MATTRESSES, FOLDERS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:
TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF "FAILURE"

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ABSTRACT

JUAN RICARDO APARICIO: "Mattresses, Folders and Internally Displaced Persons:
Towards an Anthropology of "Failure"
Under the direction of Arturo Escobar and Peter Redfield

The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) problem area emerged as an international concern for institutions, goverments and communities of experts in the mid 1990s. In the following pages, I historicize both the conditons of possibility and actualization of the IDPs by linking this formation to a set events necessary for its appearance both as an object of knowledge and intervention during the years of 1992-1998. I analyze how this ensemble of discourses was introduced in Colombia in 1995, how they have operated through institutional interventions, and what have been their side-effects. In my conclusions, I discuss how these practices are also part of the present neoliberal govermentality by which caring for and protecting specific communities are both understood under specific rationalities. I end by suggesting that both social movements and grassroots organizations are precisely resisting these rationalities through the defense of local and collective ethical projects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is indeed hard to sustain that academic intellectual production is a solitary enterprise. Some decades ago, Michel Foucault detailed the internal and external procedures set in action to constrain what one said, and much more, of how it should be said. He also talked about the invention of the 'idea of an author' as a neccesary modern myth. I strongly belief in these constrains, this is, in our inhability to say something new or original. Perhaps, one should better think of restraining the desire of saying something 'new' or 'original'. Instead, one should passionately believe in collective intellectual endeavors that could provide a better diagnosis of a particular situation in order to transform it with the help of others. This said, my gratitude goes in many directions to my advisor Arturo Escobar, a personal friend, allied and comrade, who has provided me with the most privilege opportunity to engage in a much needed conversation on the need to follow and belief in a politics of possibility for Latin America. Peter Redfield has challenged me to deeply believe in my ideas and to generously create a space for rich and

rigorous discussions. Matthew Hull has interrogated me several times for the benefit of my own intellectual interrogations. I also have been benefited by the company of John Pickles, Lawrence Grossberg and Walter Mignolo. Many other friends and colleages can be listed here, Yoni, Juan Carlos Orrantia, Dana Powell, Sebastian Cobarrubias, Mario Blaser and Maria Isabel Casas Cortes. I thank all of them for their company and patience.

Finally, I need to thanks my compañera de lucha, Catalina, the most critical reader I could have, for 'eventalizing' our everyday life, in all dimensions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

DP: Displaced Person

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission of Refugees

UN: United Nations

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IGCR: Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees

UNRRA: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency

IRO: International Refugee Organization

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Work Agency

SARRED: Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa

CIREFCA: International Conference on Central American Refugees

RPG: Refugee Policy Group

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> *"IDP has emerged as one of the great human tragedies of our time, between 20 million and 25 million"(Kofi Annan, Cited in Deng and Cohen: 1998: 2).*

During the first years of my undergraduate studies in anthropology in Bogotá, Colombia (1995-1997), I, like many the inhabitants of the city, noticed that numerous groups of people, families or individuals stood still in the street corners asking for money from people driving by. Some were occupied by groups of Afro-Colombians, others by indigenous people, and to a greater extent, all were peasants coming from the rural areas of Colombia as far from Bogotá as the Pacific region. As in many major cities of "Third World" countries, the image of individuals alone or sometimes accompanied by their entire families standing in the streets asking for money, is certainly a common scene. But

these people were not only asking for money, they were standing with poster signs and

pasted photocopies of documents kept in paper folders and sentences pleading for help.

After several occasions in which I approached these groups of people, I learned that these

were official certifications, photocopies of their documentation, letters written to the

institutions demanding their rights in terms of education, health and housing provisions in

Bogotá, and very often, the *Carta de Salud* (Health Card). These items were identifying

them not just as poor people asking for help, they were doing much more. These

identified them as "internally displaced persons", or IDP's.

Following an analytic of power inspired by Michel Foucault (1977), which

understands that power is not only restrictive, constraining and negative but also positive

and productive, in terms of effects, subjectivities and discourses, three fundamental

questions are thereby opened: Where did this category, "internally displaced persons",

came from? Why "internally displaced persons" and not another term? And why were

these documents doing in the street corners at this moment in Colombia? In the next

pages, following Rabinow (1986: 241), I want to anthropologize that configuration of

knowledge that made possible that something like IDPs come into existence in the 1990's

worldwide as a new problem area "by showing how exotic its constitution of reality has

been: emphasize those domains most taken for granted as universal; make them seem as historically peculiar as possible"; and, finally, to "show how their claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world"[1].

Indeed, some of the reasons by which people fled to the cities during the nineties had been present in the longer history of Colombia and in the world; others emerged more recently in response to the violent contestation over certain territories by various actors for the extraction of legal and illegal resources articulated to global economies. But never before did people forced to move and which remained within Colombia or within their own country were referred as "internally displaced persons". What I do want to suggest, again, inspired by Foucault's (1972) analysis on discursive formations, is that this specific object, IDPs, simultaneously a *program*, a *technique* and an *apparatus*, only came into existence within a specific problem area in the mid 1990's. This is the history I want to trace here.

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[1] Here, although it may seem obvious, I want to claim that this specific interrogation on humanitarian, human rights and refugee law inspired by Foucaultian analytic of power does not belong exclusively to the discipline of anthropology. Certainly, "to deconstruct the 'field' and 'categories' embedded in international regimes of force migration as natural and to consider them as political constructs produced in and by particular power relationships", has been part of what Sørensen (2004) suggests for the anthropological contributions to forced migration studies. However, as Riles (2006) appropriately shows, these same theoretical tools coming from poststructuralism have been adopted by a group of critical human rights lawyers identified under the label of the *New Approaches to International Law* (NAIL). In the latter one, as Riles (2006) illustrates, a critique of power relations and a general distrust of claims to ethical purity, indeed, much of what anthropologists inspired by poststructuralism have been claiming after all, are fundamental in their research agendas as well.

In the following pages, I start by making clear my research strategies inspired by a Foucaultian scholarship interested in the role of discursive regimes for constituting and positioning subjects, subjectivities and subject positions (Sullivan 2006). Simultaneously, I approach perspectives coming from actor network theory and its emphasis in the materiality and actualization of these regimes through a network of human and non human actors such as documents, reports, identification cards, conferences, rapporteurs, etc. After this theoretical introduction, a historical section narrates events occurred during the 18th, 19th century and beginning of the 20th century when the initial institutional arrangements for the emergence of the *refugee* regime were first established. I then signal the Post-Cold war scenario that legitimized the international human rights regime in which the IDPs worldwide problem area emerged. Following this historical section, I explicitly follow Foucault's (1972) procedures on the analysis of discursive formations in relation to the IDPs problem area. I then turn to Colombia to analyze how this problem area became brewed since the mid 1990s on a local historicity which must be considered to understand the outcomes of its ultimate deployment. In my conclusions, I discuss some of the effects that such materiality-in itself a blue print on to how govern the problem area of IDP-has have on the everyday lives and future life projects of these groups of people in Colombia.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH STRATEGIES: DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS AND ACTOR-NETWORKS

My research strategy in this analytic of the IDPs attempts to 'eventalize' this discursive formation (Foucault 1994). I want to fragment this history of the IDPs by separating elements that are now united, by questioning how certain concepts, objects and interventions came to be possible and formed throughout these initial years in particular places including think tanks in Washington, conferences in Guatemala and the Great Lakes, international agencies in Geneva and meetings and consultations in New York, among many other. What I want to do is to make visible the singularity of this formation to show that things "weren't as necessary as all that" (Foucault 2000: 226-227). I also want to rediscover "the connections, encounters, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary" (Foucault 2000: 226-227). Through the eventalization

of the IDP's formation, I intend to follow two inquiries (Foucault 1998: 324). First, I seek

to understand the conditions of possibility of the IDPs in its historical existence. In this

sense, following Chimni (1998) arguments on the geopolitics of refugee studies, I want to

track specific relations between the interests of hegemonic states, strands of international

law and the policies and practices of key sites of production of knowledge and agencies

in charge of offering assistance and protection to IDPs. Second, I purport to analyze this

discursive formation relative to its domain of objects, to the type of languages it uses, to

the concepts that it has at its disposal or it is seeking to establish.

In order to analyze the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the IDPs problem

area, I've followed the *annual reports* prepared for the Commission of Human Rights and

General Assembly of the United Nations by one of the most "central" nodes in this story,

the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced persons, Francis

Deng. Additionally, I consider his *Compilation and Analysis of Legal and Normative*

frameworks for Internally Displaced Persons, his involvement in a major research at the

Brookings Institute on IDPs published in two different volumes in 1998, and finally, his

Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement published by the same year. Although the

Representative is a central character here, which I had opportunity to talk in December

2005 in Chapel Hill after he gave a speech on internal displacement, I don't want to

reconstitute him as the source of action or as the central actor for our analysis. Instead, I

perceive this very important actor as well as the reports produced in this history as

moving targets of a vast array of entities swarming towards them (Latour 2005: 46).

Indeed, there is a very dense materiality that goes along these reports and the

Representative that can be ethnographically studied as I pretend to illustrate. As Foucault

(1998: 315) suggests, one has to consider that the emergence of a problem area was

possible not only by purely perceptual descriptions but also observations mediated

through instruments, protocols, statistical calculation, demographic observations,

institutional settlements, and political decisions.

One word about these documents. Not only are the reports prepared by Deng

appropriate for studying locations to which we cannot pragmatically have access (Nader

1969); they are also part of those textual strategies that provide a framework of self-

objectification for actors located in institutions accounting for themselves to outsiders

and to each other, as Mosse (2005) argues in his study of aid agencies. In themselves,

these reports materialize what Riles (2000) names as the 'aesthetics of bureaucratic

practice' describing the character of contemporary institutional knowledge where

problems of design and form (and not only content) become fundamental for constituting

not only what counts as "the real" but the same terms of action. Conversely, as highly

aesthetized documents, they turn action into a document (Riles 2000). On other grounds,

following Anders (2005) analysis of loan documents of the World Bank and IMF, I want

to suggest that these particular reports also provide excellent material to analyze the way

in which the IDPs problem area became framed along the lines of new notions of

governance and human rights-based humanitarian intervention (Chandler 2002, Mosse

and Lewis 2005, Duffield 2002).

But I don't want to fetishize these reports nor grant them agency. Above all, I

understand them within a particular configuration in which something like a "report"

becomes possible. For example, Sally Engle-Merry (2006) has done a deep ethnographic

research on the intense debates and political interests of delegates on UN Commissions as

highly relevant to the IDPs problem area such as the Commission of Human Rights.

Through this ethnography, she is able to grasp the intense conflicts and negotiations that

were never able to survive to the last instance of the final official report. Following the

reports in this way, she is able to understand the contingent networks of practice, the

diversity of actors, brokers, perspectives and interests (Mosse 2005a). On the other side

of the spectrum, this scholar follows the paths taken by these reports to other locations in

the village level in countries like Philippines to understand the intense mediations and

struggles that these reports activate. They are always mediated. In this sense, while I

discuss in the following pages the emergence of this specific problem area, I do not

pretend to suggest that even its design nor its deployment was uniform, stable or

homogeneous. I argue, in similar ways as how Grossberg (2003) discusses the limits and

possibilities of the Foucaultian notion of govermentality, also central in my argument on

the IDPs, is on how these responses must be always be thought and analyzed as the

difficult articulation of fractured set of discursive apparatus. My strategy, paraphrasing

Mitchell (2002a), challenges an understanding of the IDPs problem area that does not

simply produce a more global and homogeneous narrative. In this very short history of

the IDPs formation that can be dated from the years 1992 to 1998, I want to interrupt the

idea of a 'unity' and challenge its same stability, while at the same time stressing the

extraordinary and performative power of those fragments and articulations.

Following perspectives coming from actor-network theory (Latour 2005, Tsing

2005, Bowker and Star 1999), I also focus on how this discursive formation travels

physically and symbolically in a scattered, discontinuous and regular way through

various heterogeneous points of inflections such as institutions, disciplines and even the poster signs or documents in the streets in Bogotá. I want to keep the idea that this formation transverses physically and symbolically different geographies but also has to be reenacted in different places. It takes "work" to move it worldwide. Documents, reports, identification cards and many other non-human actors will reappear several times in the subsequent pages. In a way, my remaining inquiry is all about them, and of course, about the bodies that carry them. Remembering those folders, as I show in the following page, I am intrigued by a specific set of human and non-human actors and locations that connect these bodies standing in the streets to international offices in Bogotá, Geneva, Washington and New York as the places (*starlike oligopticons*, Latour 2005: 178) where the global problem of IDPs was initially recognized, classified and refined (Pickering 1995). In conclusion, an array of different locations and actors, and more than that, a regime of truth contained in these paper folders that IDPs carry under their arms in the street corners of Bogotá, gets assembled every time the folders are opened.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICIZING THE CONFIGURATION OF IDPs

Worldwide problem areas like the IDPs bear upon a specific material, an epoch and a body of determined practices and discourses that have continued to recur up to our time (Foucault 1984: 49). As Foucault explains (1998: 232), these should never be thought as ideal types, but as *programs, technologies* and *apparatuses* for taking care of a particular problematic, they induce a whole set of effects in the real, crystallizing in institutions, informing individual behavior and acting as grids for perception and evaluation of things. But these problems didn't emerge in a vacuum, and as Foucault commented, these could only be possible and actualized by the disposal, transformation and expansion of other previous problems (i.e. *a history of problematizations*, Rabinow 1984). Conversely, in my analysis of the emergence of the IDPs problem area, I will describe its very recent invention through its differentiation from other previous similar

but different objects of knowledge and humanitarian interventions (e.g., *programs, technologies* and *apparatuses*) such as the one of the "stateless people", the "displaced", the "refugee", etc (Malkii 1992, 1995, Arendt 1951, Loescher 2003, Lippert 1999).

In this section, I want to understand how and why these other problem areas and *programs* became possible and when and why did they required there expansion. I argue that this historical detour is needed for answering the following questions. Why did the IDP formation emerge at all? Why did it emerge only two decades ago? If "forced movement of people" is something that all these problem areas share, then why their specificities, differentiations and possibilities? Why was a new category needed? Why did previous categories were not more resourceful and efficient? And finally, has this new problem area, the IDPs, acquired such a stable and solid existence worldwide at all in order to even name it as a 'new worldwide problem area' or even a 'regime'?[2]

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[2] Before starting, I need to introduce a basic caveat. To be sure, there are still many debates concerning the blurring or even the usefulness of these differentiations. Here I will just mention some of these. On one hand, in the light of conflicts like the one of the ex-Yugoslavia and Rwanda where the clear distinction between IDPs and refugees fall apart, some scholars have found this differentiation difficult and even obtrusive for the protection and assistance for both populations (Lee 1996). Second, as argued by Barutciski (1998), the definition of the IDPs prompted by the interest of international agencies runs the risk of removing the responsibilities of the same Nation-States with its own 'citizens'. For the author, by placing the leverage on International Agencies for responding to the problem of IDPs, their is the risk of obliterating the responsibilities of the same Nation-States with their own citizens. More so, the same category of the citizen already encompasses many of the rights that IDP's have. Finally, as Kelly (2004) suggests, following the shifting forms of legal status of Palestinian residents in the West Bank created by the Israelian state, geopolitical interests of Nation-States make any distinction between these categories

THE RIGHTS OF THE CITIZEN AND THE MODERN STATE

Several scholars working on the humanitarian and human rights regime have gone all the way back to the Enlightment to trace the construction of a conceptual apparatus that links the rights of man (not woman) with the fact of being a citizen of the nation-state (Chandler 2002, Arendt 1951, Ishay 2004, Sassen 2006). By looking at the way in which the rights of man were endowed for being a citizen of a particular nation-state during the Enlightment, these scholars have equated the condition of "stateness" with the fact of having rights under the protection of a larger juridical and eurocentric configuration of modern-state system, in itself, a particular ensemble of territory, rights and authority (Sassen 2006, Lee 1996, Ishay 2004, Arendt 1951). For Ishay (2004: 9), the thoughts and influences of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke and Kant, events such as the Westphalia Treaties (1648), the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776), the French

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such as IDPs or refugee too arbitrary and contingent. However their blurriness and the debates around these categories, indeed, an image that I want to keep along this article, I want to be remembered of the powerful consequences that these have for those people standing in the streets with documents identifying them as IDPs. However their fragility and instability, as Mosse (2005a) argues describing the fragility of global development policies, their "effects, brought directing resource flows, are real, especially for those compelled to buy into them, or who are excluded from them". In similar ways as Gordillo (2000 172) discusses ID-paper fetishism in the Argentinean Chaco, and certainly, in the case of IDP's in Colombia standing in the streets, there are enough powerful reasons to explain why people take great care in protecting them from dust by keeping them in plastic bags under their arms. Even though the IDPs formation, as I will discuss in this article, doesn't appear to be a 'well-oiled machine', people in the streets and in the rural areas do cling to this same category for reasons that should and can be studied ethnographically.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) among others, were responsible for creating the conditions of possibility for the idea of the role of the sovereign-state as both the guardian of basic rights and as the custodian against which one's right need to be defended.

More precisely, this state, for Kant (1795), should be republican and guided by the principles of freedom to the members of a society, by principles of dependence of all upon a single common legislation and by a law of their equality as citizens[3]. For the German philosopher there would be a perpetual peace as long as all states worldwide conformed to this same formation, in which no state had the right to dominate another one. He even thought of a League of the Nations that could end all wars forever. Interesting for us, even Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* (1795) proposed the idea of a world citizenship in which any citizen living outside its original territory must be welcomed and enjoy particular rights in another country.

By the same time, as Foucault (1997) has suggested, the classic theory of

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[3] On the other hand, as Gilroy (2000) claimed in Kant's (1764) *Observations of the National Characteristics*, these nation-states were racialized entities with specific distinctiveness: the French had a predominate feeling for the morally beautiful, the Spaniard is earnest, taciturn and truthful, the Italian appears a mix from the Spaniard and the Frenchman, the Indians have a dominating taste for the grotesque and "the Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above trifling" (Kant 1764: 110).

sovereignty acknowledged by the right of the sword became complemented by the power

to make 'live' and let 'die'. Indeed, this relation between the republican state and this

type of power is one that deserves much deeper analysis in the future (Rose and Valverde

1998). But for now, this *biopolitics* targeted the population as both the empirical object

and the transcendental subject in relation to the emergence and spread of industrial

capitalism: the regulation and management of citizens meant to maximize and extract

forces under the aegis of the nation-state is neither natural nor original. It was made

possible by the articulation of two technologies of power under the bounded

configuration of the state sovereignty since the s. XVIII: one focused on the aegis of the

body-organism-discipline-institutions and the other on the aegis of the population-

biological processes and regulatory mechanisms of (Foucault 1997). Now, the nation-

state was given the task of *taking care* of its citizens through practices of govermentality[4]

that introduced mechanisms such as forecasts, statistical estimates and overall measures

whereby the will to govern became intertwined with the production of truth (Foucault

1997: 246, 2000). For Rose (1999), with the introduction of this techniques, the

characteristic modern triangular geometry of power composed by discipline,

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[4] Foucault used the term *govermentality* to understand this problem in which states since the s. XVIII
started to regulate " the conduct of conduct-that is, to all those more or less calculated and systematic ways
of thinking and acting that aim to shape, regulate, or manage the comportment of others, whether these be
workers in a factory, inmates in a prison, wards in a mental hospital, the inhabitants of territory, or the
members of a population" (Inda 2005: 1).

govermentality and sovereignty becomes assembled.

Hanna Arendt (1951: 267) claimed that the events surrounding the First World War and its severe consequences of instability had sufficiently shattered the façade of Europe's political system to lay bare its hidden frame. Loescher (2004: 23) estimates that approximately two million Poles migrated to Poland and one million ethnic Germans moved to Germany from their previous homes in the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. The Greco-Turkish war displaced 1 million more Anatolian Greek and Armenian Refugees. For Loescher (2004: 22) with the changing nature of the international warfare, both the dissolution of the old multinational empires in Eastern Europe and the Balkan region and the expansion of the nation-states attempting to create culturally and politically homogenous groups, forced millions of people to abandon their homelands fleeing to new territories. As Arendt (1951) shows, these impressive movements of people between states created a power vacuum in which ethnic minorities were excluded from the new territories with no authority to grant them with any rights.

THE REFUGEE AS A NEW PROBLEM AREA

What is remarkable about these events, as Lippert (1999: 298) illustrates, is that before this massive movements of people, "Europeans [modern-nation states] did not regard large masses of human beings forced to migrate to seek refuge from persecution as experiencing as a distinctive kind of victimization." Evermore, for the author, "there was no refugee condition and no such distinction to be made" (Lippert: 1999: 298). In similar ways as I am trying to argue here, he does not claim that refugee movements (or in my case, IDPs movements) did not exist before the period. Rather, in a very Foucaltian way, he argues "that there were no movements, practices or refugees" until the early twentieth century in precisely the same way in which "there was no sexuality until the eighteenth century or human beings with multiple personality disorder until the late nineteenth century" (Lippert 1999: 299). But very soon, along with these events surrounding the First World War, as I immediately show, a series of *programs*, *technologies* and *apparatuses*, both as discursive and material practices, emerged during the first decades of the XX century to respond to this problematization.

It was precisely this conjuncture that led to the League of Nations to commission in 1920 the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen as the First High Commissioner of Refugees with specific responsibilities for Russian refugees only (Loescher 2004). After

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some years, he was also asked to deal with the consequences of Kemal Ataturk's

counteroffensive against the Greek army's in Asia minor (Barutciski 1998). Throughout

his mandate, however, Nansen will receive very limited political and economic support

from donor countries (Barutciski 1998). Even more, as Lippert argues, the refugee relief

consisted in philantropic endeavors financed through private means, with the League's

office foreseen coordinating delivery. Nansen was sent specifically to deal with

alleviating the plight of people who had to flee-essentially by helping them to resettle. In

practical terms, on July 5 1921, to alleviate the problems of refugee travel, the High

Commissioner issued travel documents that came to be known as the 'Nansen passports'

initially granted to Russian nationals, then to Armenians, and several years after, to other

nationalities as well (Torpey 2000).

Here, it is certainly important to be reminded by Lippert (1999) when he argues

that never before this had passports been required to travel *between* European Nations,

although they were in certain regions such as the territories of the Tsarist and Ottoman

Empires. For Torpey (2000: 129), the Nanson Passport was a notable achievement

precisely in a period that apotheosized the nation-state. Not only it identified and made

intelligible thousands moving across national boundaries, but simultaneously created

something entirely new by that time: the international refugee law. Through this *technology*, the *passport*, in which an international agency could act for those whom their countries of origin had rejected and were crossing international boundaries, the beginning of an international refugee law can properly be dated (Skran 1995: 105 quoted in Torpey 2000: 129). For sure, Kant's dream of a worldwide citizenship and even of a League of Nations has already materialized by this time.

On the other hand, as noted by Skran (quoted in Loescher 2004), the Commissioner activities grew to encompass refugee settlement, employment opportunities, emigration, and the linkage of refugee assistance with economic development. As Barutciski (1998) claims, the rationality of his mandate was on non-political activities that could help to explain why refugee protection was considered distinct from the interventionist type of activity. Indeed, as Loescher (2004: 25) argues, the Commissioner believed that the international refugee regime would also contribute to solving Europe's economic problems. Although still away from what Chandler (2002) calls as a broadening humanitarianism that involved a developmental approach fostered by NGO's and international organizations since the 1980's, one can witness the emergence of a *rationality* that links the refugee, displaced or internally displaced

alleviation that will focus on economic (much later, development oriented) solutions. Within this rationality of these early humanitarianism, there is no political debate around the root causes for why do people, in first instance, are displaced. In fact, for Chimni (1988) and others (Kennedy 2004), who historize the shifting policy contexts of refugee law, the consensus of a positivist approach between 1950 and 1980's that separated the legal and political spheres represented the perfect embodiment of this depolitized discourse.[5]

After the period of the World Wars, as Loescher (2001) describes, anti-fascist refugees fled from Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain. In the postwar period, and very important to understand the conditions of possibility of something like the IDP's to emerge in the nineties, a new term, "displaced persons" (DP's), was created to refer to people forced to move from their homeland during the war (Loescher 2001)[6]. In 1945,

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[5] Analyzing the logic behind refugee camps in Tanzania, both Malkii (1995) and Scott (1998) have argued that these were in fact designed for the domestication of the forest and its transformation into a granary. In fact, the former author named this practice as an example of "captured peasantry". In similar ways, it is not a coincidence that one of the first directors of a key international refugee organization United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) (*see below*) came from being the chairman of a model for large-scale development project worldwide, the Tennessee Valley Project[5] in the U.S. (Farah 2003). As Farah (2003) suggests, the "W" in UNRWA stands in opposite direction to camp life and idleness. Its mandate was strictly humanitarian and "work" was its main reason to exist. In similar ways, it is not a coincidence that one of the first directors of a key international refugee organization in the West Bank, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) came from being the chairman of a model for large-scale development project worldwide, the Tennessee Valley Project in the U.S. (Farah 2003). As Farah (2003) suggests, the "W" in UNRWA stands in opposite direction to camp life and idleness. Its mandate was strictly humanitarian and "work" was its main reason to exist.

[6] Interestingly enough, for Arendt (1951: 279), this term was invented during the war for the express purpose of liquidating stateless-ness once and for all by ignoring its existence.

Ishay (2004: 268) argues, the Soviet Union expelled millions of Germans from densely populated German territory that had been awarded to Poland. And with these events, the previous configuration of nation-state-sovereignity-citizen inherited from the Enlightment, which secured protection under the territorial and jurisdiction of its own state, at least theoretically, had to be reorganized. As Foucault suggests with the concept of *problematization*, new responses had to be given "that made something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc)" (Foucault 1998: 670, quoted in Rabinow 2003: 138). Now states but even more, much more stable and well financed international agencies than the League of the Nations and the Nansen mandate, appeared to respond to this new problem, the *refugee,* by creating different institutions to respond to this problematic.

Loescher (2001) lists several international agencies created during this years around the refugee problem which brought it into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc. For example, institutions such as the Intergovermental Comitee on Refugees (IGCR) were formed in 1943 to negotiate with Germany about Jewish

migration. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) provided temporary emergency assistance for millions of displaced persons (DP's) who fell into allied hands. Prompted by tensions along the East-West Issue on the resettlement or repatriation of refugees, the United States cut off the support to the latter one and created the International Refugee Organization (IRO) which had as its chief function the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons uprooted by World Was II (Loescher 2001). Loescher (2001) notes that this institution will close its offices several years later after several discussions taking place between 1948 and 1950 in the United Nations, once observed that the problem of refugee movement was indeed international thanks to massive displacements occurring in the Korean Peninsula, in China and in Palestine. In this conjuncture, the author says, the discussions were on the termination of the IRO and the creation of a new international refugee organization-the Office of the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) (Loescher 2001: 42).

For this author, the imprint of the July 1950 UNHCR statute and the July 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees were deeply influenced by the experience of the post-conflict post-World War Europe (2001: 44). In fact, as he argues, a common tension in the history of the UNHCR has been between the one of negotiating the

protection of refuges vis-à-vis the sovereign prerogatives and interests of states (Loescher

2003). These documents defined a refugee who had a "well-founded fear of being

persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social

group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing

to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself

of the protection of that country (…)" (UNHCR Statute, 1951). For the author (Loescher

2001: 44), this persecution-centered definition molded by Western states, perceived

refugees as victims of oppressive, totalitarian and specific Communist regimes. During

the meetings, as Loescher (2001: 45) argues, there were discussions on whether this

definition should apply to refugees worldwide or whether it should be restricted to

European refugees. The United States argued for a narrow definition and enumerated

clearly the category needing protection; at the end, its position regarding the definition of

the refugee prevailed after the Americans exerted pressure on the other Latin American

and other delegations to change its position (Ibid: 45).

An important event for our purposes is how in June 1957, governmental

representatives debated whether 'internal refugees' should be included in the refugee

definition and decided to exclude these groups from the mandate (Loescher 2004: 45). As

the author suggests, fears of illegal massive movements of German minorities that totaled approximately nine million persons moving to other countries were very present in these discussions. The suspicion that these population could later claim refugee status and invoke their protection, led to the exclusion from the High Commission competence of all persons "who posses the same rights as the inhabitants of the country in which they were currently living" (Loescher 2004: 49). By this time, as well, new flows of people outside the European border led to the formation of other institutions such as the previously mentioned United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) to respond to the crisis of Palestinian refugees who lost both their home and livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict (Farah 2003). Founded in 1949, this agency became throughout the following decades a central node where different and contradictory interests mesh together in relation with refugee recognition and protection in Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories (Farah 2003). As she suggests, not even the term "Palestinian Refugee" has been adopted by the United Nations.

In the previous pages, I've described the different *programs, technologies and apparatuses* emerging to confront a new problem: the massive movement of people triggered by the tearing apart of old imperial powers in Europe and by interstate World

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Wars, among other historical events. I've argued that these processes problematized the

Enlightment configuration that guaranteed the citizen's protection under the condition of

inhabiting one's territory. These events forced the rearticulations and reaccomodations of

this same configuration in order to come up with a new ensemble of *programs,*

technologies and apparatuses that came along with this new object, the *refugee*. Massive

movements of people had been present in history. But what was required for its

emergence was the simultaneous appearance of heterogeneous network of events such as

the Nation-state, the Nansen passport, The League of the Nations, the Minority Treaties,

at this moment and not before. In conclusion, as Lappert (1999: 299) shows, refugees

came into being as the category *refugee* was being invented.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PROBLEM AREA: FRICTIONS AND PREDICAMENTS OF THE POST-COLD WAR

This is not the place to go into a detailed historical narrative of the Post-Cold War period. It suffices to follow Chandler's (2002: 27) argument that the roots of today's human rights based humanitarianism lied in the growing consensus of support for Western involvement in the internal affairs of the developing world since the 1970's. Here, the model of sovereign-state as the guardian of the human rights of its citizens was replaced by one focused on the human centered human rights model safeguarded by international institutions (Chandler 2002, Duffield 2002). Chandler identifies two strands of the 'new humanitarian' interventionism that predate the post-Cold War consensus. The first one, following the author, "was the extension of involvement from the provision of immediate assistance to victims of conflict to the greater commitments of solidarity and advocacy works for victims and concerns for the long-term protection of human rights for

'at risk' groups" (2002: 27). The second one, "developed with problems of famine and drought, was the move of relief NGO's from emergency humanitarian aid to long-term development in the 1970's" (Chandler 2002: 27).

With these trends, as Chandler (2002: 218) argues, the key argument forwarded by the human rights advocates was that international institutions, international and domestic courts, NGOs or ethics committees are better representatives of the people's need than are elected governments. By these discursive practices, as well, both the representations of 'corrupt or human rights abusive states' and a focus for internalist explanations, for example, of refugee or IDPs flows, became widespread in international institutions (Chimni 1998). In the case of Postcolonial African Nations, *refugeeness* [or IDPsness], for Lippert (1999), allowed Western "non-political" interference in these regions, first through emergency refugee aid, and then with additional programs of refugee development. Together with new orientations on refugee law which favored the enforcement of policies of containment of northern countries, as argued by Chimni

(1998), these events facilitated the shift of focus from refugees to IDPs as well as to the

justification of humanitarian intervention[7].

Simultaneously, for Duffield (2002: 1052), following reports of International

Institutions such as the UNDP reports in the nineties, a constant pattern of the description

of conflicts worldwide seem to reinforce a series of "implicit 'them' and 'us'

dichotomies". Their conflicts are internal, illegitimate, identity-based, etc, requiring not

only particular interventions from international agencies, but also, an extraordinary work

of concealment and distancing (Duffield 2002, Mitchell 2002, Fergusson 1991, Escobar

1995). For example, Chimni (1998) suggests that internalist explanations were key (albeit

unsustainable) for conceptualizing both the Rwandan and Yugoslavian crisis. Chimni

(1988) argues (quoting Chossudovsky 1997), that these explanations in both cases

overlooked how macro-economic reforms reinforced by international financial

institutions exacerbated ethnic tensions and accelerated the process of political collapse

which then led to the massive flows of people.

By the late eighties, two international conferences on Internal Displacement were

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[7] On the other side of the spectrum, however, Ishay (2005) argues that with the emergence of these trends, there certainly seemed to be good reasons for Post-Cold war optimism over prospects for promoting human rights. These are indeed the paradoxes of neoliberalism. Like any regime, it carries both dangers and possibilities (Redfield, personal communication 2006).

fundamental for making this problem visible on an international scale: the Conference on

the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa (SARRED)

held at Oslo in August 1988 and the International Conference on Central American

Refugees (CIREFCA) held in Guatemala (Cohen and Deng 1998). These publications

would become relevant for starting to stabilize the identity of its subjects (Callon 1986).

Indeed, one of the fundamental debates during these first years was precisely to define

what groups or individuals could be considered as IDPs. As I show later, this fundamental

act of labeling a target population is not only fundamental for aid agencies (Mosse 2005),

but also, following Escobar (1995: 109), for understanding how this textually mediated

discourse substitute the actual relations and practices of the "beneficiaries, burying the

latter's experience in the matrix that organizes the institution's representation". From this

view, the conference in Guatemala is important because it gave a first initial definition in

this regard.

    For the Conference,

        "(...) internally displaced persons are persons who have been endangered
        by generalized violence, massive violation of human rights, an ongoing
        conflict or other circumstances which have or are seriously disturbed the

public order, but who have remained within their own countries." (E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 39).

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations system, seized with the issue a year later, requested the Secretary-General to "initiate a system-wide review to assess the experience and capacity of various organizations in the coordination of assistance to all refugees, displaced persons and returnees"[8]. In fact, the Commission on Human Rights, in a resolution dated by March 5 1991, "requested the Secretary General to take into account the protection of human rights and the needs of internally displaced persons in the system-wide review and to submit to the Commission at its forty eight session an analytical report (there are going to be at least two of this in this story) on internally displaced"[9]. Accordingly, by June 28 1991, the Secretary-General addressed a verbal note to all Governments and letters to relevant organizations, requesting information and views on the subject. This report was indeed successful for recruiting followers. After this analytical report was submitted, the Commission of Human Rights recognized "that internally displaced persons are in need of relief assistance and of protection" [10]. But even more, by 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights

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[8] Cited in E/CN.4/1993/35: 4
[9] Cited in A/48/279 1993: 3
[10] Cited in E/CN.4/1993/35: parr 9

emphasized the importance of United Nations human rights bodies to give special attention to the IDPs problem area[11].

THE RARIFICATION OF THE DISCOURSE: THE REPRESENTATIVE

Thanks to this report, the Commission requested the Secretary-General "to designate a representative [not yet in upper-case] to seek again views and information from all governments on the human rights issues related to internally displaced persons." He should submit annual reports and compile country profiles to better understand more fully the issues related to IDPs[12]. Apart from the mandate, he should develop a comprehensive global strategy for providing effective support, protection, assistance, reintegration and development support for IDP's (Deng and Cohen 1998: IX). Accordingly, during 1992 and 1998, with a team of collaborators of the Brookings Institute and other International Institutions, this Representative start the first global research on internal displacement based on country profiles (Deng and Cohen 1998), of publishing the *Compilation and Analysis of Legal and Normative frameworks for Internally Displaced Persons* (Deng 1998) and finally, of elaborating the *Guiding*

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[11] A/50/558: parr 76

[12] A/48/579, November. 9, 1993.

Principles of Internal Displacement in 1998, a "soft law" in charge of orienting

governments on how to respond to the problem of IDPs.

The production of knowledge, as Redfield (2006) claims for the case of MSF

(Doctors without Borders), is to a greater extent what his mandate is about. As the

Representative (Deng 2003) argued much later, an important pillar of the mandate is the

development of the knowledge base on internal displacement. Books, international

conferences, reports, statistics and surveys are going to be central in his mandate. But

also, in very similar ways as Redfield (2006) analyzes the production of knowledge

within the French organization, this Representative visits "the field", gives "voice" to the

victims and presents "facts" in order to claim its moral and technical authority. The

mandate also has a *spatial* property. As Gupta & Ferguson (2005: 112) argue, the practice

of traveling in order to conduct inspections, to discipline, reward, encourage and punish

is central for the way states represent themselves as reified entities with particular *spatial*

properties (in this cases, both "vertical and horizontal encompassment"). One also has to

be reminded that the trope of "traveling and "having being there" not only is fundamental

for these entities, but has also constructed the ethnographic authority (Clifford 1997).

In spring 1992, the Secretary-General appointed Francis M. Deng, former

Sudanese diplomat and senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies program at the

Brookings Institution[13] (Cohen and Deng 1998). As Deng told me in the interview we

had in December 2005, the Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Gali by that time, an

Egyptian, knew him well. They were both internationally recognized public intellectuals,

and certainly, members of the African intelligentsia. As Korn argues;

> " [The UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Galhi] did not ask him to
> consider the assignment; he said he wanted him for it and made clear that
> the only answer he would accept is yes. Deng has a reputation both as
> diplomat and scholar, but Boutros-Ghali explained that he had another
> reason as well for choosing him. Deng was the scion of a leading family of
> Sudan's Dinka people who have suffered massive displacement from civil
> war. He would, as Boutros-Galhi put it, "know what the problem is all
> about."" (Korn 1999: 6).

In response to this request, the Brookings Institution undertook a collaborative

approach with the Refugee Policy Group (RPG), an independent center for policy

research and analysis concerning refugee and related humanitarian emergency issues

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[13]It is certainly necessary to stop momentarily my analysis and say something about this particular place, a fundamental player for the emergence of this discursive formation, the Brookings Institute with headquarters in Washington DC. The same website of the Brookings Institute informs us that is one of the oldest think tanks of the United Status. Founded "in 1916, when a group of leading reformers founded the Institute for Government Research (IGR), the first private organization devoted to analyzing public policy issues at the national level". The website continues: "the founders "believed that day to day government was not a matter of political emotionalism; but of quiet competence and professionalism. They believed that critical analysis of government administration and operation, accompanied by specific suggestions for improvement was needed."

(Deng and Cohen 1998: ix). The Project on Internal Displacement of the Brookings Institute, as the official website informs, "was created to promote a more effective national, regional and international response to this global problem and to support the work of the Representative of the UN-Secretary in carrying out the responsibilities of its mandate". Certainly, this is not a small matter. Indeed, Babbington (2004: 732) has claimed in his analysis of NGO geographies and uneven development, that the presence of these institutions not only "hooks" these problems like the one of IDPs into types of global networks, but brings meanings, resources, forms of exercising power, notions of modernity and a whole range of other influences. In particular, as I show below, I am interested in describing how and thanks to its inception within the Brookings Institute domain, the IDPs problem area became interlocked with the problems of 'state-failure' and 'good governance'.

THE FORMATION OF OBJECTS: THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The first report of the Secretary-General defined the IDPs as "persons who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers, as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-

made disasters; and who are within the territory of their own country."[14] The second report this time prepared by the Representative, which included several consultations with other agencies, informs that controversies on the first definition emerged. Specifically, controversies were raised on the mention of "large numbers", "suddenly and unexpectedly" in this first definition. One could wonder if its reliance on the African context where precisely this was the case, and its rejection on the Latin American reports that came late, could have resulted in this first definition.

Other controversies on this definition came from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights proposing an overarching concept of "dispossessed persons". Other respondents like the Salvadorian authorities pointed out to the relationship between the larger problem of underdevelopment and the specific problem of internal displacement, without advocating the inclusion of all those affected by poverty, uneven development or environmental degradation. Countries such as Cyprus suggested that the element of being unable to return should be added to the definition. The International Red Cross replied that this definition "is too general to serve as a basis for a specific instruments"[15]. For

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[14] "Commission on Human Rights, Analytical Report of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, E/CN.4/1992/23, para 17.
[15] E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 37

current purposes, and in fact, very important for starting to stabilize this particular object,

the Representative suggests in 1993[16] that what is needed is to identify the main features

of a working definition and the initial one should serve this purpose[17].

THE FORMATION OF STRATEGIES: GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

Once in mandate, as the Representative told me in our interview, he and other

international human rights and humanitarian researchers and lawyers of the Brookings

Institute had to come with a conceptual platform for making the mandate operational.

Foucault's comment on the formation of strategies are not external to the discourse, but

are essential for its deployment, is crucial here (Foucault 1972). What one is looking

then, is of those necessary strategies that made something enter into a discourse the way

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[16] Much later in time, more precisely, in a Regional Seminar on Internal Displacement held in Mexico City on February 18-20 2004, there were still problems with this definition in response to the regional specificities (Regional Seminar on Internal Displacement, Mexico 2004). For example, there were some interventions that discussed the need of expanding the definition to include the economic migrants, or even denouncing that in Colombia, for example, there have been efforts to categorize IDPs as simple economic migrants to reduce the official statistics on IDP. Another intervention pointed to the importance of including peasants displaced by aerial fumigation of coca plantations or ongoing military combats between the State and the guerrilla or paramilitary forces in Colombia. It is clear: there is still neither national nor regional consensus on the IDPs category. This same discussion was present in a collective interview I had around March 2003 in the peripheral area of Ciudad Bolivar, Bogotá (Aparicio 2005). I interviewed several individuals certified as IDPs by the official institutions and others that were just neighbors and friends. In the interview, one of the latter told me that in fact all of them were also "IDPs". In his words, he explained that all of them were displaced by that "other violence" that has marginalized entire populations and pushed them to live in the worst conditions in the outskirts of major cities.

[17] E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 53

it did, how it was even operationalized and how it became constitutive of it. Indeed, as

Deng (1993) argues, by the early 1990s there were some international conferences on

human rights that came to the conclusion that the concept of sovereignty, one of the basic

stumbling blocks that international human rights organizations faced when trying to

intervene on internal violations of human rights, had to be reworked.

As his 1994 annual report states [18], he followed some basic principles and

assumptions to be able to fulfill his mandate. First, his efforts were geared towards

enhancing the prospects of providing effective protection and assistance for IDPs.

Second, since IDPs fall into domestic jurisdiction, this can be best done through dialogue

and cooperation with the Government predicated on the assumption that sovereignty

carries with it responsibility to ensure protection and assistance to its citizens. As he said

in 1998, the hope remains that the spread of democracy and respect for human rights may

show the way toward the easing of crisis of national identity and internal displacement

(Deng and Cohen 1998: 23). And third, when Governments are incapable or unwilling to

provide protection and assistance, then some of international action becomes an

imperative (Deng 1993). In fact, for the Representative, echoing what had become a

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[18] E/CN.4/1994/44, 25 January 1994, parr 41-44

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major trend within the NGO's and international humanitarian institutions of the 1990s (Ignatieff 2001), "the foundations, pillars and perhaps even the structures of global government were taking shape with the emergence of the post-cold war international order in which the internally displaced persons are bound to be the beneficiaries" (Deng 1993: 20).

Since 1993, the Representative also initiated the coordination of the *International Legal Standards* and the *Institutional Arrangements* addressing the case of IDPs. A patchwork (Deng's word, not mine) formation of treaties, regimes (again, Deng's word, not mine) and institutions has been formed (Deng 1998). Regarding the institutional arrangements, there was not a single UN agency exclusively dedicated to address the problem of IDPs[19]. As Deng (2003) argues, the defense of sovereignty and the fear of international interventions in domestic crisis were responsible for never building enough leverage within the international arena for creating one single institution dedicated exclusively for the IDPs problem area. Instead, the approach corresponded to an inter-

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[19] E/CN.,4/1994/44: parr. 61.

agency cooperation between the different international institutions[20]. In December 1994, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) designated the Emergency Relief Coordinator as the central reference point within the United Nation system to review requests for assistance and protection on actual or developing of situations of IDPs that require a coordinated response[21]. Within the UN system, however, as the report suggests, UNHCR is perhaps the most pertinent to the needs of internal displacement. In fact, as the report informs, UNHCR has extended his mandate on refugees to include the internally displaced in specific operations in response to requests from the Secretary-General[22].

And finally, as the report informs, in consultation with experts it was agreed that to remedy the situation, a major review should be undertaken to develop the needed comprehensive approach for an effective international protection for internally displaced persons[23]. This review will be made precisely by the Brookings Institute and published in

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[20] The United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR), the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Food Program, United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the Organization of International Migration (OIM).

[21] A/50/558: parr. 72.

[22] A/50/558: parr 63

[23] E/CN.,4/1994/44: parr 54

two books and a compilation and analysis of existing normative frameworks and legal

standards. A caveat is thrown to this project: it should not be merely a theoretical study,

devoid of practical application: "Research and operations take parallel but intersection

paths"[24]. Echoing Foucault's (1980: 171) analysis of the *Politics of Health in the*

Eighteenth century, the IDPs emerges as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention,

modification, etc.

ENUNCIATIVE MODALITIES: THE POST-COLD WAR AND PROBLEMS OF NATION BUILDING

The analytical report of 1992 identified six causes for internal displacement

worldwide[25]. For the Secretary-General, the roots of internal displacement worldwide are:

armed conflict or internal strife, forced relocation, communal violence, natural disasters,

ecological disasters and violation of human rights[26]. This neither is an irrelevant event.

For Deng, appreciating the underlying causes of these conflicts is crucial for taking

appropriate measures and initiate ameliorative actions. The 1993 annual report starts by

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[24] E/CN.,4/1994/44: 59

[25] E/CN-4/1993/35

[26] E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 1.

declaring that these causes have been confirmed by the information received from the questionnaires. But even more, a historical narrative is produced to locate events according to specific coordinates: "the challenge posed by the problem of the internally displaced must be viewed in the context of the events since the end of the Cold War" (Deng 1993: 4) and "most IDP's are in developing countries with acute problems of nation-building"[27]. The Cold War, problems of nation-building and underdeveloped countries, as these and all the documents later testify, will begin to appear as the building blocks of the knowledge produced on internal displacement worldwide.

Other more and even marginal explanations, never commented in the documents but that appear in just a couple of single paragraphs in both books, very compelling for an actor network approach, have to do with the telecommunication revolution which helped to make public the plight of internally displaced persons mainly in Iraq and Sudan (Cohen and Deng 1998). Also, with the emergence of an International Human Rights movement that denounced the government of Sudan and last but not least, the 1991 Gulf War, which authorized military intervention after recognizing the Irak government's failure to fulfill its responsibilities to its citizens (Cohen and Deng 1998: 4). As Chandler

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[27] E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 132.

(2002: 49) and Duffield (2002) argue, this convergence between 'ethical foreign policy',

carried out through military action and humanitarian assistance, was only made possible

through the concept of human rights-based humanitarian intervention. For Chandler, for

example, the Nato assault on Kosovo was the first internationally military action in the

name of human rights and international questions of governance, instead of the usual

arguments on international security (Chandler 2002: 50, see also Weiss and Amic 1998).

Through the visits carried in 1995, a very provocative statement is stated after

finishing the country profiles: "common to all of the countries visited, the main cause of

displacement is violence in the context of internal conflict"[28]. Succinctly, it is suggested

that the main cause of internal displacement is internal conflict. And this is not a small

event. One on side, as noted by Chimni (1998), the orientation in the discussion of the

causes of refugee flows in has been on internalist explanations that while relevant, they

are one-sided and do not capture the complex reality of the root causes of refugee flows.

As he argues, many of the massive displacements both in Yugoslavia and Rwanda were

prompted by the implementation of policies dictated by international institutions. On the

other side, the practice of representing each country as a bounded and rarified object with

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[28] A/50/558: parr 14.

no connections to the external world has also been common in development discourses (Escobar 1995, Mitchell 2004, Ferguson 1994). By these operations, these "objects" could become a target for a wide range of interventions that isolated them it from the international arena. And even more, as these authors argue, through these same discursive practices, subjectivities such as the one of the "corrupt" or "ineffective" local politicians that require and legitimize the leverage of international agencies are simultaneously created.

THE 1998 ANNUAL REPORT: THE STABILIZATION OF THE PROBLEM AREA

By 1998, the report had almost stabilized the object. In its first paragraph, it claims that since the Commission first undertook consideration of the item of internal displacement in 1992, the international community has made appreciable progress in response to IDPs[29]. In 1998, both the Compilation and the research study of the Brookings Institute were published. It is stated that the challenge now is largely an operational one of monitoring and translating the normative and institutional progress

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[29] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr. 1

achieved into effective action on the ground[30]. New actors are brought into the scene by

this 1998 annual report. Thus, it recommends links between relief and development

agencies, in which the World Bank provisions for operating in post-conflict scenarios are

welcomed[31]. Nansen's vision of linking aid with development and economic solutions

has officially materialized. A Global survey of the internally displaced persons is in

preparation by the Norwegian Refugee Council-literally, they say, "in which a global

information network [within regional, national and global scale-making projects, making

each succeed wildly-it also partially and tentatively (Tsing 2005: 59)] has been created

for this purpose"[32].

By 1998, and still without any single agency for IDPs, several institutions have

responded to this problem area. In fact, the mandate of the Representative does not still

have a clear institutional ground nor will it have it for the years to come. These are the

leaks and fragments of this story. As an external consultant to the Secretary-General for

the IDPs, he does not have even financial stability. In his 1994 annual report, for example,

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[30] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr 3

[31] The World Bank (1997: 35, my italics) reports says: "Bank operations have been designed in partnership with and at the explicit request of the UNHCR and other relevant international agencies, in the hope of developing sustainable strategies that build on initial programs developed by relief agencies to facilitate the return home of refugees and *internally displaced persons*."

[32] E/CN.4/1998/53

he described that the resources available to him are minimal in comparison with the

monumental challenge of his mandate and that Norway has given financial support for

his mandate. In his 1998 annual report, he explains has had to rely on external support

initially in the form of an intern from Harvard, extended by short-term appointments until

her departure last year. The report mentions that an associate expert, which has been

"generously provided" by the Government of Norway, but whose contract have since

expired, supplemented this position. Another problem highlighted in this document is on

the amount of time that the Representative can devote to the responsibilities of his

mandate. The position of the Representative is voluntary and, according to his agreement

with his employer, the Brookings Institute, the amount of time he can devote to the work

of the mandate should not exceed one quarter of his work time[33].

The report of 1998 finishes by saying that although the numbers have fluctuated, a

modest estimate will mention 25 and 30 million spread in 40 countries. In 1998, as the

final paragraph of the report states, "the crisis leaves no doubt that international

involvement is necessary since internal displacement is a human tragedy of great

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[33] E/CN.4/1998.50, Section IV, parr. 7.

magnitude and global dimensions"[34]. For the Representative, these implications of not fulfilling this requirement are certainly high: "It is not only a symptom of state failure in varying degrees, whether related to political will or sheer lack of capacity, but is often a crisis with regional and global implications"[35].

By the same year, the *Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement* are produced, a "soft law"[36] designed to contribute over time to the creation of a moral and political climate necessary for improving responses, an a benchmark from which to monitor and measure the treatment of internally displaced persons worldwide [37]. The *Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement,*, for Deng and Cohen (1998: 7), "set the standards that should put all groups on notice that their conduct is open to scrutiny and will be measured". But it is still a soft-law, which reminds of its fragile character. However, the annual report of 1998 states that they marked the first attempt to articulate the meaning

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[34] E/CN.4/1995.50: 76

[35] E/CN.4/1995.50: 76

[36] For Szasa (1997: 32, cited in Riles 2000: 8), these are international agreements that do not carry threats of sanctions for their violation. For Riles (2000: 8), following the aspirations of participants in UN Global Conferences which also concluded in the elaboration of this "soft law", the hope is that, as "language" is quoted and repeated from one conference document to the next and as states begin to conform to their practices, some of what is agreed upon gradually will becomes rules of "customary international law".

[37] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr 8-9.

and nature of protection for IDPs[38]. The reformulated definition in the Guiding Principles

eliminates both the temporal and quantitative criteria. And they add a new right that had

never appeared before: the right to not be arbitrarily displaced[39]. Interestingly enough,

they mention large-scale development projects not justified by public interest as a cause

that would qualify as legitimate for considering any persons as an IDPs. They also

recommend the full participation of IDPs in the design and implementation of their

voluntary return or resettlement in new places.

As I had already discussed, they also point to the necessary co-relation between

sovereignty and responsibility for citizens. As a Handbook for applying the Guiding

Principles published in 1999 (The Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement

1999: 12) confirm, these "Guiding Principles reinforce the duty and responsibility of

national authorities to protect and assist their population". Both the Compilation and the

Guiding Principles do things. As the last sentence of the report says, now the

Commission has the normative and institutional foundation upon which to build a more

effective and sustainable system of international responses to the crisis of internally

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[38] E/CN.4/1998/53: Section B, parr. 3

[39] E/CN.4/1998/53: section A, parr 4

displacement[40]. They are not just words; literally, they do things. Thus, they are already

part of the training models for field staff[41]. As I described before, they are also mediated

by those IDPs standing outside the offices in Bogotá.

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[40] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr. 77

[41] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr. 13

CHAPTER V

BACK TO COLOMBIA: GOVERMENTALITY AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF FAILURE

In this final section, I will connect this discursive formation that links the Representative, the Guiding Principles, the Brookings Institute, the annual reports, among many other actors, with what was happening in Colombia by that time. As I said in the beginning, forced migration from the rural areas to the cities has been present in the history of Colombia since the sixteenth century. But never before the 1990's did something like the problem area of IDPs existed. The Representative visited the country from 10-18 June 1994. He will visit the country again for a follow up mission to Colombia from 20-27 May 1999 and in July 2002. In fact, in his first report, he claims that "until a few years ago the Government did not recognize that there was a problem of internal displacement in the country"[42]. Of course, the government didn't recognize it

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[42] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr. 74

before the 1990's because it was not "there": forced displacement has been common in the history of Colombia but neither was it named like this, nor did this very complex institutional apparatus created to respond to this problem area existed before. The necessary events were not just there for creating its conditions of possibility.

But they will emerge soon, and more than that, as Foucault (Rabinow 1984) clarifies in his analysis of problematizations, they will emerge *simultaneously*. In fact, by the mid 1990's, as I said, the Church published research results that, through a survey of 1.170 displaced persons in parishes throughout the country, estimated for the first time in the history of Colombia that 586,261 people had been *displaced* between January 1985 and August 1994 (Conferencia Episcopal 1995). In his 1995 report, the Representative knew about this research and actually comments that the results from this research are expected to be the most comprehensive documentation of internal displacement in the country[43].

First, as the report confirms, he didn't listen just to one source of information, but as a "good ethnographer" going to fieldwork, he endeavored to hear a variety of views on

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[43] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr. 94

the complex situation of displacement. As the document goes on to say, "as during previous similar visits to other countries he endeavored, within the short time available, to hear a variety of views on the complex situation of displacement in Colombia from the different social, political, legal, religious and intellectual segments of Colombian society"[44]. The ranges of visits illustrate his disposition to see with his own eyes what the situation was all about. His description of the government officials that took him around reminds one of those descriptions of travelers of the nineteenth century described by Pratt (1992): "youthful, technocratic, progressive in their ideas and very open and candid"[45]. He also visited the offices of the President and high ranking officials to the Altos de Cazuca in Ciudad Bolivar, Bogotá; in fact, very close to the interview I mentioned at the beginning when the father of a family showed me a folder with a very thick documentation. As the document goes on to say, "as during previous similar visits to other countries he endeavored, within the short time available, to hear a variety of views on the complex situation of displacement in Colombia from the different social, political, legal, religious and intellectual segments of Colombian society"[46]. He also manifests that there are doubts on the accuracy of figures. In 1994, there has been no methodological

[44] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 7

[45] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1:Parr 51

[46] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 7

attempt to estimate the IDPs figures, although this situation is about to change after the Episcopal Conference report to be submitted this year

There are also some expectations on the future of the report. As the Representative states, there are hopes that this report would provide a challenge to the new government. In fact, very soon after his visit, and thanks to another report submitted by the church the same year, the office of the Presidency released the Document CONPES 2804 of 1995 that would inaugurate the official state policy on IDPs included many of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary (Aparicio 2005). It also handed the responsibility for IDPs to the Office of Disasters and Calamities that responds to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. For Uribe (2001: 29), this decision to link IDPs attention and protection to the one of victims of natural disasters during these initial years, led to assimilate in a direct way the forced movement of people with the one occurred by natural disasters, thus depoliticizing the nature of the displacement which is always political; for the author (Ibid.), an example of this rationality can be found in a Presidential Decree of 1997, which states "the phenomenom of massive displacement of the civil population should be understood in similar ways to the one cause by disasters and calamities".

These first normative frameworks will later become the *Law 387 of 1997*, which,

until now, is the major normative and legal framework for implementing actions for

protection and assistance for IDPs. With this Law the *National System for the Integral*

Attention to Population Displaced by Violence became officially created and later

implemented by the Decree Number 173 of 1998. In this Decree, the different strategies

concerning the political, communication, pedagogical, research, distension and protection

dimensions are set. It also assigned responsibilities to the major institutions in charge of

offering a coordinated protection and assistance to IDPs. This decree also stated and

organized the different phases of attention that started right after the person gave his or

her testimony in the institutional offices. During this first period, the IDPs are entitled to

receive an Emergency aid for fifteen days. After information has been cross-checked, the

IDPs receive the Humanitarian Assistance aid for three months, occasionally extended for

other three months (Law 387, 1997).

Interestingly enough, the first document CONPES of 1995 does not identify IDPs

in the way the analytical report in 1992 did, but would consider the definition proposed

by the above discussed Interamerican Institute of Human Rights[47]. This same definition

will continue to appear in the subsequent modifications. During a seminar held in Santa

Fé de Antioquia on the *UN Guiding Principles and the International Context of Forced

Displacement*, participants not only recognized that the Guiding Principle's orientation

was more definitional in nature, and that the one the Law 387 was a legal one. For the

participants, "the definition in Law 387 focuses on victims of human rights violations and

war-affected persons, excluding persons to leave their homes as a result of natural

disasters and large development projects, while these last individuals would fall under the

definition in the Principles" (Global IDP Project 2002).

A constant pattern seen through the 1995 report is on how difficult it is to fit the

Colombian situation to the framework that the Representative had for internal

displacement. Here, there are a lot of frictions. Inside Colombia, on a regional level, he

claims that making any generic description of the phenomenon is problematic[48]. He

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[47] In this definition, IDP's are: "those who have been obliged to migrate within national territory, abandoning their places of residence or habitual economic activities because their lives, physical safety or freedom have been harmed or are under threat due to the presence of any of the following situations of human origin: internal armed conflict, internal disturbances or tensions, widespread violence, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances deriving from these situations that may disturb or drastically disturb public order." (Cohen and Deng: 1998: 320).

[48] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 13

argues that it is impossible to understand the situation of IDPs without analyzing the

context in which it occurs[49]. In fact, he goes on to list specific events of the internal

history of Colombia like the presence of guerrilla or "self-defence" armed groups, the

Coca Cartels, the "dirty war" of the eighties again certain political parties of the Left, that

probably echo but have little or nothing to do with the above mentioned background of

the Post-Cold War Period. The comprehensiveness of the Colombian case is elusive[50]. As

the Representative says, there are stark regional differences. Instead of the massive

movements seen in Africa, here, individuals and small families are the ones fleeing. In

fact, for the Representative, the situation challenges in many respects the working

definition of IDPs[51]. In the interview we had, as well, he repeatedly asked me to help him

making sense of the IDPs situation in Colombia.

With this information in hand, he makes very provoking conclusions for the

Colombian case. First, he states that the distribution of land is at the heart of the social

conflicts in Colombia: 3% of landowners own 70% of arable land[52]. Second, he observed

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[49] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 17

[50] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 17

[51] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 108

[52] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr. 30

that internally displaced persons on both rural and urban areas share in the poverty of the

local population[53]. In his report of the year 2000, indeed, much more critical on the whole

situation, he claims that the areas from where the majority of IDPs come from, coincide

with not only where guerrilla and paramilitary activity is most intense, but also tend to be

rich in natural resources[54]. He also adds that "a similar pattern of displacement has

appeared in relation to the exploration and the implementation of large-scale development

projects, in some cases concerning not strictly domestic economic interests but also the

objectives of multinational corporations"[55]. Indeed, if one takes seriously this statement,

how far is the Representative from his own affirmation of 1995 which stated that

"common to all of the countries visited, the main cause of displacement is violence in the

context of internal conflict"[56].

On the information and allegations by internally displaced persons on human

rights reports, he concludes that there is a perpetual violation of international human

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[53] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr. 70

[54] E/CN.4/2000/83/Add.1: parr. 23

[55] E/CN.4/2000/83/Add.1: parr. 23

[56] A/50/558: parr 14

rights by all actors[57] . IDPs lack adequate housing and basic services. In fact, the

Constitutional Court of Colombia, in a transcendental recent legal decision which

responded to a collective legal action (acción de tutela *tutela*) of one thousand one

hundred and fifty (1150) IDP families on February 2004, found that for the period

between 2001 and 2004, for the one hundred seventy thousand and two hundred and sixty

two (170,262) families registered in the IDPs State census, humanitarian assistance was

only given to 9.71% (families) (*Corte Constitucional* Auto 178, 2005). And third, as

he suggests, there is no hope of returning for the internally displaced persons. In fact, as

he says: there are very few solutions to the fundamental causes of displacement[58]. But he

does mention that the realities of the human rights situation are at variance with the

country's record on the signing and ratification of international instruments[59]. Even more,

he mentions that the new Constitution of 1991 brought certain measures for the general

protection of Human Rights.

The report of the Representative concludes by saying that the mission to

Colombia was a great success on all these grounds, which in itself, exemplifies the

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[57] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 62-70
[58] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 73

[59] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr. 61

importance of having country profiles. As the annual report of 1995 claims, country visits constitute one of the pillars of is mandate. The final sentence of the report to Colombia confirm that country profiles and visits are of importance in both understanding the generic problems of internal displacement as a worldwide problem. But also, of "appreciating the uniqueness of the situation in each country in order to devise the protection and assistance strategies appropriate to the particular context of the case in point"[60]. What the report shows and what will be considered in the annual report of 1995, is that although in the majority of cases these conflicts respond to ethnic boundaries, the situation is less clear in Perú and Colombia. The same report of 1995 announces that there are new reports of countries that only now have problems of internal displacement: Kenya, Tajikistan, Chechnya, Turkey. The collection of information becomes central in the following years: "availability and up-to-date information as well as its systematization are considered to be requirements for the fulfillment of the mandate"[61].

In September 2004, in a small house built with mud plaster, earthen floor, without water or sewage, I was carrying out a survey conducted by a national NGO (a religious organization, *Minuto de Dios*, God's Minute) which had formalized in the last months an

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[60] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1:.parr 135
[61] E/CN.4/1995.50

agreement with the government's *Social Solidarity Network, (Red de Solidaridad Social*),

to decentralize the provision of humanitarian aid to IDPs families in Ciudad Bolivar, a

marginal and very poor zone of Bogotá nowadays inhabited by more than 2 million

persons, mostly migrant peasants arriving in the last 50 years. While doing this particular

interview, the father of this family - sharing with me a folder with a very thick

documentation kept with great care- showed me letters he had personally written to the

office of the Presidency of Colombia, where he demanded his rights to be acknowledged

according to all the national and international legal norms ratified by the Colombian

Congress since 1997. Again, he showed me and even pointed out at the *Guiding*

Principles on Internal Displacement.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

In November 2003, I visited the house of an old couple of IDP's coming from a neighboring province of Bogotá. The floor was just made out of mud plaster and for their restroom, they excavated a whole in the back yard. They couldn't work because of their age so they lived thanks to the charity of their neighbors. During the interview, I asked them if they had received any help from the Government Institutions. The old woman, almost blind because of very visible eye cataracts, went to the room in the back. She brought with her two thin mattresses that I have seen before in the storage room of the office of the God's Minute (Minuto de Dios) in Ciudad Bolívar. With a smile in her face, she said "yes": the government had recognized her as an IDP's and had actually helped her. She was very grateful. The two mattresses were the proof. I remained silent. I didn't know what to say for the rest of the interview. I just stared at the two mattresses. I left

and walked silently through the informal and improvised muddy streets of Ciudad Bolívar, right in the peripheries of Bogotá.

In this article, I have described events that preceded and surrounded the emergence of a new worldwide problem area, the IDPs. Revisiting the historicity of other similar problem areas like the one of the *refugee* or the *displaced persons*, I have tried to answer the question of why did this formation emerged at all and why did it only emerged until the 1990s. I have relied on the historical contingencies that created the conditions of possibility for this new problem area to emerge, by looking at the reorganization of previous *programs, technologies and apparatuses*. Through six years, from 1992 and 1998, I have followed the formation of the object by simultaneously understanding the creation of strategies, enunciative modalities and the rarification of the discourse in the Representative. But also, as I showed along these pages, this story does not conform exactly to the idea of a "very well oiled regime" of the IDPs by looking at the leaks, instabilities and also, its lack of political and financial support.

In these final pages, although I barely talked about the specific govermentalization of the deployment area in Colombia, and much less, about the intense work of resistance,

appropriation and transformation of these institutional responses by grassroots

organizations and social movements, I can tentatively underline some of the side-effects

that it has produced. It is my contention that by tracking these, one is also able to

delineate much clearly the rationalities that lie behind the IDPs problem area in Colombia

and elsewhere. Indeed, two of the most powerful images of IDPs in Colombia are the one

of the street corners and the folders containing documents, and the debate around how the

official rates of IDPs in the country. I am just going to refer to the latter one. Through my

fieldwork, I constantly witnessed how these people are forced to enter not only into a

play of 'falsehood' and 'truthfulness' to demonstrate that they are IDP's to the

institutions and to drivers in the street corners of Bogota. They carry their paper folders

for telling the "truth" about their situation. Simultaneously, they have to design and

present projects to the State Institutions, incorporate a whole vocabulary and rationality

of the usual project-making process, stand in line outside the institutional offices from the

early morning for receiving any humanitarian assistance, accommodate to the subsequent

different "phases" in which they are classified making them targets of specific

interventions (emergency kits, humanitarian kits, productive projects, etc.) and finally,

receive these mattresses as the only aid from the institutions.

Within the official public policy responding to this problem, a bulk part of the government's assistance is aimed (and limited) to promote and finance what the *Law 387 of 1997* stipulates as "Productive Project" (*Proyecto Productivo*) (Aparicio 2005). This is to be designed and submitted to institutions by IDPs for obtaining small loans for capitalizing their new business initiatives that would improve their conditions when returning to their homeland. In fact, much of the activity that I saw in the offices where I did fieldwork in Bogotá, focused on courses on weaving, bakery, carpentry and electronics, among other instructions offered. The sounds of the industrial weaving machines and the vision of both male and female bodies organized in their particular work stations listening to the instructor were common in the visits I made to several institutions providing assistance to IDPs. In similar ways as Nelson (2005) discusses infrastructure development policies in the postwar period in Guatemala, one should not seek to know if these strategies, like the one of linking humanitarian aid with development alleviation, are repressive or liberatory. Instead, one should ask how these powerful strategies were even possible. Why was the state giving weaving instructions to IDP's? What were the options at hand? Interestingly enough, courses on "Human Rights" and one of "English language" were also offered.

One certainly has to acknowledge that these side-effects were never intended by Deng and his mandate. These correspond perhaps to something larger than the same IDPs problem area, Deng and his followers. As a hypothesis, I can venture to say that these side-effects stem from what Rabinow (2005) calls the current problematization of *anthropos*, specifically, in relation to the question of what does it means to be *human* and hence what are *human rights* in present times. Here, I am talking about a *machine* that produces (neo-)liberal subjects responsible for their own future, in charge of writing projects in a very homogenized and technical language, of producing truth about themselves, and becoming extremely normalized by a grid of intelligibility (Rose 1999). Indeed, this will be the subject addressed by Foucault's 1976 lectures at the College de France on the whole notion of neoliberal govermentality (Lemke 2001). For sure, this is not a 'well-oiled machine", but their side-effects are clear and evident, albeit unpredictable, in terms of what are they accomplishing. Mattress and paper folders are some of its side-effects; however, one can also ask the reversed questions: aren't these mattresses and paper folders precisely responding to the question of what does it mean to be "human" at all in these residual locations?

One could ask, echoing Redfield (2005) interrogation about the Penal Colony in the French Guyana, or Scott's (1998) engagement with those unsuccessful schemes for improving the human condition, has the Representative attempts of recruiting enough support failed? Are his initiatives or strategies to respond to this problem area becoming bankrupt? The answer is a definite no; as with the prison for Foucault (1978), IDPs are already part of our imaginary, our strategies, and our mode of thinking. More than that, there are the side-effects living with us. The "failure" does not stem from the fact of not giving humanitarian aid or that the State does not comply with the international laws and agreements ratified by governments. The IDPs problem area, its *programs, technologies* and *apparatuses*, inhabit and circulate today in national and international institutions, offices, conferences, books, media coverage, in those paper folders and yes, in this same paper. In terms of Foucault (1998: 232), it is this effect what gives the resulting apparatus its solidity and suppleness. One cannot think without this problem area. Perhaps one could do in the future. In the end, there remains the positive and almost *magical* effect of the Representative's Mandate within the whole network of human and non-human actors however heterogeneous, fragile and disconnected might be.

Or perhaps, there are in fact other ways of thinking about the IDPs problem that

are precisely counteracting these side-effects in very complex ways. One could suggest

that there have been always there, although surely, not in the radar of my previous

perspective on the IDPs formation and actualization[62]. Two examples are worth

mentioning: the *Peace Communities* of San Jose de Apartadó, a predominantly mestizo

peasant organization located in the Northwestern region, and the network of Afro-

Colombian activists and communities of the *Process of Black Communities*, operating

throughout the Pacific rainforest region in western Colombia In fact, both collectives are

currently crafting and deploying responses both to the long-standing armed conflict and

the State's failure to respond to the problem of internally displaced persons. Examples of

these responses are the recuperation of traditional agricultural practices to secure their

food procurement, the creation of the *University of Resistance* (an alternative node for

producing knowledge about violence) and the designation of humanitarian zones where

people should flee during combats to find refuge, among others. Through these

measures, among others, and in tension with official responses to the crisis, local

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[62] One could also mention other responses, for example, from the Catholic church and its bishops and priests working at the national level, regional organizations, local parishes, etc. As I told before, thanks to a report published by the *Conferencia Episcopal* in 1995 did the problem of the IDPs in Colombia became for the first time visible and named. In recent years, progressive bishops and priests working with several NGOs including Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace), CODHES (Consultancy for Human Righs and Displacement) and CINEP (Center for Research and Popular Education) have certainly been one of the most visceral critics of the state's negligence and lack of responsibility with the IDPs population in general. Several of these have actually turned into collaborators and allies of communities and grassroots organizations that I mention here.

communities get connected with the State, NGO's and international institutions dealing

with human rights and humanitarian interventions in manifold ways.

But this will be a much larger project than the one I started here. It will

indeed have to explore of how institutional human rights and humanitarian notions and

practices related to the problem of internally displaced persons, becomes a highly

contested terrain once appropriated, resisted or transformed by these collective efforts. It

will be devoted to answer not only how the IDPs formation emerged as a new worldwide

problem area, but also how are the notions and practices of human rights and

humanitarian interventions related to this problem reworked, resisted and transformed by

these grassroots organizations. For now, as an initial strategic intervention, I just wanted

to understand how was this problem area was even possible, how it was named and

organized and how it was ultimately link to the production of "truth". And surely, to

suggest some of the "side-effects" of its deployment in Colombia. In conclusion, aligning

myself within a Foucaultian perspective, my analysis also wanted to call attention to

these humanitarian and human rights notions and practices related to the IDPs problem,

as potential sites, together with schools, hospitals, and prisons, for the analysis of the

modern triangular geometry of power composed by the nodes of discipline,

govermentality and sovereignty.

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