**Transcription of Walking interview with Tita**

Date and time: 15 May, 2023. 9 hrs. Walk starts at 10:32, after we have breakfast and start the interview while sitting down.

Duration: 57:41 (34 mins of walking interview)

Distance covered: 1.5 kms

Starting point: Tita’s house

Route: From Tita’s house to a walk around the block and back to her house

Notes:

The route is around the streets by Tita's house. The interview begins sitting down, where she shows me some photos, at 10:11. There we talk for a while about the memories evoked by these photos, associated with the construction of Flores Park, and at 10:32 the walk begins.

Before the interview, Tita invites me to have coffee and breakfast at her house. During the walk she tells me about how the nearby streets and houses were built. Especially her own house and the house of her neighbours, as they were part of a movement of housing applicants. She tells me about the successive processes of urbanisation in her street and nearby streets. She talks about how different groups have been involved in this process. She mentions the political tensions around this. We stop to look at the contrasts between the private developments (flats), what the housing applicants did and what other groups have done. He also shows me the courtyard of his house, and his plants. She talks to me about how the territory has changed from being a plain, from being natural, to being all built up. The walk lasts about half an hour. She chooses her pseudonym, Tita, because it reminds her of another activist and social fighter from the neighbourhood. The route ends at Tita's house.

Participants: Interviewer [A] ; Tita [T]

**TRANSCRIPTION**

T: [looking at some photographs] Well, I'll show them to you quickly. These are the ones from here, from this street, I'm talking about 1990. In 1990, look at the buildings that are just over there.

A: These are the buildings here on the front.

T: Yes, the ones here, the ones on the corner. Look at the stone hill. That one came out here, look. Those are the ones I'm looking for. This is the stone hill, except this one is black and white, look. Look at the machines they lent us, hydraulic operation. Yes, they did give us a lot of support, but at that time we were the opposition.

A: But then, were they also installing pipes?

T: No, because those stones, son, it was like a hill of stones. And I don't know where I took those photos. And I'll take them later and take them with me, son. Let's see, here's another one, let's see if it's there [looking and searching through his photos] so no, there are no photos.

This is also the hydraulic operation machine, like in 90 or 92. We were working, lowering, demolishing the stone hill.

A: And that was then in this part here?

T: Yes, in all this part, son. This one, look, these photos are from up there above the park and sports centre, but I'm missing more photos. So, these photos, look, the stream, up there. These photos are from... 87, like 88, 90, 92, because then the Zapatista movement in 94. Here are comrades, look, this is a comrade from the popular community centre. [looking at the photographs] This is a comrade from a lot of struggle too. I think this is my daughter... yes, this is my daughter, the girl, the one in the village. It was a rubbish dump up there in that park, it was rescued.

A: Yes, that park was rescued there too. That's where they threw rubble, you said.

T: Yes, the rubble and all that. And this is the stream that ran. [looking at the photograph] Yes, it's a pity I don't have those other photos.

A: You did faena (community work) collecting rubbish. On Sundays, it says here.

T: Oh, look, here's the comrade again. But my daughters were on that tour, but yes, this is her, I'm sure it's her. Look. No, how nice.

A: [reading from writing on a photograph] Young people from 20 to 23 years old collaborate to keep this great ecological place that has been formed over the years clean.

T: And in that park, up there the water, that same water is what is here in Aztecas 215.

A: [I continue reading from what is written] "we can appreciate the stream of water". And this stream is all the way down to the bottom of the park, isn't it?

T: Yes, all the way down, that's all the way down. Yes, I have to look for those photos, so you can see them. No, you'll fall in love.

A: So these three photos are from the bottom.

T: Those are from there, yes, from the sports centre and pitches that are up there.

A: So you were involved in the rescue.

T: Yes, because that was, I tell you, when we were going around, we had the movement of housing applicants and wherever they took you, you had to go. That's why I always talk about the rescue of the Flores park and sports centre, and Huayamilpas.

A: Can I take a picture of the photos?

T: Yes, take it.

A: Just so it's clear that we're looking at them... [I take photos of the photos] And these other photos are from here in front of us.

T: Yes, these are the ones from here in front, when we started to demolish the stone. We already had the model and everything that we were going to build on the stone. But what happens? When Infonavit (housing finance institute for workers) opens the street, they break the rock. So the soil mechanics were no longer useful, so we had to align ourselves, lower all the rock to what Infonavit had opened up. But we already had the model. Our houses were going to be on top of the rocks. [looking at the photograph] Look, just look at the height here. But that's here, that photo is from over here. From the corner, yes.

A: And so it was here that the settlers' association took the initiative.

T: Yes, the Settlers' Association (Unión de Colonos) took the lead. They were involved in helping us to get a loan. Look, the Unión de Colonos at that time took out a loan. And then we as applicants for housing were paying the Unión de Colonos. And then the Unión de Colonos, as it were, triangulated to buy this land.

A: And then this is what you see here, now here is the house.

T: All this is the stone of what is now where the houses are here. Yes, it's more or less like that, because it shows, there are the buildings.

A: These orange buildings are the ones here?

T: They're the ones in front of here. It's a blade, as they say, because it's a thousand metres.

A: So that's what it looked like before. And now there are all these houses that are now on this side.

T: Yes

A: And the neighbours you have next door, are they the same since then?

T: They are the same, only one was the one who sold. One sold and sold it to an architect. And then that architect sold. That house has been in three hands, it has had three owners. And now the ones who bought it are some of the same people, the sons of a lot of struggle. And now even one of them, well, you see that the authorities then weave crimes and all that. He was very involved with Atenco. So he wasn't here for a long time. Now he's kind of letting himself be seen.

A: And then the neighbours here were also as housing claimants.

T: Look, at the time we were all walking on a common struggle. That's what united us. Not having a house is what united us, what kept us together.

But now that we had a house, many didn't continue in the struggle. Sometimes it makes me sad to say goodbye to the neighbours because that's not what one seeks only the common benefit. You have to look for the benefit of all. Don't just think about me, me, me. We must always think of others because now that I have a house I say "how many people are renting, how many people don't have a roof to shelter them from the cold, the rain, the sun". That's what makes me sad on that side. Because I think that my neighbours should have kept on, kept on fighting, fighting. And they fight for improvements.

For improvements in water, electricity, drainage, in the environment. Well, more than anything else, they fight for the territory. We are concerned now that, well, you see this scarcity of water. We are now concerned about why the tremors are being felt here in the south. Where it used to be a rocky area and now they are being felt here on this side. This is very worrying. And then sometimes I start to think that maybe it's all due to the real estate companies that are fracturing the rock. And because of the extraction of water, because when the rock is fractured, when the ground level is lowered by 20, 25 metres, you say, "where is all that water going to? So, to say, the houses were lower and at that time, the water used to flow under their houses, but now it doesn't. So, what is going to happen with the water? So, what is going to happen over time? Well, yes, I think that the ground is going to settle. I am very worried about that. Yes, because this time the tremor felt really bad. I was sitting there at night, waiting for my coffee to heat up. And I was there leaning on this little wall, leaning on my mobile phone.

And suddenly, just like that, the pull felt ugly. It felt ugly and it sounded like a thunderclap. I talk to the neighbours and the houses rumbled. They say, "it rumbled here too", and I tell them, "my house rumbled too". We are going to fall. When you could hardly feel it here.

A: No, you couldn't feel the tremors here.

T: You couldn't feel them here. And now, well, now they've been, for six years now they've been felt. And now this one was felt.

A: It's already six years old, isn't it?

T: Yes, the other one was when it caused the destruction there in Xochimilco.

A: Yes, and now, you say that your neighbours, once they got housing, a lot of them are...

T: Yes, many of them are no longer there. And then I tell them, "no, you have to look at this". When it was Aztecas 215, I told them, there are like two, three neighbours from here who supported the Aztecas 215 movement, because I started to tell them about all this that we were living here near us, and then the capital gain comes. Because eventually they are going to charge us more for more land, more water, more electricity. And then people come from other places and you don't even know who they are. Because I don't think it's people of limited means who come to buy a two or three million dollar flat there. It's strange people who come.

[Her granddaughter arrives and we greet her, she introduces me to her.]

A: And do you still frequent your neighbours here?

T: Yes, yes, I talk to them and everything. Then I start talking to them, like this, well, what you're doing. And now we have the problem of the electricity. Then when we see that the electricity people are around, then I tell them, "get ready". I start to tell them how to defend themselves. But I already told them, "file a complaint with Profeco (consumer protection agency), you have to defend yourselves". But more than anything else, I tell them that we have to teach ourselves to defend what has cost us. What has cost us, we defend it with tooth and nail.

T: But in general you have a good relationship with your neighbours.

T: Yes, there are only two neighbours here who are very reluctant. Yes. They don't want to be involved in anything. They feel like they already belong to high society. It's like they've forgotten where we come from, who we are and how we got housing here. Yes, but I've moved on from there and I get on well with all my other neighbours.

A: And you share space here?

T: Yes, we share the courtyard. Yes, the courtyard is what we all share. We all own the courtyard.

A: In the back, there?

T: Yes, that's right, son. Well, it cost us a lot. It cost us a lot to have a roof over our heads. It cost us all a lot because we suffered the inclemency of the weather. We exposed our children to the weather, to water, to light, to the sun, to the cold. To danger more than anything else. Because when we arrived here there was no water, no electricity, no drainage.

A: And the drainage was also installed like in other parts of the neighbourhood?

T: Uh-huh. Yes, that's how it was too. The electricity was also like that.

A: You had to pay part of the contribution, didn't you?

T: Uh-huh. That's how it was too, son.

A: Until they put in the pipes.

T: Yes, even when we first applied for it, a colleague who at that time, I'm talking about 20, 25 years, was working in the delegation. He was there at that time, and they supported us a lot because, well, we would go to the sub-delegation and say "we need this and this". And because they saw that we were organised, there was more flexibility towards us.

A: And before you were involved in Aztecas 215, you were already involved in water issues?

T: Uh-huh.

We were already involved with the ZODES (urban development projects), we were involved with the 43 (disappeared students), we were involved with natural gas, defending the territory and more than anything else because they don't sleep. They study us to see where they are going to hit us.

A: So you were involved with the ZODES, with the gas...

T: The electricity issue, it was from 11 October 2009 that we joined forces with them.

A: And then that's when Aztecas came into the picture.

T: Yes, Aztecas.

A: And now about water.

T: Yes, from there, from Aztecas, from there came the Water Defence Committee, the Water Defence Committee.

A: You say it's like a defence of the territory, then.

T: Yes, it is the defence of the territory because I'm telling you that all this that we are living through, the big constructions, the real estate companies, they know where to go, that's why I'm telling you, they study us. They study the territory well and they know where the water is, and they build there. So what is happening? Well, we see the gentrification of the city and we have to defend the territory. It is very sad that, after this scarcity of water, where are we going to go? Where are they pushing us. We are going to migrate somewhere else and leave them the territory. Yes, because they are coming over these areas (pedregal). You know that the pedregales are very coveted, because they know that the water is here, the water that comes down from the Xitle volcano, Dinamos, Contreras.

A: But it's good that you still have those photos and memories, right, and memories and everything.

T: Yes, I mean, you have the experiences, because you talk about what you lived through. I'm not going to talk about what other people went through and I'm talking about it as if it were my own.

A: And you say you share the courtyard. Is it all right to share the courtyard with the neighbours?

T: Oh yes, there are problems, eh? Problems because there are those who say "this is my space and nobody passes from this side". There have been problems. Two people have even gone to the Social Ombudsman's Office.

A: Because of the use of the courtyard.

T: Well, I say that they are common areas. I tell them, "we have to teach each other to respect our own space". And I tell them, they are common areas. I'm not going to get angry because the people in the back come here on this side, they have every right. These are common areas. But there are people who don't, then you walk outside like that and then they see you, so what are you looking for, right?

A: And are there people from this part of the neighbourhood who are also involved in the Water Defence Committee or who were in Aztecas?

T: Some of them supported it. I mean, when we had a big event like this, I would tell them, there is going to be this and this. Yes, one or two people did get there. But they were more supportive of the food that had to be given and so on. But no one from here, no one came. And no one came to the Committee either.

And although we've had a shortage of water, eh. Here we no longer have any because this December, I tell you, this person who is in the local government, I said to him, when we were meeting. "Hey, Mr., what do you think we don't have water there?"

Yes, and then there was a leak here in front of us. But that intake was made when there was still nothing here. So they made it like this, it turned around here on the pavement, over there and at the very entrance it turned around again to go inside.

So then the graduate came with an engineer and said, "This turning around takes pressure away. We're going to cancel this intake here and we'll put it over there in front." And they took it straight. From there, there's one, two, three, four people who didn't agree. That the change should be made. So we said that we and several comrades here agreed, and that we were going to make them a taquito (feed them). We all got together and you buy tortillas, you buy soft drinks and we make a taquito, with a dish of food and rice. My daughter made them rice quickly, and I went to get some pork rinds and beans. And the workers came in to eat. Then afterwards we agreed that we would give them something, right, like fifty, a hundred pesos, whatever everyone could afford. And the neighbours said to me, "How are they going to pay them? This is their obligation".

And well, it was too much for some of them to pay a hundred pesos, some didn't give anything at all. And I say, it's not the law either, because for them to have done this it would have taken, oh, how long it would have taken for them to have done this work for us. And we should have paid at the office. Because they made the opening to the main branch, to pull it from the front.

A: Did they have to bring it from there or how?

T: No, it's just that the branch line passes in front of there, so the main pipe was perforated from there and the intake was connected there, this one here that they cancelled, it was taken from there. Because the engineer who came said that when they made the turns, that's where it lost power, that's why we didn't have water here. And now, thank God, we do have water.

But no, they haven't entered the group. Then, when we were like this with the water, people said to me, "Why is there no water?"

And I told them "No, you know what? We have to join a committee, we are going to form a committee and we have to ask for water trucks." But they said "No, why am I going to waste time?"

A: For many people it's a waste of time.

T: Yes.

A: They don't want to sign up.

T: That's right. Well, I say that's everywhere. Everywhere there are people like that.

A: And so you've had to see how this whole area has changed.

T: Yes, it's changed a lot, it's changed a lot compared to how we arrived. Because it was all flat and empty (era un llano), because there were no Infonavit buildings, there was none of that. All this was the so-called quarry. Yes, I mean, I'm going to show you what the quarry was.

A: Yes, well, I would go to places that you want to show me, that help to tell your story, the story of the neighbourhood here. And if they have to do with the water issue, well, also, now with the new well there haven't been so many problems?

T: Not up there, but lately they are saying, but not like they were before, eh. But I think it's because there are leaks.

A: And when you go up there, the neighbours recognise you.

T: Yes, they recognise us, they say "I know you". So we go up there and they say hello to us. There are so many people who know you and see you that you go away. They tell us "you are the ones with the water, you are the ones with the light". Yes, great comrades, we admire them a lot, we appreciate them a lot because when they see you, they see you with pleasure. That's why it is, for us it is a great satisfaction that you did a little grain of sand that you put in, something is being done.

A: So the defence of water is part of the defence of the territory for you.

T: Yes, because water is the vital liquid. They say that if there is no water there is no life.

A: Thank you very much for this meal. Would you agree to me recording this interview so that I can use what we talk about for the interview, for the thesis?

T: Yes, no problem at all.

[we leave the house and start the walk].

A: Very good. So, do you authorise us to use this interview?

T: Yes, yes, don't worry. Well look, more than anything else, when we arrived here, from where the little red house is, all this was a stone hill. When they did the study, the soil mechanics, but then when Infonavit came in and fractured the rock, then the soil mechanics were no longer useful to us. So we had to redo the study and they demanded that we had to level ourselves to street level. So that whole rock hill had to be lowered to street level.

A: To the level it is now.

T: Up to the level that Infonavit opened. And yes, we lost time there because at that time a loan that had been authorised for us was cancelled. And it was cancelled because we already had it, but that was when we were going to build the houses on top of the stone. And if they were going to make them very nice, the houses were going to be very nice. Because more than anything we didn't lose the identity of the stone, of Pedregal (rocky area). But unfortunately, I tell you, they fractured the volcanic rock and we lost that credit. And from then on, they didn't authorise it again. But we lost that credit because of the delay in bringing the rock down. And at that time, when we arrived here, in 1995, when the Pronasol, 94, 95, was the Pronasol programme, that's when the drainage came in. But the drainage is bad because it is very high up. When the downpours come, the sewage drains out because it is too high up. So what we have said is that we are thinking of asking for the drainage to be done lower down. But before these steps are taken, they always say "there's no money, there's no money". The money goes to other things, to campaigns.

The same goes for water, when the pipeline was laid, that's also how several of our neighbours went to ask for water service. But for the time being, I tell you, they put in a provisional connection. And we had that provisional connection for several years. I think it's been about 10 years since the water has been legalised. But since 1990, when the land was bought, a provisional intake was authorised. So we didn't even take it from this network, we took it from the network that goes up somewhere else. Because it went through that intake, and that intake was there on one side of the little house that is my house, but as if it were yours. Yes, that's where that intake was. So from there, when the applicants left, we came to an agreement and went to request the service so that everyone could pay for their water. So they put them here, look where I'm showing you. [points to an opening in the street] We had it like this, it turned around there. It went around the pavement and into the green hallway. [pointing to parts of his building] That's the main entrance for us. But we saw that it didn't, and we had that leak here for a long time. That leak was there for a long time and we would report it and they would come and patch it. So from time to time, what happened? This December, it was only a year ago that they passed it to us there where the truck is, so that it would be in front of the front of the hallway. So they took it directly because an engineer told us that when they made those turns, they lost the force of the water. And that was the change of this pipe that was made. And now, thank God, we are not struggling much with the water. But we were also struggling here with low water pressure.

And in the paving services, they say, here there has been no neighbourhood committee. So you have to make the request here yourself. For example, this pothole we have here. Well, we have to work hard and hard, what for? So that they come and fix the pothole there. But a new pothole has already been made, and we only had it repaired this December. It's been a year, so how long has it been a year since they did that repair?

A: I'm going to take a picture of the pothole. [laughs]

T: Oh yes, and about the corridor, the corridor they made was also only finished a year ago in November, December. And we can see that the cracks in the pavements are already there. So we can see that this is second class stuff. The point is to show the expenses.

A: In other words, a year ago they re-did the pavements.

T: Yes, they redid the pavements, but they didn't do all of them, they just left this pending. But last year they finished them a year ago and they were already cracking. I'm telling you, it's very common material that they are putting in. Well, let's walk.

A: Well yes, let's go where you want to take me.

T: Because this used to be the quarry.

A: This was the quarry, this was pure stone.

T: Yes, this was pure stone, I tell you. All this stone that came out of here was to form the avenues and all that. Because this is where the stone comes from to form, to make the asphalt.

A: This street is Ladrillo.

T: This is Ladrillo Street, yes.

A: And it's still the Pedregal of Santo Domingo.

T: This is Santo Domingo and here is Los Reyes.

A: Ah, we're kind of on the border.

T: Yes, uh-huh, we're on the border here. But anyway, this is Calle Ladrillo. These buildings were formed when we arrived. All this was a plain, we had to see the exploration of all this to see how deep the firm ground was. And right there, where the water cart comes from, where that street is, there was a water spring, son.

Yes, they took the hose out of that water hole and they poured it on our property, because we weren't building yet. That water lasted day and night, day and night, for months on end. But they never put an end to that water. But that water, there is also a spring, or water pond, there. All this was quarry, son. Behind these buildings are the lands of Carlos Slim, Telmex.

A: And the spring?

T: The water point is covered up, but an architect from the UNAM said that these houses would eventually become damp. And we are seeing this because these houses are already being sold. Why? For the same reason, there it is, it's in front, look. Because behind it is another piece of land that belongs to us, to the same organisation. You can see the land from here.

And before, because there weren't these houses, it was all empty. And we used to cross from Santo Domingo, because there was another piece of land over there that the organisation bought, so we could see how it was, how all this was.

[we continued walking].

Here is the so-called lost city.

A: Why the lost city?

T: Because people came here from various places, there are various organisations here, but all these houses are built on the landfill from 1985.

All this is filled with rubble from that earthquake.

A: This park that is here too?

T: Yes, all this, all this landfill is a pocket park. Look, and that pond, I'm telling you, we used to see it [pointing to buildings and parks that we can see] Look at that building over there, that's part of us, of the organisation, we belonged to that organisation. So from there there was a hallway, when it wasn't built yet, and we used to go through it.

A: Could you pass through?

T: Yes, no man, it was very nice here because I'm telling you it was empty plain (era un llano). And when they arrived, they came in like squatters ("paracaidistas"). I tell you it's very sad, well, when you know how the land is, you see that it's sad that they are building big constructions, because I say, this is no longer for people of limited resources.

A: Of course. Those buildings over there are much bigger.

T: These are Infonavit's, that's the Infonavit unit, these are the bank's houses, but even there they just put up the mesh, they didn't go all the way down like we did. We still had to leave the street, we still got down, for our own safety, but those houses, I'm telling you, the concrete slab with the fence was just thrown down, and that's it, there are the buildings. But we saw the construction of this and the construction of these little houses.

A: These opposite.

T: We saw all this construction.

A: So you arrived earlier.

T: Yes, we arrived, I'm telling you that we, the land was bought in 1990, where you have your house, in 1990, the two plots were bought together, ours with that land. That land is also a thousand metres, from the same organisation, from the settlers' union. And from there you can already see the change in the neighbourhood. But it was very beautiful before, because all this was a llano, it was a flat plain (llano), and my daughter, the one who is living in the village, the one who is 42 years old, said that one day she was coming from the little school,

because it was our road, and she says that one day in the afternoon or at night she was coming and she says that she heard a little girl screaming. And I told him "well, there's all the rubble from '85, it's buried here". And because I tell you that this was a quarry before, these were the so-called quarries. Here it was deep, and here was a lagoon. There were even deaths, because those who went in to swim, they say that the lily pads entangled them inside, and many say that it was because the water was so cold and those who went in stayed inside. Because we met a comrade from the SME (Mexican Electrical Workers' Union), may he rest in peace, who told us that yes, another little bit and he was already staying here, but when they saw that he wasn't coming up, they went down to look for him and he says that he was already very stiff. Look there's the proof, look how everything from 85 is, that's rubble.

A: And these houses were built on top of all this, is that why they call it the lost city or why?

T: Well, that's what we neighbours call it, it's the lost city, because now they are already building, because even we know that they have been told that they have to build so that they can get the deeds. But right now we're going to go around that side, we're going to go down the other street, or I don't know, if you want us to go up the other side. [pointing to the streets in front of us].

A: Whichever way you want, which way do you prefer?

T: Whatever you want, you tell me

A: Well, let's go that way and then we'll go up [pointing to the streets in front of us].

T: Okay. [we continue walking].

Yes, I tell you, we call them the lost city, because there were their little cardboard houses. It's the neighbours who don't know them, I do know some of them, not all of them, but some, because most of them are from Santo Domingo. There are comrades from Santo Domingo, from Candelaria, but there are four organisations here. And I'm talking about the last ones that came in eight years ago, when Toledo was still here, and they brought in all their people. Now the people from Toledo are from here on up, and you can see the change, how the houses are. They went from the bottom to the top, and you say, a person of limited resources doesn't do this.

A: In other words, you can see the change in the houses because of the money that Toledo gave them.

T: Yes, at that time I tell you, it was Toledo, and it's still Toledo, and you see, look, the only ones that have stayed are these, they are the only ones, but nowadays, I tell you that if you want to do something you have to buy each little stick one by one, because you can't afford it. But on the other hand, we saw these with the material lying around outside. And I said to Waldo, "look, tons of rebar outside, just look at the constructions".

And these are people from a group from Santo Domingo, with whom we had a dispute over natural gas, because they didn't want the people to oppose it. And it's all this side, you see, I'll tell you how far they go. You see their houses and you go to the back, and look [at the houses that are bigger than those in another part of the neighbourhood] of course. And look at the clandestine water intakes, in the middle of the day they have clandestine intakes, putting in their water, putting in the drainage, pulling electricity from the poles. Well, it's the PRD party, do you think these are poor people? [looking at another house] Look, this one belongs to a comrade, and she says that her little house is built with rubble and filler, you can see the difference, she has gradually been laying the floor of her little kitchen, and the floor is already cracked, it's already uneven.

And we're going to go down the other side and there you'll see, this is as far as they go. But no, when they arrived eight years ago, no man, things got so bad. When they came to this property, no man, it was really ugly, really sad, grenadiers, you can see that before, the big cars of grenadiers, the trucks, you know those? Then the patrols, no, the police cars, the police cars, and all you could hear was the gunfire, but it was a very ugly thing 8 years ago, when these guys came in. And from 8 years ago, look, they left very quickly, but now, as there are acquaintances there, it seems that they are telling them to hurry up and build, so that they can get the deeds, that's why they are demanding that they have to build.

A: But they are also with Toledo, aren't they?

T: Yes, these people here, these are Toledo's people, part of the group of vultures (a violent group) are there. At that time, when we arrived here, this was the only thing that was there, this little school.

A: This UNAM building?

T: Yes, from UNAM. And these other buildings weren't there yet because it was more nature. This was the road that passed, ah no, it was on the other side. This was another entrance. But behind these buildings there is an entrance, which is the entrance that divided Santo Domingo from La Candelaria.

A: [pointing to the street] This side here.

T: Yes, we used to cross it because as I lived up there all the time, in Santo Domingo, all this was not there, and behind, where the fence is, there is a street that went all the way down there, but I'm telling you, all this was quarry, all this was quarry before.

A.: Now it's Pájaros Street, isn't it?

T: This is Pájaros now. All this was pure stone

A: And what about water, were there little water wells?

T: Well, there was water, yes there was. And look, there was a fellow countryman of ours who looked after the whole quarry, and there were other fellow countrymen of mine, also from the village, looking after it because it was all plain. And you have so many experiences. It was very beautiful before, more nature, but look, the big constructions are coming. And those that we see are private. And these belong to UNAM workers.

A: So more or less what remained natural is Flores Park, and Huayamilpas.

T: Huayamilpas is what's left, let's see, we've been doing it for 28 years. But all this was very beautiful, because I'm telling you it was part of the quarry. And if we had won Aztecas 215 it would also have been rescued. Did you get to see what the teachers did?

A: Ah, yes, the proposals on how to use the land.

T: Yes, how nice all this would have been if it had been achieved. But look, we have faith in God, let's see now with the earthquake how those people in the building did. [laughs] But I do believe that it must have been felt there. Look, what you see is part of Telmex, and all of that was quarry as well. I'm telling you, right up to the very edge, there were some people from the village there who looked after part of the quarry. It was a plain and all the kids from the village used to come here to play. It was very nice before.

A: And now when you see your neighbours, where do you normally see them? in the street?

T: Yes, because one of them is even working here on Aztecas. He's working there in the old ironworks. And then I tell him "oh, look for the photos your father had, to remember old times".

[Tita exchanges good morning greetings with a person walking down the street].

T: That's why I tell you that capitalism is studying us and seeing where to enter. They don't go to sleep, we are the ones who go to sleep.

A: And in the Electricity Committee have you been able to meet more people?

T: Oh yes, we have met more people. No, many of the people who were really the founders. And they tell you, son, how they arrived, how they lived. And it's not just the fact that they tell you about it and you take credit for the experience, but that they have told you about it, they lived it.

A: They know what they are talking about,

T: Yes, look, now you're going to see the change. Look at these little houses and look at the other side, you can see quickly where the authority has marked. On this side it's not people from Toledo, and you can see the difference. On this side they are others. I'm telling you, there are four organisations here. And you can see the difference in the houses of each group.

[good morning greeting to a person walking by].

A: Yes, you can see that the houses are reflecting that.

T: Yes, the contrast as you say. Let's go this way, there's a dog coming [we move to avoid the dog] Then the other day a dog jumped on me at night, but it was on this side.

A: And how long have these houses been here?

T: Let's see, they date back to the 90s, because if my daughter is 28 years old, then they date back to 95.

I remember it very well because we arrived in 1990 and this wasn't there yet. This wasn't there, the houses there weren't there, the buildings on that side were barely there. But look at that little house across the street, here they are part of the buitres (vultures). But look at this little house, you can tell the difference very quickly. That one is not poor... They say it belongs to a leader, but we don't know who. See here, look, here you can see the difference. [looking at the difference in building materials and the size of the houses].

A: Yes, it contrasts a lot,

T: Sure. Ah, look, you see that little house up there [pointing to another house]. No man, that one was like a queen, compared to how they were. And I liked that little house a lot, the one upstairs, made of wood and all that. It's just that my little house was made of wood, sheet metal, whatever there was. Look how beautiful it was. And I liked that house a lot, I like it a lot, I like it. And that's how we started.

A: And yes, you can see the difference with the others.

T: Yes, can't you tell the difference?

A: And you say it's the vultures, right?

T: No, they're up there. But here they are part of the group from La Candelaria, from Los Reyes. That's why I'm telling you that there are four groups here.

A: But then here it was a pit, and everything else was over there.

T: It was a lagoon, over there was the lagoon.

A: So you can see the private ones, those of organisations, and then those of the union of settlers that are over there. There are different organisations that have been building the neighbourhood.

T: That's it, yes, because I'm telling you that when we came in, we arrived back there. First we bought the land on Ladrillo Street and then we bought the other one over there that I showed you just now that's in the back. That's an alley, just the same, with no water, no electricity, no drainage, no pavements. And there you see when the PRONASOL programme comes in and lays down the pavements, we put in the water, and as applicants for housing we have to put in the water and sewage. At that time, I tell you, it was a fight with the PRI members, and no man, they were very closed-minded.

A: This is Sol Street

T: Yes, and it goes all the way to Ladrillo Street, son. And look, all this stone came from there with us.

A: All this stone from this fence.

T: Yes, all this stone wall came from there. Because I'm telling you, it was all flat, very beautiful, and if you notice, many houses here are already being sold, because they say they have damp. The engineer told us "I'll give these houses a life span of 10 to 15 years".

A: And do you like living here in Santo Domingo?

Y: Oh yes, I like it, because I saw the difference, here you breathe tranquillity, don't you, son? It feels calmer, and the climate feels humid, it doesn't feel dry. It's like you go to the city centre and it feels dry up to your nose, and you just go down from the fish bowl here or down there and you can feel the difference. I love my house very much, because I sowed hope there, for my children more than anything else. I tell my children to value the fact that they have a safe roof over their heads because there are people who don't even have a place to live.

A: Are you fond of these streets?

T: These streets, yes, because I saw what they were like before and what they are like now. We always fight to see things change, for improvement.

A: And your neighbours?

T: Yes, a lot. I have many acquaintances from here. And they appreciate us, and as they know the struggle we are fighting, when they see us, they see us with affection. Because many people here in these little houses knew about our struggle, about Aztecas 215, and they supported us a lot. I'm telling you, they would go. I would tell them: "there's going to be a forum about this, or there's going to be this", and then they would go. And now they say that they are looking at the water problem and that it would be different if we had won that. But I tell them that more pressure was needed.

But look, we are going little by little, son, but we say that we haven't lost it, well, at least I still have hope that we haven't lost it in Aztecas 215, because we still need a study.

[observes a person entering the courtyard shared with other neighbours].

Now, what, what?

A: What did you see?

T: [recognises his neighbour] Ah, that's my neighbour. It's just that the other day a little thief came in and took the trash bottles.

A: From inside there?

T: Yes, from inside.

A: The courtyard?

T: Yes, it's the main courtyard, do you want to go in and see the main courtyard?

A: Well, if you want to show me.

T: Yes, son. It's the common areas.

A: It's the part you share.

T: Uh-huh, that we all share. There are 17 houses here. In a thousand metres they built 17 houses.

A: And all this was because of the union of settlers.

T: Aha, yes, that's how it was. The housing started to be built because a project came in, and many entered the project. Many didn't want to, and many did it on their own, but many did enter the project. This is, look, the common areas, these are the alleys, because across the street is Ladrillo Street, and this is an alley. There are 17 houses, son.

Look, she's also one of my neighbours. [exchanges good afternoon greetings with the neighbour]. [we enter the courtyard]

This is part of the street, and it's the inner courtyard that belongs to all of us.

A: How nice the shared courtyard.

T: Yes, isn't it?

A: Yes.

T: And this is mine, look, here it is, yes [we walk to the part of the courtyard that adjoins her house and corresponds to her] Look, here there was a problem, a big problem with a little neighbour who has been very closed off. She got very upset because the one in the back made her little chapel because there she has the ashes of her partner who died, two years ago he died because of the pandemic.

And this is my part, my front [looking at the part in front of her house where there are a lot of plants].

A: These are your plants.

T: Yes, all these, all these are my plants.

A: Oh, that's very nice, it has a lot of plants.

T: Look, these are my plants, my little neighbour [points to his neighbour's house] A: Do you have water to water them?

T: Yes, just now, thanks to God, I've had some.

A: Can I take pictures of them?

T: Yes, yes, here. [I start to take some photos] A: Ah, look, yes, over there.

Ah, look, yes, from there to here my garden looks beautiful.

A: Well, thank you very much for the tour.

T: With pleasure