

# パナマシティ・エルチョリジョ地区の都市アイデンティティの変容：分断、侵攻、復興の影響に着目して

## The transformation of the Urban Identity in El Chorrillo, Panama City: the influence of segregation, invasion, and the way to recovery.

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This study aims to recognize the evolution of El Chorrillo, a vulnerable settlement in Panama City's center, and to comprehend the processes that led to the formation and change of its urban identity, in order to identify the historical role of segregation, invasion, and other forces that intervened in the past, with a focus on the last 30 years of recovery.

To do so, the words of relegated residents were used to reproduce three scenarios from different periods in recent history and observe the effects of these influences on the identity. The ultimate goal is to collect the components that distinguish the settlement in order to maintain its long-term sustainability and identity.

### 1. Context

The arrival of the information age imposed a new system in which cities compete for the new hierarchies of power and development. Besides, the neoliberal policies by governments puts economic interests above the preservation of local character, which has led to a widespread phenomenon of identity loss.

In Panama City this phenomenon is observed in the neighborhoods that lead economic development as in the rest of the world, but also in the vulnerable settlements that remain in the city center, which have been created by the segregating nature of the formation of the city. To understand the process of identity loss in a vulnerable settlement, the Chorrillo Study Case was chosen, as it was also the epicenter of the invasion and consequent bombing by USA in 1989. I'd like to address how segregation processes and other factors have shaped the formation of local urban identities, so this information can be useful for its sustainability and in future renovation programs.

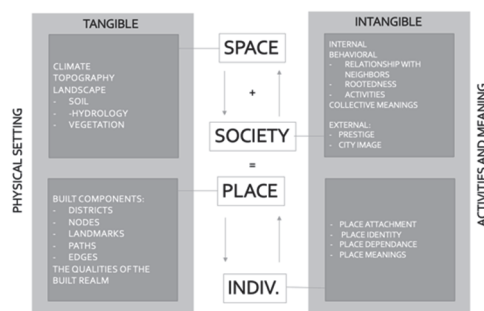
### 2. Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1. Urban Identity

This research will focus on the concept of urban identity, with a definition understood as a collective agreement upon the elements that give a place its character, such are, the natural environment, the social constructs, and their reflection in the physical realm. The consequences of the place on the individual (known as place attachment, place identity, dependence and meanings) will be included, considering the symbiotic relationship that exists between the construction of the identities of individuals and their environment (Figure 1). For the analysis of the case study, we will also refer to two characteristics of urban identity, its permanent evolution in time and its fragmented character.

Figure 1. Urban Identity Components. Source:

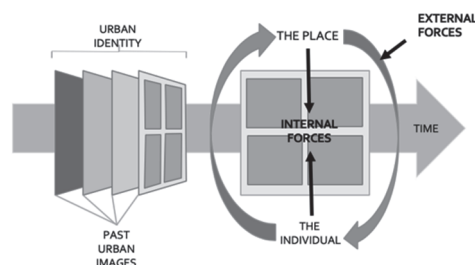
#### Bernardo et al. and author contribution



#### 2.2. Evolutionary Character: Urban Identity Change

Urban identity requires the continuity of certain characteristics to be generated. The change in identity is caused by the action of driving forces on the physical or social environment. These forces can be internal or external, regular, forced or planned. (Figure 2) According to the magnitude of these forces, the magnitude and intensity of the changes are defined. This positions the Invasion of 1989 as a point of comparison.

Figure 2. Urban Identity change through time after the interaction of the forces. Source: made by author

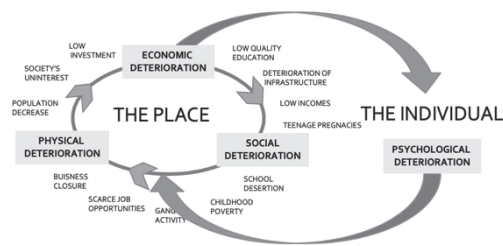


Tatis Morales, Tatiana Janeth

### 2.3. Urban Identity vs. Segregation

Spatial Segregation is the concentration of population or elements that share a characteristic somewhere in the urban fabric. It can occur voluntarily in ethnic enclaves or in an imposed way, with the creation of ghettos through the influence of government policies or the real estate market. Within the latter there is a process of deceleration that usually entails economic, social and physical environment deterioration, with their respective consequences for the individual (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Consequences of segregation.** Source: Plan Santa Ana lidera and author contribution



Summarizing, the main ideas are:

1. The impact of big forces as the invasion gave way to drastic changes in the identity.
2. In the long run, the segregated situation as a vulnerable settlement has left its mark on the urban identity.

However, other driving forces that could have interacted with the place in the last 30 years still need to be acknowledged.

### 3. Framework Application

To define such forces, the research began with the reconstruction of the timeline through archive research through maps, articles and photos, and a physical survey for the creation of a GIS dataset for comparison with previous maps.

With the completed timeline, the scope of the scenarios to be analyzed were also established.

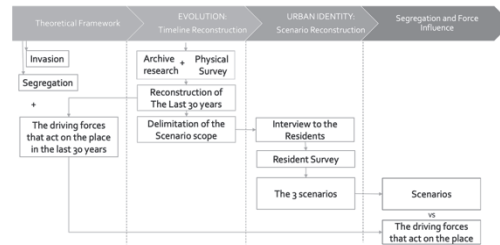
Then the reconstruction of the urban images of the three scenarios began.

For this, interviews with residents were performed to learn about the situation that occurred on the site and to reconstruct the social and individual sections, based on the questionnaire proposed by Jaime Linares Zarco in 2009.

For the rectification of the results, a quantitative survey was carried out based on the questionnaire proposed by Oktay in 2015 to numerically establish the content of the current identity.

With the scenarios completed, they were compared with some testimonies of the residents and some remarks made by previous authors to address the impact of the forces and segregation in the identity.

**Figure 4. Research Methodology.** Source: Author



## 4. CASE STUDY

### 4.1. General information and Evolution

El Chorrillo is one of the three corregimientos that compose the historical center of Panama City, together with Santa Ana and San Felipe. The population is 18,302 inhabitants according to the 2010 Census. It has an area of 0,6 Km<sup>2</sup> and a density of 29,363 hab/ Km<sup>2</sup>. The early urban growth of the settlement took place during periods of abundance as a result of the construction of engineering works such as the railroad and the Canal. Before the 20th century, the expansion was highly conditioned by diseases and the climate, however, land fillings and sanitation programs consolidated the growth of the population. Its segregated condition was defined by the construction of the Barrio Obrero (worker neighborhood) of Chorrillo. Since the 1940s it was gradually transformed into an area of experimentation for social housing by the state. The area has gradually suffered since the 1950's from a process of abandonment and deterioration. In the 70s, the initial social housing model was replaced by high-rise housing complexes.

In 1989, the invasion represented the loss of 203 077sq m, of state and private owned properties (Figure 5) and affected 12 114 people. It also represented the complete eradication of the worker neighborhood, damage to public services inside the corregimiento and the loss of community equipment.

**Figure 5. Invasion Effects.** Source: Espino, 1990; Gordon, 2016; INEC



### 4.2. The Last 30 Years

After the invasion, the recovery process was slow and tortuous. According to the physical survey,

during this period the changes in the environment were not limited to the areas directly affected by the bombardment but extended to cover 41.35% of the corregimiento's surface (Figure 6).

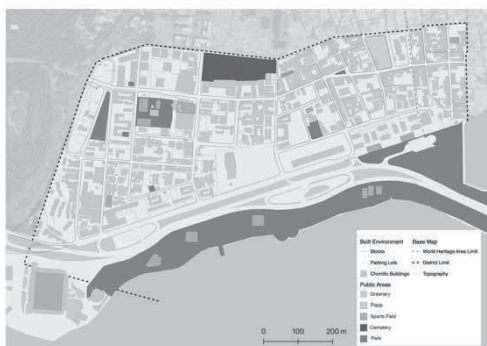
**Figure 6. Changes in the Last 30 Years. Source: Espino, 1990; Gordon, 2016; Physical Survey**



Much of the diversity of uses of the corregimiento was lost, since the commercial premises and industries in the area were replaced by social housing projects built from 1990 to 2005, making up 67% of the changes in the territory.

On the other hand, there was a substantial increase of the available public spaces in the area. In 2014, Cinta Costera was made over a filling that provided the corregimiento with 212 398 m<sup>2</sup> of land, (an increment of about 33% of the available land) for the placement of public spaces (Figure 7). This increased the public area per person in the corregimiento to a number close to the recommended 9 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

**Figure 7. Open Spaces. Source: Physical Survey**



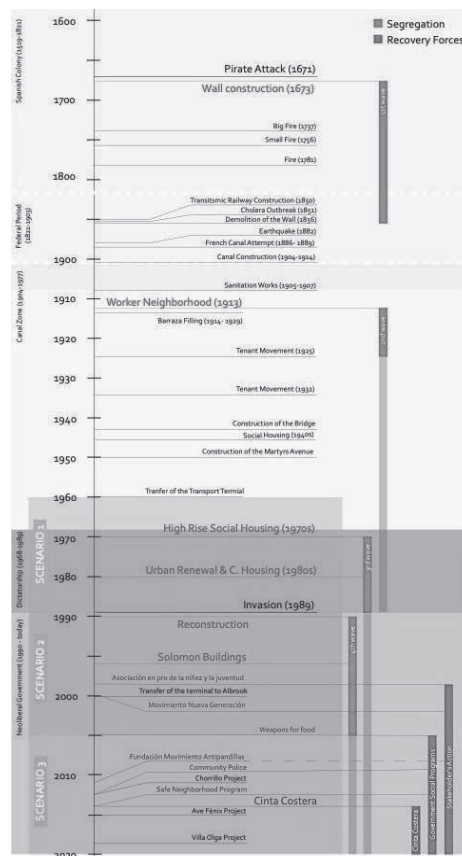
The area presented an accelerated increase in crime, so state and community action in social matters were necessary. After the physical survey and the reconstruction of the timeline it was concluded that although the invasion marks a before and after in the history of

the township, the diving forces that have had the greatest impact on the built and social environments are the processes that involve segregation. For this reason, for the configuration of the scenarios to be analyzed, two types of forces were considered: segregation processes and recovery forces. Among the former we can highlight 4 main waves due to their scale:

1. From the construction of the Wall
2. The Canal Zone and the Barrio Obrero
3. The housing projects of the 70s
4. Reconstruction after invasion.

In contrast, the recovery processes include state policies, stakeholder action and the Cinta Costera. For the delimitation of the scenarios, the invasion and the end of the periods of construction of social housing altogether with the begging of anti-delinquency programs were used as divisions (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Relationship between segregation, the recovery forces and the 3 Scenarios. Source: previous research with Author's contributions.**



### 4.3. Urban Identity

#### 4.3.1. Interview to the residents

After the delimitation of the scope of the scenarios

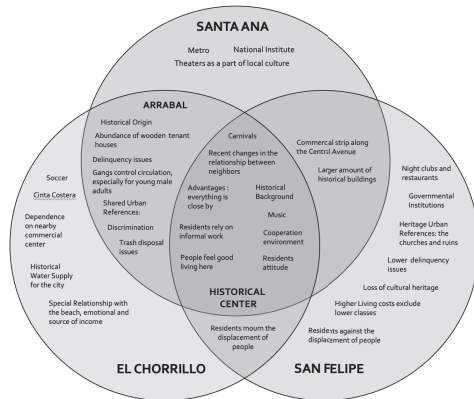
we move on to the construction the identity content. The first step was performing lengthy interviews with the residents.

A total of 8 interviews were made to residents of the 3 corregimientos of the historic center to define the characteristics that distinguish the case study from its neighbors. Additionally, Urban references social dynamics, cultural activities, and attachment conditions for residents were obtained.

Some findings from the first survey were:

- The beach and home as main attachment places.
- There were physical references to public places and certain streets only.
- There was no reference to traditional architecture or social housing.
- Residents reported a sudden increase in violence, then slow improvement.
- The existing community involves everyone equally.
- Residents give special importance to interpersonal relationships.
- Convenience as one of the reasons for attachment
- No consensus on perception of discrimination

**Figure 9. Venn Diagram of the similarities and differences between the corregimientos. Source: Interviews with residents.**



#### 4.3.2. Resident Survey

From the interviews with the residents and the information from the evolution maps, a list of the potential elements of the current urban identity was created.

With this information a questionnaire was developed based on the one proposed by Derya Oktay's research in Girne (Kyrenia).

A random sampling procedure was performed within the site. The sample consists of 17 residents over the age of 18.

The survey consisted of two parts:

1. Sociodemographic data of the respondent.

#### 2. The influence of certain elements on identity

From the survey, we obtained a description of the four different components of El Chorrillo's urban identity as follows:

##### Natural

The expansion of the built environment has meant much that the influence of natural elements has lost importance over time. Such is the case of mangroves and Chorros, even if these had ties with the name of the corregimiento. Ancón Hill and weather remain with high scores.

##### Built

The importance of places for public interaction stands out regarding the built environment.

Only the one area linked to the now-gone Malecon, is believed to have had a considerable impact in identity. Heritage architecture is considered to be more linked to San Felipe than to El Chorrillo.

Calle A had the highest score among the streets for the number of shops and activities, followed by Martyrs Avenue, which has historical significance in the Canal Zone. After the removal of the Malecon and the establishment of Calle A as the site's primary thoroughfare, the effect of the Paseo de los Poets and Calle B appears to have reduced to a medium level.

Among the landmarks, only the Monument to the Victims of the Invasion, with an average score, was regarded relevant.

##### Social

Economic and sporting activities stood out in the social segment.

From the respondents, only one person admits not being a part of the community, and 76 percent of those polled think that there is one in the area.

Residents believe that hanging clothes on balconies and children playing in the street are not unique to Chorrillo and occur in all other popular areas. Conversely, interacting with neighbors outside the house was seen to be particularly crucial for social interactions.

Other social activities, such as shell gathering and beach bathing, received medium scores because their frequency has dropped since the Cinta Costera was established.

Cultural activities such as street music and weekly meetings have a moderate impact because not all residents, primarily housewives, appear to participate. The murga and comparsas are experiencing difficulties organizing their practices and acquiring legal permissions from the municipality. Traditional cuisine in the area, such as fried pescado, has seen a decline in recent years. Residents report that prices have risen significantly since the Cinta Costera's fritodrome opened.

The hat repair shop is well-known, although it doesn't contribute as much to the overall image.



In this area, sports activities took the lead, with soccer being rated highly influential by all respondents, followed by boxing.

In the economic area, inns and tourism have supplanted building and fishing as the most influential activities, despite the fact that all three retain a high level of engagement.

Criminal activity has a moderate impact.

### **Individual**

Chorrillo has become part of the identity of 94 percent of the residents polled, and it has a lot of meaning for 88 percent of them. 70 percent are emotionally connected to Chorrillo as a place as a result of their experiences, particularly with their streets, but not as much with the people. Only 49% of interviewees stated they feel tied to individuals, and many of them refer to their family and friends exclusively, even when they regard themselves as members of the community. On the subject of discrimination, there was still no consensus.

Although security is a major concern, 52 percent of those polled disagree with the assertion that Chorrillo is a safe place. Although this may be related to the area of residency inside the corregimiento, there is no consensus on whether it has become a safer place in recent years. The residents are proud of living in El Chorrillo, according to 88 percent of those polled.

Despite the fact that sports had gotten the highest scores in the preceding section, most participants preferred a cultural or gourmet site when asked about a future vision for the area. The interviewed residents agreed that there has been a general change of identity, with only one of the participants replying that the identity has remained the same.

### **4.3.3. Scenarios**

To develop the scenarios, we combined the available data with two additional interviews conducted via voice call with two residents who consented to help with the research further. The questionnaire used was tailored to their period of residence inside the corregimiento, and the interviews were taped and transcribed later.

#### **4.3.3.1. Scenario 1**

Scenario 1 was influenced by the first three waves of segregation. The effects of the first wave were slightly reflected in the built environment, but they were more pervasive in the social sphere.

The effects of the second wave were more positive, since they helped to create a cohesive society concerned about its environment. This society promoted the growth of certain people, but this evolution was not reflected in the physical environment, so they decided to leave, leading to the start of the loss of identity.

The third wave brought about the modification of the scale of the place, of the configuration of relations between neighbors and the inclusion of

people from other neighborhoods, who with a different mindset started the social division, thus increasing neglect of the environment.

#### **4.3.3.2. Scenario 2**

On Scenario 2, The invasion brought about the disappearance of the image of Chorrillo and with it a new process of state intervention, which promoted the rotation of the inhabitants again. Due to its extension, the renovation had to become the new image, however, the rejection of the population and the poor quality and cohesion of what was built prevented it.

The greatest effects of the invasion apart from the reconstruction process were: in the built realm, the destruction of urban landmarks, in the social realm, the increase in insecurity due to the disappearance of the militia \*, the destruction of ways of life, the slowdown in social activities and individually the trauma suffered by the loss of life and in the temporal camp.

#### **4.3.3.3. Scenario 3**

The influence of segregation has waned in recent years, and there has been some stability with the lower scale of the recent projects. The decrease in criminality produced by state policies and the stakeholders was not perceived by all the residents. The Cinta Costera positioned itself as the force behind the recent identity change. It has had an effect mainly on the reduction of the influence of the beach and related activities, the reduction of the consumption of traditional foods due to the increase in prices and an opening for tourism is seen. It is observed that the urban references that remain are those that present a greater continuity in time and serve leisure purposes.

### **4.4. Analysis of Intervention by Segregation in Transformation of Urban Identity**

This section summarizes the effects that the different waves of segregation had on the environment and the population.

The first wave had the least implications in the built environment; however, it influenced the creation of social biases that continue to this day.

The second wave created the image of the neighborhood and caused the deterioration that would last for generations, but it also created the social ties that made El Chorrillo a cohesive community.

The change to high-rise housing and the mobilization of people from other parts of the city which began with the third wave created a break in the social dynamics of the neighborhood and furthered the deterioration of the built environment. The fourth wave continued the social exchange of the third wave and brought with it a decrease in the diversity of uses, which then transformed El Chorrillo into a mostly residential area with few job opportunities for residents.

Therefore, it is considered that the acceleration in the process of identity change is linked to the government projects of social housing. However, not all the change is explained by the processes related to segregation. Among the recovery processes, we observe that the Cinta Costera has positioned itself as the intervention with the greatest influence, with both positive and negative changes.

## 5. Conclusions:

### Influence of segregation:

- Segregation as a product of the working-class neighborhood did influence the configuration of identity, orienting the society towards coexistence and the creation of a cohesive community.
- The effect of the environment on the individual was the turning point that started the negative process that works in the opposite direction, removing identity.
- After several waves of social housing projects in place, it is considered that these do not produce the necessary conditions of continuity for the urban identity to be maintained for two reasons:
  - The constant rotation of residents.
  - The quality of the built environment that does not seem to generate attachment or significant connections in the population.

### Identity Change

- Cinta Costera has established itself as an important part of identity in a short time, but it is also worth making the call to the effects that tourism could have in the future on identity.

### Urban Identity Elements

- Although the qualitative research failed to collect enough samples to be considered representative of the entire population, it left us the following takes:

The direct consequences of the segregation are not considered as identity elements because they can be repeated in other places that present deficiencies, however the lack of space within the residences and the lack of attachment to the buildings produce the development of a community focused on public spaces, so that they acquire a greater influence in the construction of the identity of the place.

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