the group (Smith, 2017, p.72).

Smith found that apart from belonging, this idea of exclusiveness, almost elitism, where outsiders can only enter the settlement if they are accompanied by a resident of La Chacarita, also leads to a certain feeling of pride and privilege among the people living there (Smith, 2017, p.72). Pride can be related to the group membership for one, as Smith (2017) reports, but according to Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018, p.4) pride can also relate to the neighbourhood's appearance. The feeling of belonging to a place, a sense of place attachment, can lead to the pride described in Smith's (2017) research and in turn improve the people's feeling of wellbeing and how they experience the environment as safe, stable and secure (Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu, 2018, p.4). Smith writes that the living conditions that outsiders might describe as unhealthy, unsafe and thus undesirable, aren't necessarily experienced that way by the actual residents (Smith, 2017, p.68). This isn't to say that they might not aspire to live in other, better conditions, but it shows that there are several factors that can make life in a certain neighbourhood more appealing and, according to Rivlin, that a sense of community is a very important one (Rivlin, 1982, p.90). This can be illustrated with the affected residents' reaction after the Christmas Eve fire, stating the need for better living conditions while demanding solutions within or as close as possible to La Chacarita (La Nación, 2020a). The city's temporary solution which placed the victims near El Cabildo, had those affected saying they now had to "bathe in the street" where "everyone looks at us" and that it was "the first time" they had to "live like this", implying they previously felt safe and sheltered in their homes in La Chacarita (La Nación, 2020a).

Applying Rivlin (1982) and Henderson *et al.*'s (2017) ideas to Smith's (2017) explorations of La Chacarita, it can be argued that it is thanks to that group membership that the residents of the favela have developed more resilience and perseverance - or as Henderson *et al.* (2017) write: persistence - in relation to the place compared to the average outsider. The residents might recognise the neighbourhood's problems, but there is more to it, as Rivlin puts it: a strong place attachment, deep roots have a holding power (Rivlin, 1982, p.90).

Tuan's concept of rootedness refers to a union of people and their environments (Tuan in Rivlin, 1982, p.90). According to his concept, when someone is rooted in a place, they can describe being in that place as being at home, feeling secure and/or comfortable (Tuan in Rivlin, 1982, p.90). In that sense, I believe the distinction can be made: a house is not necessarily a home. The security presented by the government to the people of La Chacarita

in the form of new housing outside the settlement, does not necessarily equal the security imagined by the community. Or in Rivlin's (1982, p.90) words, rootedness isn't simply achieved through the affordability of a place. Applying these views to Smith's (2017) mentioned descriptions of the community in La Chacarita, I argue that the sense of belonging, the sense of community in the area doesn't exist because different people moved there due to free or cheap land. What ties them to the area and to others in it, is a shared lifestyle or shared experiences, access to needed resources, social interactions in the place, a common goal or identity (Rivlin, 1982, p.90; Smith, 2017, p.69).

As Smith points out, there is a strong relation between a sense of community and place attachment (Smith, 2017, p.66). Which means that if, as explored in this chapter, La Chacarita has a great sense of community, there must also be a great attachment to the place - and vice versa. Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018, p.3) argue that thanks to place attachment, groups can be mobilised to work toward a common goal like community development and neighbourhood revitalisation. This in turn adds to the sense of community: the attachment one feels to a place, motivates one to not only cater to one's own needs, but those of the whole community (Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu, 2018, p.4). In other words, through group effort, the place one cares for, can be better developed. In that sense, place attachment can be understood as building social capital (Smith, 2017, p.69; Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu, 2018, p.2). Smith explains this by stating that the collective action that comes from place attachment, doesn't only help improve the neighbourhood, but also the social and group relations and integrations because of the collaboration on projects, and it further strengthens the emotional connection to the place due to the fruits of the people's labour (Smith, 2017, p.69).

According to Rivlin (1982, p.89), place attachment is also strengthened when more aspects of an individual's life are covered by the group and if that happens within a specific area. These aspects go from housing to where people get their food, where they go to work and to school, how they relax, what they do as a hobby, where they socialise and where they can practice their religion (Rivlin, 1982, p.89). As reported by Smith (2017, p.70), in La Chacarita, people rely on the community when it comes to water and sewerage systems. The same goes for education, recreation, socialisation and public services which are all held in community buildings. Those are built informally through group effort (Smith, 2017, p.68). Despite the

geographical class division mentioned before, residents of La Chacarita are closely knit: through collective action, the educational and infrastructural needs of La Chacarita are met. Only thanks to the lower and upper zones' coordinated efforts, can the water and sewerage systems function properly (Smith, 2017, p.70). Children's education is taken care of with a whole range of small schools throughout the neighbourhood (Smith, 2017, p.68). The settlement also has its own football stadiums and teams playing in the Paraguayan league like Resistencia and Oriental that have stuck around since the first years of the 1900s (Smith, 2017; La Nación, 2020b; Soccerway, 2021).

Smith stresses that such places designated for social interaction are very important in community building (Smith, 2017, p.68). La Chacarita consists of informal houses made out of semi-permanent materials like wood. These wooden constructions are easily washed away or burnt, and can also be found on the Plaza de Armas where houses are set up during the annual flooding. However, the buildings for social gatherings such as schools, chapels and football stadiums in La Chacarita are made out of permanent materials (Smith, 2017, p.69). I argue that those buildings being durable in contrast with the houses adapted to the temporariness of the annual migration, hint to the fact that the community is permanent.

Rivlin explains different types of place meaning when discussing group membership (Rivlin, 1982). Looking at La Chacarita, I distinguish the geographical type of place meaning presented in Rivlin's research (Rivling, 1982, p.87). This refers to how much people associate themselves with and rely on the place they find themselves in (Rivlin, 1982, p.87). Contrary to a generic meaning of place where a person doesn't need to have ever been in the area but relies on certain connections to eg. monuments or ideas, geographical place meaning is developed through someone physically being in the place, someone's experience of it, through social interactions and a personal history in the place (Rivlin, 1982, p.87). This geographical type of place dependence can be distinguished in the case of La Chacarita, where people physically moved to, resided in and built histories since the colonial era (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24). The favela was even visibly isolated in its built environment from as early as 1821 when it was excluded from urban renewal which straightened, widened and leveled the city's streets, while La Chacarita remained a web of winding alleys: like a bubble hosting a community and its subjects' interactions and histories (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.24).

Rivlin (1982, p.91) argues that one can have an individual connection to a place, but also via the group one belongs to. With both individual and group-based roots, one's attachment to place is assumed to be more lasting and durable than if it had only depended on individual experiences (Rivlin, 1982, p.91). And so, as Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu (2018, p.9) put it: If the community has a strong group membership and high place attachment, the place is expected to be more resilient and sustainable. As discussed in this section, the aspects needed for great place attachment and likewise a strong community, can clearly be found in La Chacarita.

Space carving place in downtown Asunción

Having analysed the different power structures in and of place and applying them to different events in the downtown area of Asunción, I have set the base for the conclusion of my argument that - as opposed to de Certeau's (1988) views, place is not fixed, but moreover, that the hierarchy of power structures and thus agency can be flipped. To continue this argument, I will now move on to analyse how these previously outlined different power structures intersect, interact and affect the place and agency hierarchy within it.

As previously explained in the chapter on environmentality, with this type of governmentality I refer in the context of this research to how the government frames subjects within specific spatial boundaries as displaying unwanted behaviour. That unwanted behaviour is ascribed to spatial causal relations (Huxley, 2006; Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020). The idea behind this environmentality is that subjectivities displaying correct behaviour can be produced within a redeveloped space. If the space is corrected, so will the subjects be (Huxley, 2006). So following that thought, like Smith also notes, when living circumstances are labelled as inhospitable, unhealthy, draining the economy and other negative characteristics and this is linked to environmental factors, urban development might be presented as a logical and beneficial solution for all parties (Smith, 2017, p.64). Not only will the city's image improve, attract investors, real estate developers and more, but the relocated residents coming from the neighbourhood framed as underdeveloped would also get a chance to succeed in life thanks to

a more secure living environment and - as the case is presented through the lens of environmentality - thus more secure jobs (Desai in Smith, 2017, p.71; La Nación, 2021).

When a seemingly desirable outcome for everyone is presented, Smith argues that protest against such plans is not expected (Smith, 2017, p.64). However, this perspective rooted in Foucault's ideas on governmentality assumes the individualistic character of the subjects in the neighbourhood. Squatter settlements tend to be associated with individuality, a sole focus on survival, and a lack of social cohesion (Smith, 2017, p.71). As stated in the previous chapter based on Smith's findings, this isn't applicable in La Chacarita which in fact displays a strong sense of community (Smith, 2017).

The government of the city of Asunción hasn't started the urban development of its oldest neighbourhood nor the relocation of its residents despite several attempts since the turn of the millennium (Smith, 2017, p.65). The state instead moved on with the revitalisation of the Costanera in 2012 and the revamping of a similarly old, underdeveloped neighbourhood on the riverbank, Loma San Jerónimo in 2013 (Revista AIA, 2018; Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.59). Although La Chacarita was pretty much left alone and the state notes it has no clear idea of the actual number of inhabitants, it did note that the development of La Costanera affected the demographics of the lower zone of La Chacarita significantly (Smith, 2017, p.65; Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.59). Apart from that, it believes the demographics will change with the expected relocation of residents from the lower flood zone to two new places - barrio San Francisco and a neighbourhood in Zeballos - still in development (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019, p.59). However, in July 2019, Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay presented its plans for an integral improvement project of the upper zone of La Chacarita in collaboration with Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID), the Ministry of Urbanism, Housing and Habitat (MUVH) and the Municipality of the City of Asunción (MCA). The presented aim was to improve the living conditions of the more than 1,000 families of the upper zone of the neighbourhood which isn't affected by the annual flooding and to promote environmental sustainability (Hábitat para la humanidad Paraguay, 2019).

Moreover, after a fire on Christmas Eve 2020 destroyed the homes of more than 100 families living in the barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, the government addressed the event by proposing

plans for the relocation of the Chacarita residents (HOY, 2021a). In the communication of that proposition, secure homes were connected to secure jobs - implying not only a 'correction' of the neighbourhood, but of its residents too (La Nación, 2021). A clear example of the previously explained governmentality through spatial rationalities (Huxley, 2006). A first hurdle in the process arises, however, as Rivlin notes in her research: If a fire destroys the homes of a community with strong place attachment, new houses cannot simply take on the same place meaning (Rivlin, 1982, p.77). The affected residents asked not to be moved further than a few kilometres away from La Chacarita (HOY, 2021a; La Nación, 2021). Yet, as I observed during my fieldwork, previously built housing units situated along the riverbank next to barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada, remain mostly uninhabited.

The intersection of community and environmentality

The question then arises: How is place affected by an unexpected collision of environmentality efforts and a strong sense of place attachment? De Certeau argues that place directs space and the subjects moving in it, their agency only existing in space - not place (De Certeau, 1988; Vermeulen, 2015). In other words, place crafts space, not the other way around. Subjects cannot make changes to a place. It is a fixed thing, while space is mobile (De Certeau, 1988, p.117). However, when environmentality and a sense of community - both born from place and driven by spatial factors - intersect, I argue that de Certeau's proposed hierarchy is flipped (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015). Through this intersection, the subjects disciplined by place and its pre-set spaces are able to have agency in a place - making changes to it. To use de Certeau's analogy: the subjects aren't merely acting out a script, they can be the author and rewrite it too (De Certeau, 1988, p.117; Vermeulen, 2015).

The fire on the evening of 24 December 2020 offers a good illustration of both environmentality and community colliding and turning the tables. I use the case as an example of the government's discourse about La Chacarita: it is an inhospitable, insecure, unsafe place. The way the event and its victims are discussed, I argue, presents the people as being too poor to build durable homes and fires or floods can sweep it all away in an instant, rendering them homeless and helpless. If only they had durable homes, it sounds like, they would also be able to secure good jobs and have an overall higher living standard (HOY,

2021a; La Nación, 2021). The government is quick to invest in such durable homes and the relocation of the residents, as from an environmentality point of view, the aim is to control the area and develop it according to the government's wishes (Huxley, 2006; Joseph, 2008; Smith, 2017).

The houses in La Chacarita may be informally built with semi-permanent materials that aren't the most reliable for lasting constructions (Smith, 2017, p.65). However, the devastating fire is perhaps not merely the result of poor living conditions due to the settlement's location as suggested in the government's communication on the matter. In analysing the event, I believe it is important to consider the fact that the government doesn't provide basic infrastructure, nor does it extend fire protection services to the settlement, which may have contributed to the extent of the Christmas Eve fire (Smith, 2017, p.65). I would like to note in that respect, that police and fire services not reaching La Chacarita, aren't factors decided by place, but a governmental decision.

From an environmentality perspective, the government aims to uphold the image of inhospitability, insecurity and poor living conditions of the settlement - an image that would normally allow for urban development plans to go through (Huxley, 2006; Smith, 2017). But I argue that it is due to that approach, that the sense of community in La Chacarita is actually strengthened. Because the government doesn't provide barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada with the necessary, basic infrastructure, the residents rely on each other and have to join forces to eg. develop water and sewerage systems (Smith, 2017, p.70). In that sense, I believe that the residents work together to fill in the gaps left by the state, their marginalisation forges a sense of community needed to make La Chacarita livable.

Another example of environmentality and a sense of community intersecting can be found in the protest of Friday 5 March 2021. Following Huxley's ideas on governmentality and spatial rationalities, I argue that in order to justify slum removal and to allow for the subjectivation of the people of La Chacarita, the behaviour of settlement residents moving outside of the neighbourhood is criminalised (Huxley, 2006, p.774). As previously noted, referring to Brighenti's (2007) visibility theory and van Ditzhuijzen and van Hartingsveldt's (2018) research on stereotypes and behavioural scripts, the general perception of favela residents navigating the downtown area is a negative one based on stereotypes attributed to the whole

group. I argue, based on these theoretical frameworks, media reports and my observations on the ground, that informal and illicit activities of a few are extrapolated to all individuals of La Chacarita spotted outside of the borders of the settlement. Media reports about the residents who lost their homes to a fire in barrio Dr. Ricardo Brugada on Christmas Eve frame them as victims in and of that space, while residents who temporarily move to the Plaza de Armas because of the annual flooding tend to be framed as intruders in the space that is downtown (HOY, 2021a; HOY, 2021b).

This can also be illustrated by the event of the 5 March protest, where the sight of looters and violent actors was quickly associated by acquaintances and other protesters with a 'hired group' meant to purposefully disrupt and escalate the demonstration. Generally their reactions linked the violent actors to 'people of La Chacarita' - as if this should be expected.

To expand on the idea of stereotypes in this context, I want to refer to the concept of framing. The American communication scientist Stephen Reese defines frames as ways to structure reality (Reese, 2001, p.5). The French philosopher Jacques Derrida discussed framing decades prior to Reese through his concept of the 'parergon' (Derrida and Owens, 1979). He explained the term with the analogy of looking at a framed painting on a wall: when looking at the painting, the frame might disappear into the wall, and when looking at the wall, the frame might become part of the painting (Derrida and Owens, 1979). So when applying the concept of framing to society, one could say the frame is either part of the subject or the context - but in both cases it offers a contextualising framework for that which is being framed. Frames structure reality, give rise to meaning and thus shape reality (Derrida and Owens, 1979; Reese, 2001). Moreover, like Reese writes (2001), frames shift the focus from a single story to a bigger picture - which adds to the previously mentioned ideas of Malkki (1995) about homogenising groups and stripping them of their individual stories, and leads me to stereotypes and their effects regarding the people of La Chacarita. According to Van Gorp, Figoureux and Vyncke (2018), the most simplifying frame is likely to be the most popular.

Framing plays an important part in communication and it helps to understand the role of media in shaping public opinion: Stereotypes supported and (sub)consciously spread by media, help influence the public's attitude toward certain topics (Jacobs *et al.* in Van Gorp,

Figoureux and Vyncke, 2018, p.8). When the media report negatively about minorities, this leads the public to experience the group more as a threat (Vergeer *et al.* in Van Gorp, Figoureux and Vyncke, 2018, p.8). Vice versa, positive news about eg. migration, leads to less people perceiving it as a problem (Boomgaarden *et al.* in Van Gorp, Figoureux and Vyncke, 2018, p.8). However, the researchers also found a correlation between a higher visibility of a topic in the media and a rise in negative attitudes toward it (Eberl *et al.* in Van Gorp, Figoureux and Vyncke, 2018, p.8).

The latter leads me back to Brighenti's (2007) views on visibility. Stereotypes can influence behaviour, but more so, supra-visibility projects stereotypes onto individuals - this means that whatever a member of the group does, good or bad, it is more likely to be seen through negative framing (Brighenti, 2007; Van Ditzhuijzen and van Hartingsveldt, 2018). However, through his fieldwork, Smith (2017, p.72) found that residents of La Chacarita actually use that negative framing to their benefit. He mentions how residents even encourage their neighbourhood's dangerous reputation (Smith, 2017, p.72). Being framed as a threat, Smith writes, helps keep the unwanted government and developers out all while strengthening the area's boundaries - which in turn is a supporting factor for a strong sense of community too (Smith, 2017, p.72).

Agency in place

I argue that through the intersection of environmentality and community practices, both boundaries as well as a sense of belonging are strengthened. That way, the presence of the La Chacarita community has changed and continues to change the place. In other words, contrary to de Certeau's (1988) beliefs, it is not only place that forces people to navigate spaces in certain ways - not only the annual flooding that makes La Costanera, La Chacarita and downtown into the spaces they are and how they are experienced.

During the annual flooding, residents build wooden houses on the Plaza de Armas. I argue that the fact that their houses in the settlement are also made of wood, while their community buildings are made of durable materials, points to a conscious choice out of convenience rather than a lack of resources (Smith, 2017). In terms of de Certeau's (1988) description of

place, I state that the wooden houses on the Plaza de Armas signify a new point on the grid and thus a change in the place. And so, I believe that the way subjects who wander the place that is downtown experience and navigate it, the way they then articulate space, is therefore also directed by the wooden houses of La Chacarita residents on the Plaza de Armas. As previously explained from de Certeau's perspective (1988), the boundaries of a place are voiced by the people moving in it, and in this case, their message mirrors the sustained image of La Chacarita as a dangerous place, a threat: careful, do not enter - the place should be avoided (Smith, 2017, p.72).

Following the previous analyses through the theoretical framework relating to visibility, stereotypes and framing, it can be said that with the 5 March protest taking place on the Plaza de Armas in front of the Congress, during the annual flooding and thus in the presence of the community's alternative wooden houses, a violent turn of events had to be expected.

And it was. This was made clear in the articles prior to the protest citing the National Police's security alert in anticipation of the event (ABC Color, 2021b). It is in relation to this event that I suggest another element constituting a change in place: barricades. Because the National Police anticipated a large protest, they set up barricades as a precaution to control "certain neighbourhoods" (ABC Color, 2021b). I argue that the community of La Chacarita, fostering the threat frame as mentioned by Smith (2017, p.72), has agency in place which means it can move its borders. These borders are visualised through the fences that are set up in strategic points and articulated by the police (positioned with them, almost like static points on the grid too), signifying the new external borders of the settlement: no longer limited to the network of winding alleys by the riverbank, but extended into the downtown grid.

Other examples of elements that are a change in place are the state-built, mostly uninhabited houses next to La Chacarita, and the new government buildings opposite of La Loma, on the riverbank. It constitutes the urban development of the river region, however, with La Chacarita remaining seemingly untouched and unmoved by government forces, I argue that it can also be perceived as a La Chacarita-crafted place directing the way space is experienced in downtown Asunción: While the government built homes by the riverbank for residents of La Chacarita, those residents keep moving up to their self-built homes on the square

surrounded by state institutions. The latter in turn seem to plan for desertion, as they take refuge in newly built offices… on the lowest point by the river.

This leads me to conclude that - unlike de Certeau (1988) views it - place doesn't only shape space, but space can in turn change place. But more importantly, the idea that subjects not only have agency in space, but in place too, allows me to illustrate how the hierarchy of power structures in place can be flipped (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015). I argue that supra-visibility of subjects moving out of the boundaries of La Chacarita turns to the advantage of the community: Their dangerous image allows for the articulation of those boundaries as borders not to be crossed, which in turn strengthens their invisibility within the borders of La Chacarita (De Certeau, 1988; Brighenti, 2007; Smith, 2017). This state of invisibility is most desirable, because within Foucault's disciplinary society, being visible means existing in a power structure and being shaped by it (Foucault in Brighenti, 2007, p.336). So in that light, invisibility allows the residents not to be subjected to governmentality practices (Foucault in Brighenti, 2007, p.336). And yet, as I argue, this is achieved exactly through the intersection of power structures - environmentality practices and a sense of community with strong place attachment. Eventually, as I suggest in the final section of my analysis of the power balance in downtown Asunción, the hierarchy is overturned and agency is not only limited to space, but exists in place too. From de Certeau's perspective, the strategies practiced by state power to influence the power relations with the alienated La Chacarita, actually contribute to a flipped hierarchy and the practice of strategies being applicable to what was assumed as the lesser or controlled subject: La Chacarita becomes the subject with will and power isolated in a place which affects its exterior (De Certeau, 1988, p.36). This makes it look like the people of La Chacarita are actually the main disciplinary system shaping other subjects, including state actors - implying empowering effects of place (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015).

Conclusion

The neighbourhood commonly known as La Chacarita in Asunción, Paraguay is one of the oldest of the capital (La Nación, 2020b). Its lower zone is located in the floodplain of the

river Paraguay in the Bay of Asunción and its upper zone reaches the downtown city centre Plaza del Congreso and Plaza de Armas with the Congress, Senate, El Cabildo, the cathedral, Catholic University and national police department. Every year, when the river floods, residents of La Chacarita move out and up to the Plaza de Armas where they set up their temporary wooden houses - with at their heart the Column of Independence (Smith, 2017).

This intriguing setup with the annual migration of people from the lowest ranks (societal, but also literally, from the lowest point by the river) up to the squares surrounded by the higher institutions of state, security, education, church and history, got me wondering who actually holds the power and if perhaps one's locality has a hand in this. I decided to dig deeper into the power structures in place, asking the question: **How do place and space interact in downtown Asunción?**

I sought to answer the question by analysing the place, space and subjectivities on a macro- and micro-level, following de Certeau's idea of hierarchy: place as an umbrella of power structures and space below with subjects moving in it (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015). I analysed the overarching structures and applied them to the micro-politics of three specific events which made up the case study in the place at hand: a fire in La Chacarita, a protest on and around the Plaza de Armas, and a fatal stabbing in between.

In the first step, I considered place itself as a system of discipline by focusing on de Certeau's ideas on boundaries and frontiers (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). I connected these thoughts to Brighenti's (2007) visibility theory and Joseph's (2008) views on social categories in urban space and applied them to different events in order to understand and illustrate how places and spaces are separated, collide or intersect and what this means for the subjects moving within and between them (De Certeau, 1988, p.127). From this, I concluded that the setup of a place denotes and delimits how space can be practiced, and that it produces social categories (De Certeau, 1988; Brighenti, 2007; Joseph, 2008).

The second part in discussing systems of discipline in place, connected Foucault's concept of governmentality to Huxley's (2006) spatial rationalities, which I argue is a type of environmentality as well. Environmental governmentality or environmentality, as Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez explain, relates to a state using the saving, preserving or developing of

the environment as a pretext for biopower (Fletcher and Cortes-Vazquez, 2020, p.2). With her research on spatial rationalities in 19th Century England, Huxley explains from a governmentality perspective how environmental or spatial qualities can be linked to subjects' behaviours to allow for their correction (Huxley, 2006, p.772). In this section, I argued that the City of Asunción applies environmentality practices to La Chacarita aiming for urban development while linking it to residents' behaviour and an improvement of quality of life.

After discussing the state's relation to the place, the third and final section, analysing the separate systems of discipline, sought to understand the presence of the residents in La Chacarita. Throughout this part, I explored the symbiosis of a sense of community and place attachment and how this relates to what Henderson *et al.* note as 'persistence', a factor in spatial distribution of development (Henderson *et al.*, 2017). I did this by referring back to Smith's (2017) fieldwork and findings on community and place attachment in La Chacarita, and elaborating on these concepts through Rivlin's (1982) research on group membership and place meanings, and Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu's (2018) writings on place attachment and community. The conclusion here was that there is a synergy between group membership and place attachment, and that if both are strong, this not only leads the community and attachment to place to be more durable, but makes a place more resilient and sustainable too (Rivlin, 1982, p.91; Plunkett, Phillips and Kocaoglu, 2018, p.9).

Having analysed the umbrella of de Certeau's (1988) hierarchy, I finally moved on to zoom in on how those different power structures intersect, interact and thus affect the place and agency hierarchy within. I used the different events in downtown Asunción to analyse and illustrate the intersection of power structures and its effects. As I looked at subjects from La Chacarita outside the neighbourhoods' borders, I applied Brighenti's (2007) idea of supra-visibility and argued that it turns into an advantage of the community: Their dangerous image allows for the articulation of the neighbourhoods' boundaries as borders not to be crossed by outsiders, which in turn strengthens their invisibility within the borders of La Chacarita (De Certeau, 1988; Brighenti, 2007; Smith, 2017). From the perspective of Foucault's disciplinary society, that state of invisibility is most desirable, as being visible means existing in a power structure and being shaped by it, while invisibility allows the residents of La Chacarita not to be subjected to governmentality practices (Foucault in Brighenti, 2007, p.336). However, as I explained, that state of invisibility which helps escape

systems of discipline, paradoxically comes about exactly through the intersection of such power structures.

Exploring how place and space interact in downtown Asunción, I found that place leads to both environmentality practices and a sense of community with strong place attachment. The results of their interaction not only led me to conclude that, as opposed to de Certeau's (1988) views, place is not fixed, but more importantly, that the hierarchy of power structures and thus agency can be flipped. Place doesn't only shape space, but space can in turn change place (De Certeau, 1988). The idea that subjects not only have agency in space, but in place too, helps explain how the power hierarchy suggested by de Certeau is overturned: Where from his Foucauldian perspective, the people from La Chacarita tend to be viewed as disciplined bodies, looking at the interaction of place and space allows the understanding of the residents becoming the main disciplinary system, shaping other subjects, including state actors and thus implying place having empowering effects (De Certeau, 1988, p.45; Vermeulen, 2015).

With these theories and findings being applied on the specific case and place of downtown Asunción, I believe it would be interesting to analyse the effects of community and place attachment on power structures in localities with seemingly opposing qualities to broaden our understanding of these workings. Especially the aspect of persistence as mentioned by Henderson *et al.* (2017) in describing the different factors contributing to the spatial distribution of development can be further explored in relation to place attachment and power balances. How is this persistence fostered in different places? And, having discussed geographical place-dependence in this specific case, what with generic place-dependence when discussing power play in other localities (Rivlin, 1982, p.87)? Can we explore a level of place attachment there too that can disrupt existing power structures? Finally, could it then be taken even further, where findings are explored for practical applications where the built environment is adapted in anticipation of intersecting power structures?

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