RUMORS, RESIDUES AND GOVERNANCE IN THE "BEST CORNER OF SOUTH-AMERICA": A GROUNDED HISTORY OF THE 'HUMAN' LIMIT IN COLOMBIA

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Abstract

Juan Ricardo Aparicio: "Rumors, residues and governance in the "best corner of South-America": a grounded history of the 'human' limit in Colombia"
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Starting from two set of events, the emergence of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in 1997 and the passing of first Law for internally displaced persons in Colombia during the same year, this dissertation analyzes the genealogy, emergence, and mode of functioning of two different but complexly interrelated trajectories. How these two trajectories came to constitute both of these events at this precise moment is the topic of my dissertation The study is based on ethnographic research at key sites of the assemblage (global, national, regional, local), as well as historical research on the genealogies of the most pertinent aspects of both trajectories made possibly by violence but also by the arrival of caring communities and individuals. The dissertation analyzes the convergence of both trajectories within the key decade of the 1990s in Colombia where both a civil society could emerge under the umbrella of constitutional reforms that included for the first time legal frameworks for protecting victim's and strengthening peace agendas amidst the escalation of violence throughout the country. On one side, it traces the emergence and arrival of a particular apparatus or 'assemblage' –that of a

transnational human rights and humanitarian regime(s)—globally deployed to protect the internally displaced persons worldwide and its particular form in one case in Colombia. On the other hand, it focuses on a 'local history' where other types of responses are being currently arranged by peasant organizations interrelated with networks of human rights and humanitarian activism to defend and protect the 'civilian population' in the middle of the armed conflict. Here, the main field research focus of the study is a particular Peace Community which emerged in northwest Colombia in the mid 1990s as a response to both historical and intensified regional armed conflict. Through a close description of the manifold economic, political and social practices deployed by the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, the dissertation concludes by affirming the possibility and actualization of a different protection configured from the local histories of "suffering" and thereby exploring the notion of a 'post-human rights regime'.

Acknowledgments

When thinking about the multiple trajectories and encounters that have brought me to this point, it is almost impossible to trace a unilinear sequence between all of them. I can think of many beginnings and many turning points; but at the end it would be difficult to think of a single trajectory of just one person, author or researcher moving along the road. Although one can think of crucial events are that created the conditions of possibility that brought me up to this point, I am keener to think of a nuanced path full of ambivalences, doubts, fears and messy decisions. I have lived through the tension of moving through these unpredictable trajectories while still believing that one's works matters in many different ways and for different purposes. What at least seems to be more convincing for now is that these last ten years that extend well before my graduate degrees have helped me to confirm what Foucault once argued about the same idea of 'an author'. This is, about the same fiction of an author, of a single autonomous individual that can be able to write something 'new' or 'novel'. I have had the best *compañeros* and *compañeras de andanzas* that have illuminated in many ways my paths and given me comfort in the hardest moments throughout these years. They have been responsible for many of the ideas materialized in this dissertation, in many of the decisions taken throughout these years, and for many and many inspiring and sublime moments of

intense questions and interrogations. Thinking, writing, listening and just enjoying life with others has become a most inspiring characteristic of these ten years. For sure, it has been a wide-opening ten years of experiencing the collective and relational understanding of one's intellectual and affective paths.

It is thus precisely this relational nature of one's path that blurs the sanctified meaning of writing *a* dissertation: the "I" and "me", the central tenets not only of behind the idea of an author, but of larger epistemological and ontological questions sedimented at the core of our own modern institutions. So many names, faces and dialogues. So many conversations, so many walks with others; indeed, difficult to think of "oneself" or a single continuous and homogeneous 'self'. But at the end, as my title page above indicates, there is one author, one voice nurtured by many other voices, and yes, one author. So let me betray this modern configuration and think about the multiple relations by which this dissertation came to be possible. But not only about the dissertation in itself but also and very prominently, about ones' trajectories as well. So here is my way of naming and honoring these encounters which not only have made this dissertation possible, but have made me believe and hopefully act correspondingly to the relational affective space that I have inhabited through these years.

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Preface

While so many times I sat with many commenter's of the Colombian internally displaced population' situation and my own research with a wide range of audiences including officers and staff of international agencies in Geneva of Washington or international staff deployed in the field, lawyers, activists, academics, among others, I have been struck with the some of the most powerful narratives that have emerged through these dialogues. Some of these narratives have been also echoed in informal chats with the average middle and upper class Colombian discussing the country's armed conflict, the denunciation of human rights violation and the fate of victims in relation to the protection safeguarded by the Central Government. These range from the idealization and the romantization of victims and victim's movements through which many national and international audiences, including activists, academics, politicians have found a new 'utopia' right in the middle of one of the most disputed areas in the country, Urabá, named by many as 'the best corner of America'. A second narrative manifests that many of these victim's organizations have been co-opted by NGOs and international agendas of leftist agendas and movements, ordered to follow scripts and demands imposed on them by others, and hence, cannot be trusted. Yet another one is the faith in the law and the institutional building process as the basic milestones for thinking about protection against

human rights and humanitarian violations. Even though one could hear a couple of more narratives, it has always struck me that almost aside from discussing with so many different audiences across places and times, one almost always concludes with this patterned way of thinking about these issues in the contemporary Colombia.

This dissertation does not want to argue about the truthfulness of these narratives In fact, part of what I am trying to argue is the power of these same narratives for channeling desires, protocols, resources, subjectivities, ideas and affects. I want to take them seriously. But I also want to argue along Scott's (2004) key argument about the types of narratives that have been constructed, including the above mentioned ones. And even more, I want to ponder his caution to understand the type of narratives that Colombians but also different audiences might need for thinking about the complexity of our current predicaments. When reading the headlines of our newspapers, one cannot but be amused by the modes in which suddenly a new post-conflict script has been waged today to signal not the end but at least the last steps taken to secure the new consensus of peace and reconciliation. Reports from the National Commission of Reconciliation and Reparation, spectacles in which demobilized paramilitaries are asking forgiveness from their victims, the inauguration of monuments of memory across the country, newspaper headlines and TV commercials informing victims about their rights and the necessary steps they should take to receive humanitarian aid, among other locations, have become central nodes through which the body politic seems to be curing itself in present times.

“Rumors, residues and governance in the “best corner of South-America”: a grounded history of the ‘human’ limit in Colombia”, wants to interrogate critically these intense surfaces where key ontological and epistemological struggles are being waged today. Succinctly, I want to argue that perhaps one of the key decisive disputes we are witnessing today concerns with the question of what is to be human in the sense of what are the basic conditions needed to be counted or to use Nelson’s (2009) intriguing consideration, *reckoned* as one. Much of the dissertation analyses what exactly happens when these conditions are not ‘there’ any more authorizing all sorts of practices including massive humanitarian and human rights operations meant to alleviate these fragmented and wounded subject. And even more, the same administrative consensus better condensed in the promises of new schools, roads, micro-credits, ID cards and hospitals that appear after the massacres and displacements of entire populations. But also, in the political annihilation where those subjects can be dismembered and manipulated post-mortem destined to erase any degree of ‘humanity’ they once had. I argue that some of these practices emerged from a particular understanding of the human that now seem hegemonic which stems from the classic liberal configuration by which anyone is protected under the law and the power of the Central government. Indeed, many of the same practices are also connected with the legacies of the utilitarian prerogative and its weight in those very successful techniques of government connected with the disciplinization of entire populations. Yet others came to be exist through what Quijano (1991) names as the colonial matrix of power that basically classified entire populations clarifying who can be counted as human, who can be killed and who not, how we include

them in our relations, who do we care about and who can be left in zones of social abandonment.

I argue that all of these possibilities do exist and become material through techniques and rationalities of the different government(s) meant to secure a space for the deployment of power. Whether they actually succeed or not, it is not the most important question here. What interest me are the effects they have left in our imaginaries but also in the social practices that have been deployed to fix the wounded, the widows, the orphans, the killed, the displaced, the same space of devastation and hence the possibilities of reparation. The ethnography of institutions presented here analyzes these global designs through the circuits of international and national bureaucracies, the intense translations and mediations they are subject to by a wide range of actors. Far from arriving to smooth territories, this cartography through the institutions wants to problematize a singular and homogenous flow stemming from a central nucleus of power. Hence, what this cartography presents is both the desire for closure and efficiency of many of these projects but also the disorganized, heterogeneous and multiple effects they bring together upon. *Rumors, residues and governance* precisely signal the tense and always incomplete effort between those desires and the fleeting, the unnamable, the excesses and the polyvalent that cannot be captured by those apparatuses. Very much, as the classic essay of Amery (1987) argues, much of the incompleteness of these apparatus stems from the organization and mobilization of 'communities of resentment' whose role in contemporary Colombia is to denounce and interrupt those consensuses made in the name of peace and reconciliation.

I want to argue that one of the most striking and challenging residues left behind by those forms of governance are the ones currently re-worked out in complex and creative ways by self-named 'non-combatant peasant population' of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó. Emerging in the mid 1990s, this Peace Community has become nationally and internationally renowned for tenaciously insisting in the dead, the injustice and the whole structure of States and Para States that converted the whole region of Urabá in a most efficient platform for launching the necro-political State (2003). Here is where this resentment has become a major creative force for declaring the rupture with the Colombian State but also with the whole prophylactic and normalized UN's array of techniques of power and solutions. But also, to interrupt linear conceptions of time and isolated beings cut-across from their relational 'worldiness of the world' (Heidegger 1996). Although the Peace Community is densely analyzed only in the final chapter, much of the previous chapters concern with the vectors that converged in the mid 1990s that created the conditions of possibility for its emergence. This include the rise of human rights and humanitarianism as a new global 'plane of consistency' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the Peace agendas heralded in Colombia during the 1990s by many different actors, the cooperative development model announced by a new way of thinking about development in the 1970-80s and the deep tradition of liberal colonizing peasants that since the 1930s have struggled with large landowners and the State(s) efforts to govern them.

I have chosen to use the concept of 'assemblage' to understand the complex articulation of a wide array of vectors coming from different directions that characterizes the repertories and practices of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó today. Very much, it is an intellectual attempt to specify the wide range of overdeterminations that have sedimented through time in ways of thinking and acting currently embedded in the manifold everyday practices of this assemblage. My theoretical lenses is inspired by both a Foucaultian and Deleuzeian & Guattari analytic with the neomarxist tradition inspired by Gramsci, Laclau & Mouffe, Hall, among others, in order to understand and to follow ontological differences, movements and struggles. And between them, by what I consider to be a concrete analysis of relations and determinations using both acute ethnographic rapport but also by being attentive to the regulation of enunciations and the construction of discursive formations. I have experimented with a form of writing that can better be thought as cartographic following those vectors and their convergence in particular key nodes along this plane of consistency. Utterly, the whole dissertation is meant to honor the complexity of the current conjuncture in order to get us away from those same patterns I have described above. I truly believe that only by navigating through this very chaotic sea, we might come up at least with a better 'archive' from where to tell different stories about Colombia to future generations. And the ultimate warning for not starting this intellectual and affective project has already predicted by the legendary Aureliano Buendia, one of the main characters of the classic García Marquez (2003) *One Hundred Years of Solitude*:

> "[Aureliano (II)] had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano

Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.”

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List of Abbreviations

Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos de Colombia (Association of families of disappeared detainees in Colombia), ASFADDES

Asociación de Bananeros de Colombia (Colombian Association of Banana Growers), AUGURA

Centro de Investigacón en Educación Popular, (Center of Research and Popular Education), CINEP

Centro para el Estudio de la Ley, la JusticIa y la Sociedad (Center for the Study of Law, Justice and Society), DEJUSTICIA

Comisión Nacional de Reconciliación y Reparación (National Commission of Reconciliation and Reparation), CNRR

*Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (*Solidarity Committee with the Political Prisoners), CSPP

Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights), CPDH

Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó (Peace Community of San José de Apartadó), CPSJA

Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement), CODHES

Ejército de Liberación Nacional, (Army of National Liberation), ELN

Ejército de Liberación Popular (Popular Liberation Army), EPL

Emergency Relief Coordinator, ERC

Esperanza, Paz y Libertad (Hope, Peace and Liberty), EPL

Estado de Cosas Inconstitucional, (Unconstitutional Order of Things), ECI

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the FARC

Grupo de Memoria Histórica (Group of Historical Memory), GHM

Grupo Guerrillero de Marzo 19, (March 19 guerrilla group), M-19

Interagency Standing Committee, IASC

International Displacement Monitoring Center, IDMC

International Center for Transitional Justice, ICTJ

International Commission of the Red Cross, ICRC

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), MSF

Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado (the Movement of Victims of Crimes perpetuated by the State), MOVICE

Norwegian Refugee Council, NRC

Organization of International Migration, OIM

Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, (National Plan for Rehabilitation), PNR

Proceso de Comunidades Negras, (Process of Black Communities), PCN

Proyecto Colombia Nunca más (Colombian Project Never more), CNM

Secretary General for Internal Displacement, SG

Unión Nacional de Oposición (National Union of Opposition), UNO

United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF

United Nations Development Program, UNDP

United Nations High Commission of Refugees, UNHCR

World Food Program, WFP

World Health Organization, WHO

Introduction

We had finally arrived. For almost two days of long walks of 12 hours on February 2008 through the steep and muddy paths of the mountain range of the *Serranía del Abibe* located in the northwestern corner of Colombia together with almost one hundred people coming from national and international organizations, we had finally made it. We unpacked and pitched our tents in a clear area located right next to the small, improvised chapel where the corpse of one of the leaders of the *Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó* (Peace Community of San José de Apartadó; from now on, following the Spanish translation, I will use the acronym CPSJA), had been found brutally murdered together with his two children on February 21, 2005. The corpses were found by a commission organized by this same organization to search for them during those dark days. When the commission arrived to recover the corpses, soldiers from the 17th military Brigade were already there; so too were the machetes stained with blood and apparently used during the abhorrent massacre which has "travelled" through networks of solidarity and human rights activism around the world.

Three years later we arrived at the exact place where the massacre had occurred; the small chapel was covered with photographs of *Luis Eduardo* in many of the

international rallies he had been to. Next to the photographs were the Italian flags of *PACE* (Peace) I had seen in many photographs of antiglobalization movement sit-ins in Europe and the United States, and right in the center, a small altar, some candles and a catholic cross were all that the room contained. Soon after we had settled in, the whole group gathered around the altar. Many of the *acompañantes*[1] were from Italian and Spanish municipalities that had been giving funds to, and had raised awareness in their own countries about, the CPSJA's dire situation; others were from NGOs permanently settled in the region such as Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Fellowship for Reconciliation (FOR), and still others were from organizations such as Chefs without Borders and German *acompañantes* now living in Portugal proclaiming to be advancing a self-sustainable and autonomous communitarian project. After we sat around the altar, *Padre* Giraldo, a key figure of the human rights movement in Colombia and protagonist in many senses in this story I am beginning to narrate, began to explain the events that led to the massacre which had been confirmed by the Colombian government/justice department in recent years.

During the small ceremony, we heard about the history of the CPSJA and how it had been persecuted and threatened by all the armed actors present in the region including the guerrilla forces, the paramilitaries and the armed forces. Padre Giraldo remembered how the same day he was assassinated, according to some survivors, Luis Eduardo was able to perceive that the whole area was occupied by the heavily armed men and that the whole atmosphere felt "tense". Before an armed group stopped him together with the group of peasants he was walking with, he told someone to run away and inform

other families about the presence of the armed group in the area. They were able to escape to a nearby hamlet visited by the same armed group some hours later. That was the last time they saw him together with his children. And there he was three years later, photographed, in the middle of the altar next to the candles, together with the image of his five year old son. Some of his last words he gave in an interview several days before his assassination told about the imminent danger they were facing. “We might be talking today, but we don’t know if tomorrow we will be alive”, were his words. During the ceremony, a deep silence spread throughout the afternoon just to be interrupted by some Salvadorian church songs of the 1970s brought by the *padre* which sang of how their own struggle could be identified with the suffering of Jesus. I had been visiting the CPSJA for several years but I hadn’t gone so far into the *Serranía* to visit and mourn the famous leader. But the pilgrimage was designed not only for remembering the massacre but also for accompanying some families that were coming back to their abandoned houses. Approximately ten years ago, they had to flee from the combat to the lower plains to settle in the small hamlet San José de Apartadó. Through a self-managed return orchestrated almost 6 months previously by the CPSJA ten families were in effect proclaiming that they were not going to increase the almost two and a half million “internally displaced persons” (IDP) that have fled to the larger cities in Colombia since 1985.

They were coming back to occupy the houses that had been constructed, and to harvest the crops that had been grown by groups of peasants commissioned to secure food provisions some months before these families’ return. This same place of

devastation and massacre was livable again and the altar remembering the dead seemed to be the central axis from where new life-projects that had been interrupted by violence could be launched once more time. But as many of the local peasants informed us in the sessions after the ceremony, new threats and strange groups of people were starting to be seen again in the area. Despite the bad news that seems to be recurrent in these areas, the families and the whole pilgrimage that had been organized almost six months earlier were "reinhabiting the space of devastation " (Das 2007a: 217). As such, they were taking the opposite decision from most of the Colombian IDPs in recent years which has been to run away collectively or individually to larger urban settlements. Once there, they either fill out temporarily soccer stadiums or coliseums while they wait for government assistance, or hide in the anonymity of the outskirts of the larger cities of Colombia. Coincidentally, while the first official legislation for the IDPs in Colombia, Law 387 of 1997, regulated the necessary steps that this population should follow once forcibly displaced, on March 23 of the same year the CPSJA emerged as an alternative for organized displaced peasants to remain in their territory, defying the para-States that attempt to displace them in order to control the territory. Two different interrelated events: Law 387 of 1997 and the emergence of the CPSJA.

This particular experience as well as many others I had when working closely with the CPSJA and the larger phenomenon of internal displacement in Colombia in recent years, inspired the intellectual work which materializes in this dissertation. In basic terms, I can define my central interrogation as follows: what are the conditions of possibility of these two different but interrelated events, the passing of Law 387 of 1997

and the emergence of the CPSJA in March 23 of 1997. My inquiries, however varied and diverse, can be gathered around Foucault's (1977) classic description of his research program of a 'history of the present'. That is precisely my aim here, to dwell within a specific conjuncture and to understand the multiple and complex determinations that made these two events possible, in the first case, a national Law for internal displacement and in the latter case the CPSJA's emergence during those years. What I seek to analyze is what I would denominate *vectors* which came from many trajectories, organizing and ultimately producing these events in the way they did. Overall, both of these events, the Law and the creation of the CPSJA, should be considered as two nodes within larger varied "planes of consistency" created by concepts and their different actualizations through space and time (Deleuze and Guattari 1993). While the first node exists within a larger plane of other actualizations such as those of human rights, humanitarianism and refugee law, the second one exists within other actualizations such as the peasant organization tradition in Colombia, the influence of radical religious agendas and its articulation with larger networks of solidarity and activism, among others. In a very abstract way, these vectors are simultaneously statements, discourses, emerging visibilities and articulations; they are both discursive and non-discursive and always material however incorporeal and diffuse (Foucault 1998a, Deleuze 1988).

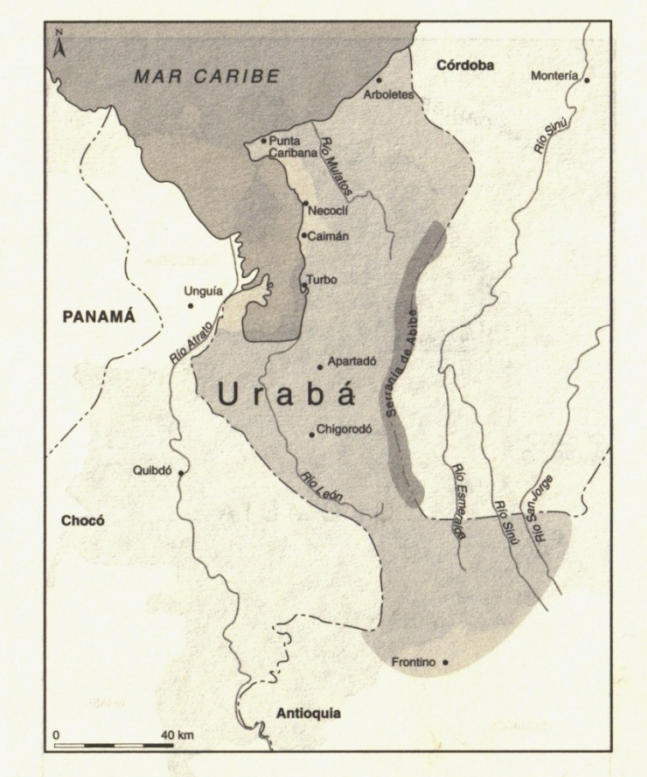
On a very general level, both of them exist and came to be possible by 'violence' and the different ways in which various 'collectives' answered to this predicament. A new problem (the IDP) that didn't quite fit within the larger international law before the 1990s came to exist through a whole convergence of actors and wars characteristic of the Post-

Cold War. Meanwhile, the CPSJA emerged in response to the actualization of other vectors responsible for converting the whole region of the Serranía and the larger region of Urabá into one of the most *violent* areas in the country according to figures published since the mid 1960s (García 1996, Suárez 2007, Ortiz, 2007, Madariaga 2006, Botero 1990, Ramírez 1997, Comisión Andina de Juristas 1994, Romero 2004, Uribe 1992). Here, legal and illegal capital ventures and corresponding political allegiances with powerful armies present in the region have been responsible for writing one of the bloodiest chapters of the history of violence of Colombia. Not coincidentally, the 'best corner of America', as it has been voiced by many attempting to benefit from its geostrategic location, has turned into a nightmare for its inhabitants[2]. Other vectors that linger behind both nodes are those coming from the international networks of solidarity, human rights and humanitarianism and their concern for the 'suffering stranger' (Bornstein and Redfield, 2008). Others are those vectors of colonizing peasants struggling for their autonomy and their own life-projects since the beginning of the twentieth century, defying landowners, armies, government agencies and drug-traffickers, among many others (Guzman, Fals Borda and Umaña 2005, 2005a, Fals Borda 1986, Le Grand 1993, Sánchez and Meertens, 1998, Sánchez 1976, 1977).

The physical and geological conditions present in the region have also captured the attention of many actors ("the best corner of Southamerica") (see map 1 and 2). Indeed, as I discuss in Chapter 2, the physical and geological conditions of the region that dispel the possibilities of hurricanes, the larger plateau of the central region appropriated for large-scale plantations, the number of rivers flowing through the Serranía de Abibe downwards and its location right next to the Gulf of Urabá, were also decisive vectors at

least for introducing the large-scale banana exportation industry from mid-century. Certainly, these were the same vectors that pushed the colonizing peasants of the 1960s to the borders of the larger plateau right where the Serranía begins to rise. Once there, as one ex-officer working with the Dutch development projects mentioned in Chapter 4, they would reproduce a mountainous agriculture typical of their original areas from where they were expelled by the political violence of *La Violencia* (Personal Communication, February 2008). Today, for administrative and environmental purposes, the specific region in which the CPSJA is located corresponds to the central sub-region of Urabá which extends over the departments of Antioquia, Córdoba and Chocó. According to *Corpourabá* (acronym for the Corporation for the Sustainable Development of Urabá), this subregion is characterized by a rich and varied physiography of tropical vegetation. 11% of the area is used for commercial agriculture geared towards exportation, 18% corresponds to inundated soils and swamps, 36% is used for cattle farming and 36% corresponds to the tropical forest of the *Serranía del Abibe*. The main urban centers are five: Apartadó, Mutatá, Chigorodó, Turbo and Carepa (Map 2). Today, the total population of this central region is 370,311 inhabitants distributed between the urban (247,701) and rural (122,610) areas. The levels of poverty and misery in the region correspond to 89.1% of the total population.

Map 1, Colombia and the Urabá region, Apartadó (From CPSJA 2008)



Map 2 The Antioquean Urabá. Main urban centers, rivers and the Serranía del Abibe (From Steiner 2000: 127)

Microbes, hurricanes, plagues, rivers, cacao trees, butterflies, maize and many other non-human actors do have a central role in this story. These also have attracted and frustrated the interests and desires of many actors. The difficult and complex articulation between these vectors (human and non-human) and others that I describe through the dissertation becomes the argumentative strategy of this dissertation. I explore the conditions of possibility of a territory disputed by legal and illegal capital ventures, stained by violence in recent years through massacres, displacements and threats, but also of the pilgrimage, the altar, the 'white t-shirts', the Salvadorian song, the law, the IDP certificate, the decision to return to the same hamlet left behind and the same emergence of the CPSJA in the mid 1990s. How these complex assemblages came to be possible right here and at this precise moment is the topic of my dissertation.

Analyzing conjunctures and following vectors

In this sense, I am describing and following simultaneously the encounter between human rights and humanitarian apparatuses, practices and techniques employed across a problem-space of international, national, regional and grassroots organizations, and those experiences of human tragedy and suffering. As such, the study of this encounter could also be thought to be an attempt to study how the state(s) operates in these "marginal" areas and experiences, through which (different) trajectories, discourses, practices, desires, rationalities, visibilities and invisibilities (Das and Poole 2004). Thus, I am making reference in general and abstract terms to those machines that tend to capture and codify matter in specific forms (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). By saying this, I am referring more to *a process* than to an apparatus or a specific entity (Trouillot 2001). According to Trouillot , the "materiality [of the State] will reside much less in institutions

than in the reworking of processes and relations of power so as to create new spaces for the deployment of power" (Ibid: 127). Here power is understood in the sense as the power to code, axiomatize, normalize and regulate both matter and speed throughout the problem-space constituted and created around the IDP. Thus, the 'signature of the state' comes to be materialized in those white jeeps, shirts and flags, ID cards, reports, and statistics, but also in what gets to be namable and enunciable, in the organization of a discourse, for example in the rights-based language used in the name of the IDP, and also in those desires and local constructions of the State (Das 2004, Gupta and Fergusson 1996, Nelson 2004, Taussig 1992a). In this vision where there is nothing like a core or center, which does not mean to evacuate a systematic and serious interrogation of power relations, the task is then to follow how it operates: through what type of channels, locations, discourses and relays; and what are its functions and finalized effects, and specifically, how it creates new spaces for the deployment of power (Foucault 2000, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, Trouillot 2001, Arextaga 2000, Abrams 1988, Mitchell 2002, Sharma and Gupta 2006, Vincent 2002, Das and Poole 2004, Nugent and Vincent 2007).

For Das (2007: 183), precisely because the 'signature of the state' indicates an always unfinished project, "it is best observed at the margins, but these margins are not simply peripheral places- they run into the body of the polity as rivers through the territory". The potential of this argument is to precisely track these state-practices in their peripheries and capillarity and in their success in making any problem governable or not[3]. For Soguk (1999: 45), who studies state-making practices behind refugee operations, "the state here will be precisely the convergent effect of both discourse and performance

contingently produced and transformed through complex sets of practices across time and place". It is precisely here where all those white jeeps, white flags, ID cards, purified water tanks but also military and paramilitary road or river blocks among other similar crystals of *state-substance*, have an enormous relevance in this analysis. In these peripheral materialities, the State gets repeated, performed, desired, disrupted and actualized, resulting in the same construction, imagination and maintenance of the idea of the State with capital "S" (Abrams 1988, Coronil 2005, Comaroff and Comaroff 2004, Gupta 1995, Jaguaribe 2001, Lomnitz 2001, Nelson, 1997, Taussig 1992a, Torpey 2000, Soguk 1999).

Thus, against the argument of the "State absence" used to explain the escalation of violence in the marginal areas in Colombia by many commentators, I focus precisely on the same State formation processes and its correlation with the spread and escalation of violence in these regions (Gonzales, Bolivar y Velásquez 2005). These peripheries are the relays and focal points where the presence of the State is condensed, repeated, disrupted and actualized on a daily basis; its main outcome is the creation of an atmosphere for the deployment and dispute of power. But precisely here is where these margins also problematize the classical formation of modern states based on the sacred triad of Territory, Authority and Rights (Sassen 2006). Not only for the transnational and privatized interests of capital in this region, but also for the human rights and humanitarian discourses and practices that blur the conventional meanings of sovereignty, these margins also inform us of the complex ways in which the sacred notion of the Westphalian modern state is currently being reworked and reconfigured. Thus, while the

widespread use of the IDP certificate dictated by Law 387 allows the Central government to dictate rhythms and terms, and to allocate resources, the self-identification of the CPSJA as a 'non-combatant civil population' brings together other sorts of practices and effects that directly disrupt this monopoly of the central Goverment.

Second, I analyze the history of these complex assemblages such as that of the CPSJA, referring to the multiple determinations, histories and events that made it possible. What are the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the CPSJA here, right at this moment, and through what type of actors? In fact, I 'eventalize' them to/and show how they are neither natural nor mechanical responses to cumulative effects (Restrepo 2007). Elsewhere in this dissertation, I describe other complex assemblages such as the *Proceso de Comunidades Negras* (Process of Black Communities; following the Spanish translation, I will use the acronym PCN), a network of grassroots Afro-descendant organizations and leaders emerging in the Pacific region struggling to defend their own collective life-projects (Escobar 2009). I compare a different trajectory of how these and other different vectors converge in the case of the PCN[4] and that of the CPSJA. Both of these are the ongoing outcomes of multiple determinations where 'local histories' of suffering and marginalization are articulated to discourses of a "non-combatant civilian population" heralded by the Geneva Conventions or "structural racism" by the 2001 Durban World Conference on Racism and Xenophobia; where place-making practices materialized in "community economies" that acknowledge a space of social interdependency and self-formation become strategically integrated or resignified into

channels of international 'fair trade' (Gibson-Graham 2006, Escobar 2008), among other complex relations.

While I advance through my dissertation, it is clear that I am also following particular convergences and expressions of 'the political' understood as the continuation and survival of 'antagonistic social practices' (Laclau 2005, 2006, 1996, Laclau and Mouffe 1986, Mouffe 1993, 2005, Butler, Laclau and Zizek 2000). This is a particular understanding of 'the political' deployed by social movements or patterns of mobilizations that have emerged over the identification of *different* significations of the human subject, nature, time, democracy, justice and progress (Escobar, Alvarez and Dagnino 2001, see special volume on meaning-making movements *Anthropological Quarterly*, 81-1). As the whole tradition working along the decisive rupture of Saussure (1945) with the previous theories of language has shown (e.g. Levi-strauss 1979), this is why meanings are important, because they orient 'us' in the world, creating borders between 'me' and 'you', 'us' and 'them', between whom can I marry and whom I can't, etc. And that is precisely why 'culture' becomes a terrain of struggle (Hall 1996, 1981). Nevertheless, although I focus my attention on the mobilization of this *difference* by grassroots organizations, activists and other actors, I don't want to give up the possibility that many other 'antagonistic social practices' are also practiced and deployed where no organizations such as these are present. As Orrantia's (2009) analysis of the devastation of towns by paramilitary action in the Caribbean coast has shown, the endless 'silences' and the lack of any 'monuments of memory' can also be seen as escaping the desires of the armed actors to control the territory. Even in the same region of Urabá, right in the

urban settlement of Apartadó 10km away from the CPSJA, Madariaga (2006) has also alerted us to be sensitive to these other every-day practices of resistance that do not "make the highlights" (Scott 1985). Hence, I want to make clear that although I will be moving through a particular understanding of 'the political', I do not want to neglect these other 'antagonistic social practices' that emerge in the silences, the rumors and the fleeting.

Here, I consciously join the growing literature on the history of peasant struggles in Colombia (Fals Borda 1979a, 1984, 1986, Ramirez 2001, Archila 2003, Sanchez 1976, 1977 Sanchez and Meertens 1989, Zamosc 1986, Sanchez y Peñaranda 2007), to understand the ongoing tensions between the State codification processes and the deviation from it by these minoritarian movements (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). On a particular level, this has also been one of the driving questions on the basic contradiction between the *popular* and the *power bloc* (Laclau 1978, Hall 1981). It is precisely in this tension where I set the difficult interrelation between the IDP and the CPSJA: that is, in the national government's and international agencies' attempt to name and govern this new problem and the sort of practices that the latter assemblage is putting forward to define their own responses to the predicaments of living in the middle of the armed conflict. I also include analysis of other peasant movements worldwide (Scott 1985, Edelman 2005) that have analyzed the coping strategies (e.g. *everyday weapons of the weak*) of peasants to new challenges, difficulties and opportunities. Albeit new tensions and power differentials, I am particularly interested in following the actualization of a 'community-form' guarding against the imposition of vertical 'State-form' as one of the

most fundamental strategies of these patterns of mobilization (Dussel 2006, Zibechi 2006, Clastres 1994). I also discuss the influence of religion and radical church agendas on these particular trajectories. The whole literature and tradition of 'millenarian movements' including the tropes of 'martyrdom', 'sacrifice' and 'pilgrimage' occupy a central role in this dissertation (Price, Nonini and Fox-Tree 2008, Aparicio and Blaser 2008, Fals Borda 1979a, 1984, 1986).

Certainly, as Zamosc's (1986) classic study of peasant movements in Colombia describes, government actions have been taken to counter and normalize the radical nature of those deviant peasants that wished to follow the example of other peasant upheavals in the continent. Simultaneously, the same State institutions had in some cases initiated campaigns of surveys, observations and commissions in order to have a better diagnosis about this particular population (Silva 2006). But in other cases, the same Government initiatives have turned in the opposite direction by opening spaces for more antagonistic agendas of peasant movements struggling vis a vis the same Goverment and the national elites and landowners. Hence, I want to also understand the complex relations that arise when the same State codification traverses these movements and gives them new languages, interlocutors and atmospheres beyond the simple-minded concepts of cooptation, colonization or neo-colonialism. Instead of pointing at clear and finalized visions concerning these outcomes, I prefer to dwell into the realms of difference, events and the becoming where no final outcome can be prefigured. Here, the event destroys and fragments the identical and homogeneous repetition and deployment of any of these vectors. The descriptive nature of this dissertation is dedicated to following how these

vectors were actualized in each and every moment through the multiple frictions, deviations and antagonisms they carried and helped to create.

As I already mentioned, I am interested in following the convergences in the mid-1990s that created the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the CPSJA. In the history of Colombia and in the history of the Urabá region where this assemblage is located, this same decade saw the escalation of violence connected to the beginnings of the counter-subversive operations that spread throughout the region confronting the nucleus of political parties, organizations, leaders and sympathizers of left-wing agendas and rationalities. Not only Urabá, but other regions with a presence of popular organizations witnessed the arrival of the notorious *beheaders* (*mochacabezas*) and paramilitary groups which inundated these regions with fear, terror and ghostly presences of what once was "there". Massive displacements and massacres were some of the material expressions often justified (at least in Urabá) as cleaning the territory of a communist threat and ultimately defending State sovereignty (Ortiz 2007, Suárez 2007, Madariaga 2006, García 1996, Ramirez 1997, Uribe 1992, 2000, Comisión Andina de Juristas 1992). But in the long run, as I show and as many other authors have also highlighted, this recent conjuncture was connected with a long tradition of regional struggles between capitalists and peasants, land owners and migrant workers. These confrontations were sometimes translated into political antagonism but most often they were covered or dissimulated by a simple confrontation between the Conservative and Liberal Party manifested in the period that came to be known as *La Violencia* of the mid twentieth century (Sánchez 2007, Pécaut 2007).

Indeed, some of the same cultural grammars of the massacre (Uribe 2004) or what Guzmán, Fals Borda and Umania (2005) rightly name as a complete and complex thanatology that signals how peasants should be killed and how their bodies should be manipulated post-mortem and be publicly displayed during this infamous period, emerged again in this new conjuncture during the 1990s (e.g. Luis Eduardo's massacre). Some of the same conflicts between the mid-century conservative paramilitary's *pájaros* and the famous liberal peasant's guerrilla related to the assassination of political contenders as well as the rationalities behind their confrontations were repeated in the nineties. Now they were actualized in Urabá at least in the articulation between paramilitaries and the capital enterprises against guerrillas and their poles of influence (peasant colonization areas). In this sense, this 1990s conjuncture is deeply connected with previous cycles of violence in the region which have been analyzed and described by an abundant literature on violence (among many others, Sánchez 1977, 1976, Sánchez and Meertens 1988, Sánchez and Peñaranda 2007, Uribe 2007, Guzman, Fals Borda and Umaña 2005, 2005a, Le Grand 1998, Fals Borda 1986, Gonzales, Bolivar y Velásquez 2005). Thus, although my focus is localized in Urabá and is temporarily situated in the 1990s, I also follow other vectors that connect this particular history with long standing processes that have even shaped the history of the region and the larger country since the sixteenth century.

Also, as I describe in Chapter 2, the 1990s also saw the simultaneous emergence of peace agendas, movements and programs heralded by National State institutions, the

central Goverment, grassroots organizations, international organizations, the church, NGOs and the same armed actors. For García-Durán (2006), this certainly was the 'peace decade' in Colombia notwithstanding the different agendas promoted by diverse actors and the escalation of the armed conflict to unprecedented levels at a national level. As I already described, the Urabá region became one of these areas. Demobilization processes, peace agreements, armistices, national rallies and the mushrooming of peace movements across the territory signaled the creation of a highly heterogeneous 'civil society' that made visible the 'victim' of the armed conflict as a new national concern within particular scripts created by the new Constitution. The Goverment signed international conventions on human rights and humanitarian law, ratified for the first time the existence of a multicultural and plurinational state, created the first law for IDPs, and allocated special human rights units across different dependencies. Several Rapporterus and Representatives were invited from the UN Commission of Human rights to visit the country and monitor the 'human rights' situation in the country. For the first time, a 'culture of rights' promoted by the new Constitution and its articulation to international law became the main asset that 'victims' of all different sorts of violence (State's negligence, forced displacement, discrimination, etc.) had for the first time. To sum up: the CPSJA and the Law didn't emerged as an automatic response to violence; they also emerged within and consciously against many of these scripts and desires.

Encounters and Itineraries

Thus, through different interrogations emerging throughout years of fieldwork and casual encounters, dialogues and observations with different rhythms, pauses and intense

explorations, I have been following the white t-shirts, jeeps, flags and posters, among other memorabilia of international humanitarian organizations and human rights activism, as nodes where many connections come together. Together with the more 'classical' effort to carry out an in-depth ethnography in particular sites such as the different villages of the CPSJA and other grassroots organizations, I have also attended meetings with ambassadors and state officials, National Afrocolombian Assemblies, National Conferences on Internal Displacement and their Rights, sessions of the University of the Resistance and particular meetings with leaders of the National Meetings of Victims, and the International Tribunal of the People, among others. In fact, the same nature of this highly complex assemblage described throughout the dissertation has obliged me to submerge and follow these unpredictable connections. Thus, throughout my fieldwork, I have also been able to carry out in-depth interviews with officers and staff of humanitarian and human rights organizations temporarily or permanently deployed in field operations and also working in headquarter offices in Bogotá, Cali and Medellin.

I have also encountered officers coming from organizations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Doctors without Borders, the Fellowship for Reconciliation, Peace Brigades International, Washington Office for Latin America, Chefs without Borders, several Spanish municipalities, the Project Counseling Service, National and International Lawyer's Collectives, and the Swiss Interchurch Aid, among others. In the effort of chasing those vectors that connect different nodes in complex ways along the same problem-space, I also visited and interviewed officers of several international agencies in Washington and Geneva, including the Norwegian Refugee

Council, Doctors without Borders, the Brookings Institution, American Friend Service Committee, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, among others. Other nodes are those scenes I still remember of more than fifty internally displaced persons (IDPs), both women and men, working behind industrial weaving machines in the outskirts of Bogotá. The extraordinary number of reports, declarations and national and international organizations' public documents circulating through the internet and staffed in offices simultaneously in Bogota, Washington D.C. and Geneva, and also, those 'humanitarian kits' given by national agencies to IDPs, are some of the different nodes I have been connecting throughout these years.

As 'crystals of social substance', as Marx (1976/1996: 128) once called them in his classic analysis of commodities, I analyze these materialities as nodes where multiple desires, projects, expectations and meanings converge in complex ways. From the water filter tanks donated by Doctors without Borders and Oxfam for the abandoned houses inhabited again when families returned to live under the constant threat of a new armed incursion, to the photocopies of official documents that certify their forced displacement pasted in posters of IDPs asking for help in the corner-streets of Bogotá, I investigate how these came to be possible and what types of associations these condense. Most of the dissertation analyzes conjunctures responsible for articulating discourses and statements into material practices that can be studied ethnographically. But against a tendency to remain at the "deterministic" level, I also follow and register the multiple tensions, divergences and conflicts that arise from how these discourses and objects are

formed, organized and actualized. As Das's (2007: 163) brilliant analysis of the textual State practices affirms, "(…) once the State institutes the forms of governance through technologies of writing, it simultaneously institutes the possibility of forgery, imitation and the mimetic performance of its power". This means that one also needs to keep on record how it moves and is actualized in different locations through the 'everyday' and the 'ordinary' registers. This emphasis on practices and not only on predicable and one-way determination, ultimately sets my dissertation at the crossroads of what can be defined as the "ethnography of violence" and the "ethnography of human rights and humanitarianism" converging around my basic and simple question on the conditions of possibility of the Law and this complex assemblage (CPSJA). By using these labels, "ethnography of violence" and the "ethnography of human rights and humanitarianism", I am signaling that I am "doing" the following things.

The ethnographies of human rights and humanitarianism

With the label of the "ethnography of human rights and humanitarianism", I intend to raise concern over the problem-space constituted by the different trajectories, prescriptions, qualifications, moral judgments and ethical projects concerning the question of 'what it is to be human'; that is, not only the question of the human in itself, but simultaneously, the 'human' that needs to be counted, labeled, protected, relieved and alleviated but also, empowered (Cheah 2006, Nelson 2004, Collier and Lakoff 2004, Myers 2005, Nguyen 2005, Feldman 2006, Hyndman 2000). Thus, I am exploring a problem-space defined as "an ensemble of questions and answers [i.e., the question of what it is to be human] around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well

as ideological-political stakes) hangs" (Scott 2004: 4). I want to be clear that although the question of "what it is to be human" orients this particular dissertation, it is far from obvious that it has also been one of the larger questions of western philosophy and in particular its chapter of phenomenology (Derrida 2005, Cheah 2006). The same questions of 'what it is to be human' or what is 'a being' has raised immense debates that have problematized (for instance, Marx, Heidegger, Nietzsche) the same axiomatic of a universal and eternal essence that I cannot and do not confront here except in my conclusions. But here, I prefer instead to dwell on one particular problem-area of this larger plane which is possible through the emergence and long-lasting recurrence of the care for the "suffering stranger" and the multiple diagrams of power, rationalities and techniques of power it launches for protecting, producing and governing of a "human" subject: the emergence of the IDP and the CPSJA.

Indeed, when confronted with the number of multiple answers that I have registered throughout these years, ranging from IDP certificates to water tanks, international accompaniment in the field to the numbers of reports written for national and international campaigns seeking to raise awareness for the protection of IDPs, one can no longer think of a unique answer to the same question. But as Scott (2004) argues, there seem to be particular questions emerging and possible within specific configurations that define the type of answers they beget. Much of my interest lies in following how present-day humanitarian operations and human rights agendas are prefigured by a particular understanding of the "human" subject that do have political but also ontological and epistemological stakes and on the particular theories of time, caring,

mourning and overcoming they encompass (Das 2008, Derrida 2007, Boff 2002, Cortés Severino 2007). Thus, in a complex approach, quoting Biehl, Good and Kleinman (2007: 5) the study of this 'human' subject as both "a strategy of existence and a material and means of governance helps to recast assumptions about the working of collective and institutions". Many 'things' are being done in the name of human rights and humanitarianism by a wide plethora of actors including religious communities, lawyers' organizations, grassroots organizations, military units, among many others. On one level, when confronted with this multiplicity, Bornstein and Redfield (2008) advice researchers on the need to trace the different genealogies of approaches, dilemmas and practices characteristic of the "human rights" legacy from those of the "humanitarian" one. Both scholars made a call for anthropologists working in these problem-spaces to make clear these distinctions and identify their effect on the type of "things" that each approach includes. Thus, from those more secular approaches to others that ratify their religious and almost mystical precedence, to others implementing development-oriented responses and others struggling for a more 'presentist' action (Bornstein and Redfield 2008), it is clear enough, as part of my ethnography exemplifies throughout the dissertation, the various and different things that each approach (human rights and humanitarian) or even the combination of both approaches[5], is actually 'doing' in the field.

Hence, my 'cartography' of how these objects, projects and desires are repeated and actualized in different locales, whether it is the CPSJA, the rivers of the South Pacific region, the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) offices in Geneva or Bogota and the State institution dedicated to coordinating the national protection program

for IDPs, Acción Social (AS), analyzes the axiomatizations and codifications executed by key institutional poles of this problem-space but also their deviance and porosity. Part of my task maps out the different rationalities and practices that hang behind different interventions and practices made in the name of "human rights" and "humanitarianism" (Bornstein and Redfield, 2008). But my interest lies as well in how they travel, move, are mediated and encounter other rationalities taking them to different and differentiated territories, to simultaneously trace how these are continuously disentangled and deterritorialized at every possible moment in order to find new vectors and territories not only different but differentiated (Deleuze 1994). Perhaps the metaphors of movement and emplacement can better describe what I want to do here: to put these objects, discourses and practices back in motion, both in temporal and geographical sense, in order to trace how they are endlessly de-territorialized and re-territorialized in new directions through different encounters. But also, to trace the multiple frictions, tensions and divergences that arise every time they are actualized in different regions of the same problem-space.

My description does not start in the 'local' nor the 'global', but with where actors are at a specific moment, not as the source of actions, but again, as the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming towards them (Latour 2005: 46). Hence, many of the chapters in this dissertation start or take decisive turning points from anecdotes, dialogues and observations I made along this itinerary. The dissertation has a clear first-person voice behind most of the narrations combined with remembrances and memories from my interviewees at these key sites. Why the CPSJA "here" and not in other places? Why not before? Why now? What are the previous vectors that made them possible? What

were their conditions of possibility? How have they organized, connected and mediated these new vectors of 'human rights and humanitarianism' in different directions and territories? Perhaps, an 'ethnography of global connections' as Tsing (2005: 3) explains, is one which is concerned with and sensitive to the unexpected and unstable aspects of global interactions. For the purposes of ethnography I am presenting here, this means that one doesn't jump or move fast in order to arrive at conclusions. One goes slowly, recuperating and describing every repetition and actualization in every node within this problem-space. This means to get away from the homogeneous, linear and dominant flows and to get back into the convoluted, disorganized and chaotic 'sea' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). At the end, this is perhaps what a 'dense ethnography' should be all about, of describing, describing and describing the swarming of differences along each and every vector. This is simultaneously a history of power and intensities, weaknesses and capacities to assemble forms and disorganize others. But it is also a story of historicities that traces the connections that have structured and striated assemblages within this problem-space into particular forms.

Through the chapters, I follow how the prescriptions, qualifications, moral judgments and ethical projects concerned with the question of 'what it is to be human' moves desiring to organize 'matter' but also on how it gets actualized or emplaced every time in a different and differentiated territory. These are the two extremes of the same problem-space, the global designs and the local histories, not in the sense of a scalar hierarchy of one over the other, but in the capacity of each one to affect more moral rules, conducts, behaviors, etc. In this analytic, the end result cannot be fore grounded nor

predicted. In fact, the same deployment of the question through the organization of forms of knowledge and diagrams of power is one which constantly enters into other relations of force, relays and multiple frictions. Thus, it is not surprising that most of the leaders of these complex assemblages usually use a rights-based language to qualify their struggles and expectations; what is more surprising, for sure, is how these enunciations are connected or actually make sense within the 'local histories' in which they are embedded. That is the case of how an old woman from the CPSJA used the example of Jesus Christ and his family as one of the first histories of internally displaced persons (IDPs) forced to flee permanently across different territories. On another level, it is no coincidence that in Colombia and in Urabá the scripts of the human rights and humanitarian agenda have been introduced by government agencies and projects; but very often, after their previous appropriation and elaboration by radical and left-wing agendas and 'travelling theories' of the Communist party, popular movements, radical priests and also political exiles (Tate 2005, Romero, Flor Alba 2001, Romero 2001)

Latour (2005:204) suggested that no place dominates enough to be global and no place is self-contained in the local. My interest lies precisely in how each and every node of this network becomes a highly complex assemblage where 'local histories' and 'global designs' become blurred and open to mutual interactions. In the case of the CPSJA, following Escobar's (2007: 198) notion of "autopoietic entities one could think of –as self-producing and autonomous entities whose basic internal organization, despite important changes, is preserved in their interaction with their environments through structural coupling". As described in chapters 2 and 3, the local actualizations of the

human rights and humanitarian regime do not start from, nor arrive at, smooth territories. The latter are already striated by previous machines, desires and vectors. What interest me here then is how this regime interacts with these previous vectors, how it starts with new processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and how it gets selectively incorporated in the CPSJA (e.g., Jesus Christ and the IDPs).

Quite often, leaders and members of the CPSJA told me about famous leaders that defied the violent arrival of legal and illegal armed groups to their territory. Memories of old maroon leaders escaping the *plantaciones* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or liberal rebels running away from the persecution of *pájaros* (famous death squads of the 1950s aligned with the Conservative Party) in the 1950s, constantly appeared in the narratives given to explain how their present struggles are linked with previous events. In similar ways, the current repertoires of leaders of the CPSJA constituted by a rights-based language resonate with those deployed by peasant organizations, leftist movements and development projects in the 1970s and 1980s present in the region. In fact, these narrations, in similar ways to the ID cards and posters of international humanitarian organizations and human rights activism, took me in unpredictable and surprising directions. Through the dissertation, and with the help of archival research from a wide range of sources and many conversations had with members of both assemblages, I just tried to follow these narrations and to see how they refer to those previous vectors.

It neither will be surprising, as several works have argued (Scott 1998, Fergusson 1990, Redfield 2000, Escobar 1995, Mosse 2005) following the key observation made by

Foucault (1978) on the ‘failure’ of the prison system to recuperate ‘criminals’, that their actualization, outcomes and results were never predictable from the blueprint initially offered by Bentham and his followers. Quite the contrary, these works find that the results of these schemes and diagrams to bring prosperity, participation, development, or rehabilitation, actually brought ‘secondary effects’ in different directions: the intensification of bureaucratic governance, new processes of subjection and subjectification and the establishment of whole new regimes of truth, among others (Mitchell 2000). Chapter 4 focuses on some of the side-effects of particular development projects deployed in the 1970s and 1980s in the region where the CPSJA would emerge one decade later. But the argument of how these operations are never stable or coherent does not only refer to their unpredictable ‘side effect’. In fact, as Das (2007: 167) suggests, it is always important to keep in mind that the forms of governance are constituted through sporadic, intermittent contact, rather than through an effective system of surveillance of subjects. Foucault (2007: 303-304) himself, in his lectures on neo-liberalism was suspicious about the ultimate coherence and affectivity of these diagrams of power in this new milieu for uniforming, identifying and individualizing subjects. His notes on these neoliberal forms of governance refer not to a technology of power developed along the axis of discipline and normalization, requiring a mechanism of general normalization and exclusion of the non-normalizable, but one devoted to creating a whole new environment open to contingent and lateral phenomena.

In fact, his notion of power in this new milieu is one that is diffuse and cannot be localized at a specific point: it is a whole environment neither stable nor homogeneous. In

similar ways as I will show in Chapter 1, these heterogeneous techniques for governing the IDPs materialized in paper folders, ID cards, humanitarian kits, statistics, reports, conferences, books, etc., do not have a totalizing consistency or even efficiency to discipline subjects and procedures. Many of these techniques have perhaps suffered what Stoler (2008) has named a process of 'ruinification' with skeletons and residues we can still track today. In fact, one might rightly ask, following Biehl's (2005) analysis of those residual areas left to the sick, the homeless, the prostitutes and the mentally ill [and the IDP], how these same concepts (biopolitics and govermentality) can still be useful for analyzing these zones of social abandonment. Several questions can be raised. What happens when the promises of healing, restoration and cure are no longer available, nor do the rationalities behind the techniques of power suppose the possibility of alleviation but just abandonment? What happens when a whole context is produced to let IDP be abandoned for their own sake? In Biehl's (Ibid: 41) own words, what happens when "one's worthiness to exist, one's claim to life (…) all pass through what is considered to be human at any particular time" and when there are no more answers, no more promises and no more expectations? Rather, paraphrasing Scott (1998), we seem to confront the residues or specters of those initial schemes meant to improve and alleviate the human condition in contexts of crisis and human suffering (Fassin and D'Halluin 2005). It is not so much about disciplining subjects, but about creating a whole environment that makes 'things' happen or appear such as those pathetic mattresses I encountered in a house of an old couple in November 2003 coming from a neighboring province of Bogotá just to be left in a 'zone of social abandonment' (Biehl 2005).

The floor of the house was just made out of mud plaster and for their restroom they excavated a hole 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 had seen before in the storage room of the office of the nationally recognized Catholic organization God's Minute (Minuto de Dios) in Ciudad Bolívar. In fact, I have encountered them many times over these years. With a smile in her face, she said "yes": the government had recognized her as an IDP and had actually helped her. She was very grateful. The two mattresses were the proof. I remained silent while I saw the now pale and used mattresses. I didn't know what to say for the rest of the interview. I just stared at the two mattresses, residues of the whole apparatus for governing the IDPs I will trace here. I left and walked silently through the informal and improvised muddy streets of Ciudad Bolívar, right in the peripheries of Bogotá. As such, it doesn't matter that the mattress is an effective response to the forced displacement of the couple; what is significant is that they received the actual mattress, echoing the spectral presence of the state in this peripheral location. What matters is that the mattresses were 'there'.

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The ethnography of violence

However, as the same CPSJA and other popular organizations throughout the country have witnessed in recent years, there are other diagrams of power that do

materialize in the most violent, vertical powerful ways. Forced displacement, massacres, disappearances, selective murders and permanent threats are some of the finalized functions of particular diagrams of power that have been established and deployed in their territories. Even more, as a growing literature that has focused on the "cultural expressions" of violence in Colombia has shown, this 'violence' has clearly followed gendered, racial, sexed, ethnic and partisan lines (Tovar 2006, Uribe 2004, Uribe 1993, UNHCR 2007a, Sánchez Baute 2008, Taussig 1987). As Sontag's (2002) counter-intuitive but poignant declaration claims, war has been usually a "game of men" and so it has been in Colombia and Urabá. Not only armed men but also those in power have been most frequently men whose direct actions have left widows and orphans spread throughout the whole country. Chapter 2 describes the current phenomenon of the feminization of the displaced population in Colombia. And as it has been denounced by different actors, the female body has been turned into a trophy of war by all the armed actors where not only she is raped but her offspring are taken away to be raised by the family of a paramilitary leader or recruited into the armed group (Tovar 2006, Mesa de trabajo "Mujer y conflicto armado" 2008). On the other hand, as the recent diagnosis of the national trends of IDPs for 2004-2007 made by the UNHCR (2007a: 55) have shown, 61.6% of the municipalities with internal displacement are concentrated in only 10 departments out of the country's 32. Out of these ten departments, the department of Antioquia where the CPSJA is located became the department with the largest number of IDPs (69.445 persons). Other departments like the Southwestern Nariño which previously didn´t have high rates of internal displacement, started to register in 2005. And although the total population of those municipalities where the largest proportion of displacement

occurred represents only 17% of the total national population, they concentrate 71% of the total of displaced persons between 2001 and 2007.

Indeed, as the report shows, there is an alarming "coincidence" between those populations that have been mostly targeted by this phenomenon in the country and the areas that have the richest natural resources including oil and coal and are set in strategic corridors for the movements of arms, illegal drugs and armed actors. As the UNHCR report also concludes, the existence of ethnic territories (indigenous) has slowly become almost a main characteristic of those areas that have suffered internal displacement: simultaneously, legal claims for the creation of *resguardos* (indigenous reserves) are taking place in 43% of the municipalities most impacted by internal displacement; in 48.7% of them *resguardos* are already established. Somehow counterintuitive but right to the point, Sánchez and Meertens (1988) have also explained how both the victims and perpetrators of violence have come from the rural settings. As they argue, the war is made and suffered by the rural inhabitants, not by the sons of the political and economic elite. Here war does not 'knock on the door' of all Colombians, but specially targets the peasant, indigenous and afrocolombian inhabitants of the rural areas of Colombia. Only on certain occasions has it spread throughout the cities: mainly through bombs located in State buildings or associated with the elites. Mostly, it has been experienced by city-dwellers when they cannot travel to the rural areas anymore because of fears and threats of any kidnappings along the road. Likewise, by the arrival of legions of IDPs from all different corners of the country. Violence has certainly not been experienced in the same way in the rural and urban areas of the country.

In relation to this concentration of violence in rural areas, Sánchez and Meertens (1988) discuss the debate over the reintroduction of the death penalty during and after the period of La Violencia in 1958 which also saw the rural areas stormed by armed groups of men. Different measures had been sought from the National Congress during those years to liquidate the last remnants of banditry in the country and to warn the new generations not to follow that path. One of these ideas was to legalize the death penalty, which during those days and still today remains prohibited by Colombia's constitution. The authors quote a peasant who was asked for his opinion of the death penalty at this time, and answered: "I think that they should prohibit it" (Ibid: 313). He had outlived the more than 300,000 deaths during the violence and now he was asked if they should legalize the death penalty. No wonder about his answer. It shows us that the fashionable concept of the 'state of exception' (Agamben 1998, 1998a) is not located only inside airports or jails, but in this case, that it could be practiced and normalized in almost all the rural territory in Colombia. One could even ask about the purchasing power of such a concept when faced with the answer of this peasant. Perhaps it just reminds us not of the exception but of the violent actualization of a whole 'coloniality of being' spread across different centuries (Maldonado-Torres 2007, Fanon 1968). Violence is not random or without agency, it also follows clear racial, ethnic, sexed and gendered lines. There have been clear 'winners' and 'losers' in this permanent conflict, although not always the same; but certainly the rural areas and their populations have suffered the most.

On the other side, Serje (2005) and Steiner (2000) clearly show in their study of marginal and frontier areas in Colombia, that the larger region of Urabá in which Apartadó figures as the most densely populated urban settlement is present in the memories and imaginations of Colombians as one of the most violent territories in the country. Interestingly enough, this image and that of similar marginal regions of the country were also central in those 'regimes of representation' created since the 19th century by the new elite following lines of civilization and barbarism (Rojas 2002). Although discursive, these same areas still confirm and reinforce many of these representations through violent armed conflicts and disputes that seem to be happening in other regions as well. These regions are "symbolically" (not geographically) distanced from the anaesthetized and prosthetic normalcy predominant in the larger cities, or more recently, the mechanized discourse of consensus characteristic of the promises of a 'postconflict' moment in Colombia created by the media and the 'general opinion' (Richard 2004, Buck-Morss 1994, Feldman 1994). In fact, for the Urabá region, both scholars and human rights NGOs have reported since the 1980s the delirious cycle of violence where different trade unions, guerrilla groups, paramilitary death squads and military operations such as the infamous "Genesis' Operation" organized for "cleaning" the territory from any communist influence, have confronted each other (Ortiz 2007, Suárez 2007, Madariaga 2006, García 1996, Ramirez 1997, Uribe 1992, 2000, Comisión Andina de Juristas 1992). In this 'culture of terror' (Taussig 1989), where four-year-old children are assassinated by soldiers and ex-leftist guerrilla members now join the death squads of right-wing armies, where the walls of houses left abandoned and bombarded are filled with graffiti of rape and sexual violence, the 'order of things' becomes flooded

with excess and the boundaries between the legal and illegal, the state and the death squads, the normal and the exception, the sacred and the profane, the public and the private, the past, the present and the future, become blurred (Malkii 1995, Sluka 2000, Greenhouse, Mertz and Warren 2002, Uribe 2005, Franco 1999).

An article written in the local newspaper of Apartadó describes the simple but effective logic operating behind this escalation of violence. It referred to this logic as the "*ley de penetrabilidad política: quítate tu, pa' ponerme yo*" (law of political penetrability: remove yourself so that I can settle in) (El Heraldo de Urabá, 1994, No. 178). For the early nineties, in fact, the figure of political or presumably political murders in the town of Apartadó was of 41.42 for every 100,000 habitants. For the rest of Colombia, the figure during the same period "remained" at 7.67 murders (Comisión Andina de Juristas 1992). To 'move yourself so that I can settle in' not only recalls the title of a famous salsa song used by the reporter in the article, but in the larger history of Apartadó, it is a subtle metaphor for describing the effective annihilation of political contenders and the arrival of new forces to the territory. Chapter 3 shows how behind the 'geographies of terror' in Apartadó lies a logic that gives this apparently chaotic and nameless phenomenon a clear-cut pattern where certain urban and rural areas or members affiliated with political organizations were more targeted than others. In a similar way that Das (2007a: 207) describes the need to change the official representations of violence in India as dominated by the picture of crowds going insane in a natural reaction to some provocative action, I argue that there are clear purposes and rationalities behind these apparently irrational acts of violence. One should not forget that certain forms of governance materialized in

massacres of political contenders in areas of the town where no opponent could even walk before, can also be techniques of very effective disciplining (Madariaga 2005).

Although Madariaga's (2005) ethnography finds that young men would hide their earrings when walking next to paramilitaries who had banned their use in the town of Apartadó, I am suspicious of giving 'violence' such a determining and uniform effect on the everyday lives of inhabitants in these regions. This is the aim of the "ethnography of violence" presented here. Thus, the descent into the everyday, as Das (2007) described her effort to narrate how abandoned places could be inhabited again, even without the presence of grassroots organizations and international accompaniments, appears as an antidote for escaping these deterministic readings of 'violence' but also on what can be predicted or expected in these terrains. Thus, not only have I witnessed meetings of leaders of the CPSJA discussing strategies for resisting future displacements and the permanent threats to their leaders, but also heard songs and watched people dancing and remembering the dead. As I show in Chapter 6, many of the everyday life practices mobilized by the CPSJA are made of very "ordinary" moments and things but in extraordinary circumstances. In the same pilgrimage described earlier, I was asked to read some sentences of the Book of Isaiah in the Bible referring to the people of Israel and their fate of suffering and sacrifice but also consolation. I have also seen people again and again coming back to their houses and abandoned territories even knowing their lives can be endangered once again. Once on the improvised soccer field of the CPSJA, a pregnant woman of no more than twenty whose companion and father of the unborn child had been killed recently, and who received threats for not giving any information to the police,

confessed to me that she was indeed scared. I realized that her companion's name was written in one of the cardboard coffins lifted during the pilgrimage. But she confessed to me: she needed the help of her mother for raising the child. Without tears or anger or any sense of frustration, she told me that she had no choice but to stay there and hope to give birth to a child without incident/in safety

Thus, the descent into the everyday also complicates the usual understandings of "violence" and even "resistance", to an extent that one cannot even predict the effects and reactions they arise and the subjectivities produced, even if deep inside I wanted this woman to leave the region and look for a "safer" place. Following Biehl, Good and Kleinman (2007: 12) who warn scholars over the role that the human sciences should perform, "far from soothing the collective anxiety that emerge through these events", I prefer "to reinstate the uncertainty and angst that life holds when it is actually lived rather than merely studied and theorized". Thus, by focusing on these complex ecologies of care, mourning and suffering experienced by different collectives (Das and Das 2007) that complicate unilinear determinations, one should ask several questions: Why a passage of the famous pilgrimage of the people of Israel? Why the songs and rhythms that refuse to stay silent along the rivers of the Pacific region? Why do young people insist on wearing earrings? Or why would she even dare to stay there even knowing she had received threats from the paramilitaries? Indeed, these are some of the key questions that I have kept for informing me of the multiple ways in which these 'landscapes' of terror can be inhabited again (Das 2007a). In themselves, these also problematize and complicate unilinear and predictable interpretations not only of violence but also of our

expectations and desires of what could count as “resistance” and what not (Mahmood 2005). Just as I have been describing the movement, repetition and actualization of the question of the human in itself, and simultaneously, of the ‘human’ subject that needs to be counted, labeled, protected, relieved and alleviated but also, empowered, I descend into those experiences of human suffering and tragedy to describe how these vectors disorganize and organize affects, what cultural repertoires they manifest or confront, what subjectivities they produce and what sort of practices they mobilize. Far from “romanticizing” and projecting desires to these assemblages, something which in itself will be analyzed throughout the dissertation by engaging the dreams and the histories they draw upon, I describe what type of “things” they are doing such as organizing pilgrimages for remembering the dead, initiating international campaigns in the International Court of Human Rights, or just remaining in the village waiting for the child to be born.

Veena Das (2007a: 221) made a call for a public role of anthropology that acts upon a double register in these areas of human tragedy and pain. On the one hand, for Richard (2004), [anthropologists and] cultural critics should offer evidence that contests both the ‘mechanized discourse of consensus’ that manages the official amnesia and the systematic acts of making evidence disappear. This has been one of the roles played by public intellectuals in Colombia. The scandals created by the publication of the famous two volumes of *La Violencia en Colombia* (1962) written by the sociologists Orlando Fals Borda and Eduardo Umaña Luna together with the priest Germán Guzmán Campos are a perfect example. The book narrated the horrible massacres, rapes and displacements

of the period of *La Violencia* (1946-1958) left unregistered in the official memory of Colombians. In the second volume the authors discussed many of the intense and often violent reactions that the first volume had in the public sphere, amongst political parties, in the academy and government sectors (Guzmán, Fals Borda and Umaña 2005a, see also Guzmán 2007 for a review of these reactions). For the first time in the country, the more than 300,000 victims produced by a partisan violence often directed through class and regional conflicts and the advancement of private land concentration (Bolívar 2003, Gonzales, Bolivar, Vasquez 2003), became publicly known, launching furious reactions by government sectors. In Sánchez's (2007: 23) review of the studies of violence in Colombia that have proliferated since the 1970s and 1980s, he argues how this book became the only empirical source for many of the essays that were written until the mid 1970s. Thus, in contexts where the victims' voices do not enter into the official regime of truth of law and the judiciary processes, or when the claim is depicted as irrational, incredible and lacking empirical evidence to be counted as such, there is an obligation of the researcher to make those words count in manifold ways (Taussig 1987, Richard 2004).

In a similar context Castillejo (2006, 2006a) has analyzed the geopolitics of knowledge at play in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's processes. He finds that the victims' claims cannot be counted as evidence in those trials for escaping the modern epistemology of law. In such contexts, intellectuals positioned in the academy can play an important although always limited role. As Das (2007a: 207) also argues, this form of doing anthropology itself is also shaped by the needs of

immediacy or activism. In my case, I once helped to organize one of the numerous larger campaigns and international tours that made those irrational words be taken seriously or at least be heard in strategic offices in the United States Congress. In other opportunities, I have just connected people and arranged meetings, for example, between leaders and officers of organic trade organizations or between grassroots organizations, or given accommodation to leaders in my house while in Bogotá. Together with other strategic allies, and the effort of many volunteers coming from different countries, but especially, with the patience and perseverance to ensure that the victim's voice not remain silent, some things are starting to happen. In fact, only after more than three years of intense campaigning and lobbying by members of the CPSJA, through offices of US senators and congressmen, sessions of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in Geneva, and trials at the International Court of Human Rights, there was enough pressure on the Colombian attorney general to start the investigation into the massacre committed on March 23, 2005 where those three children I mentioned before, together with their father, one of the leaders of the CPSJA, and his spouse were brutally murdered[6].

But on the other hand, Das (2007a: 221) also makes a call for "witnessing the descent into the everyday through which victims and survivors affirm the possibility of life by removing it from the circulation of words gone wild—leading words home". Thus, my dialogues with victims and members both of the CPSJA and the PCN had a much simpler edge, different from the one of participating in discussions with leaders to diagnose the present threats in the region, or the more public activities of international campaigning and similar activities. In the end, during those numerous silent nights where

I could intimately hear words of sorrow and mourning but also, of physical, moral and emotional exhaustion, there were other types of “things” happening as well. Perhaps, following Das (2007a: 211) in a country divided and constructed by a cultural anesthesia where the voices of marginalized victims remain silent (because there is indeed a hierarchy of victims) and forgotten and often accused, this second register of anthropology refuses complicity with violence by ‘opening itself to the pain of the other'. Throughout all these years I have found that it is precisely this opening that is the fundamental point from where to initiate actions, conversations, campaigns or just the fact of listening to her in the soccer field. Thus, a citizen of Colombia, I have also been thrown into the ethical dilemma of the role of academic practice in reforming, criticizing or transforming (Caldeira 2000) the ‘permanent state of exception’ (Benjamin 1968) by which more than 3 million people and bodies become targets of violent projects of displacement enforced by different armed actors. Precisely, after several years working with and accompanying these organizations, and witnessing their own organizational and decision-making processes, I have realized that it is this opening, a very general and non-definitive condition, my answer and commitment to this academic anxiety. It will also be my answer to Taussig’s (1987) call for writing against terror.

The dissertation

This dissertation can be described as a cartography of the circulation and different actualizations of those objects, discourses and practices of the human rights and humanitarian regime. This cartography is one which simultaneously follows vectors across networks that link headquarter officers with operations in the field, and grassroots organizations of internally displaced persons. But also, it traces how the latter vectors

enter into previous power relations in those same organizations, in this case, the CPSJA and in a much reduced way in my analysis of the PCN. And here, my cartography traces how these assemblages were possible at that time, why they were constituted and what were their conditions of possibility. Most of the dissertation describes what is happening here and there—what those objects, discourses and practices are actually doing in each and every actualization. Thus, the analysis refuses any sense of totalization or centralization although it is very much occupied with describing those nodes which seem to affect other nodes of the same problem-space more directly. But simultaneously, on how some of these nodes have become very complex assemblages where different vectors converge and possibly deviate from the initial codifications and axiomatizations arranged by powerful machines. Thus, I have decided to keep the description of these convergences and deviations as the bulk of the dissertation. In my conclusions, I analyze some of the main consequences that the description presents for larger theoretical and political questions about modernity, including the modern State's responsibilities toward its own citizens within contemporary assemblages (Sassen 2006).

I have divided the dissertation's structure into five chapters plus my conclusion. Each one of them focuses on different problems, interlocutors, temporal and spatial scales and research questions. While some chapters describe the problematization of the IDP as a general worldwide problem, others are much more focused on the Colombian case. They are all connected through my research question, which explores the emergence of the IDP and the CPSJA. Each chapter should be thought as describing a key site or segment where different vectors accumulated, colluded and assembled to create the

conditions of possibility for the IDP's and the CPSJA's simultaneous emergence in the 1990s. Although some chapters have some sort of ethnographic report, others use more "evidence" from my archival research; some have more ethnographic detail than the rest. Although the CPSJA only emerges officially in the last chapter, some of the vectors that were assembled in the 1990s are briefly described in earlier chapters. I used a combination of methodologies to grasp the histories and frictions in each site in order to produce a layered and nuanced narration for confirming that "things" could have happened differently but they still didn't: they followed specific paths and not others.

Chapter 2, 'From the "suffering stranger' to the IDP: the emergence of a new problem area', is dedicated to trace how the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) problem area emerged as an international concern for institutions, governments, agencies and communities of experts in the mid 1990s. Here, I historicize both the conditions of possibility and actualization of the IDPs on a worldwide scale by linking this formation to a set of events necessary for its appearance both as an object of knowledge and intervention. I start from the very obvious but still intriguing problematizations of and concern for the "suffering stranger' (Bornstein and Redfield 2008), a permanent 'empty signifier' across the dissertation, that is filled with different content depending on the current contingencies (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Throughout the dissertation, this 'suffering stranger' can be filled with the victim of political violence, earthquakes, states persecution, hunger, poverty, etc, depending on the specific context. In this particular chapter, I am interested in describing how this figure became codified and captured by the IDP together with the whole technologies displayed for guiding our actions and

beliefs towards him/her. I make clear how the different genealogies of the human rights legacy, the humanitarian and the refugee converge in complex ways in this “new” object of concern. 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 within their own country were referred as “internally displaced persons” in Colombia or elsewhere. What I do want to suggest, again, inspired by Foucault’s (1970) analysis on discursive formations, and 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.

Here, I introduce conversations undertaken with key protagonists of this history to stress the construction of narrations and representations as one of the more powerful devices for the introduction, rarification and deployment of this object. I also follow how these narrations or enunciative modalities correlate and operate through specific materialities such as buildings, ID cards, reports, flags, books, jeeps, computers, and what have you. But nonetheless, I offer a nuanced account that can help us also problematize the uniformity in how collectives and individuals experienced and perceived them in their daily itineraries. I revisit events happening during the Enlightment, the nineteenth century, the contexts of the First and Second World Wars where some of the necessary conditions were arranged and configured, enabling the emergence of the IDPs two

decades ago. An important reconfiguration that I trace begins with the Post-Cold War scenario where new concepts of sovereignty were worked out by different actors that created the conditions for NGOs and international agencies to become key guardians in the defense and protection of human rights worldwide. After this section, by temporarily framing my analysis from 1992 to 1998, I describe the discursive formation in which the identity of the IDPs was stabilized, discussed, interpreted and analyzed. Finally, I identify the main rationalities that lie behind this formation, which in themselves respond to the question of the human in itself, but simultaneously, of the 'human' that needs to be counted, labeled, protected, relieved and alleviated, but also empowered. In this context, as a program, technology and apparatus, I want to understand the production of new forms of governance emerging in response to this new problem area during this particular era that only seem to endure through the nodes of the Washington Consensus and the Millennium Development Goals. Although I am using the concepts of govermentality and biopolitics, I still want to qualify their usefulness and capacity to diagnose and evaluate the series of effects that these diagrams of power institute and that possibly differ from those that Foucault diagnosed in his analyses of the prison system and sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Foucault 1977, 1978)[7].

Chapter 3, "The 1990s: convergences and emergences in Colombia", analyzes how this ensemble of discourses, institutions, conferences and actors related to this problem area was introduced to Colombia in 1995, how they have operated through policy documents and institutional interventions, and what have been their side-effects. Here, I want to understand what the conditions of possibility of that incorporation were

by analyzing the context in which these vectors arrived. In particular, I show that its arrival coincides also with the arrival of the “human rights discourses” and the strengthening of peace agendas from many different actors and levels. Thus, I want to understand how these are related and how they inform and affect each other. Here, several scholars, in seeking to understand the genealogy of the human rights and humanitarian movement, and of the victim in Colombia and South America, have found how this territory was already striated by the experiences of the Truth Commissions in the Southern Cone emerging after the period of dictatorships, the influence of leftist parties and organizations and the role of the progressive church affiliated with the liberation theology movement (Orozco 2005, Tate 2005, Romero 2001). Indeed, there was a particular striation in which the rights agenda together with this new area of concern (the IDP) arrived contemporaneously in the country, which hence gave form to its actual deployment in the country. This has been precisely the purpose of recent ethnographies of development and human rights that have integrated into their analysis legal and illegal actors different from those located in international organizations and have included national politicians, political parties, religious groups, NGOs, etc. (Mosse 2005, Sinha 2006, Medeiros 2005, Tate 2005, Bornstein 2005, Nordstrom 2004). As I could witness through my interviews with Colombian officers working in international organizations in Bogota and the rural areas, even these vectors coming from these important nodes are mediated by these officers and taking them to new territories. This said, I want to understand the different ‘things’ that both the rights movement and the deployment of this new apparatus, program and technology are actually doing in the country through all the frictions, mediations and translations occurred along the network.

In this conjuncture, I also analyze the current context in Colombia where there seems to be a simultaneous boom of the victims' movement and government initiatives including the design of special laws, allocation of resources, recommendations issued by the Constitutional Court of Colombia and the creation of the National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR) in 2005, among other initiatives. In the context of the apparent laying out of arms of paramilitary groups and a whole series of programs funded by the government to aid both victims and perpetrators, discussions about a "post-conflict" scenario are starting to be heard from different quarters including the academy, media and also from the same paramilitary leaders. Certainly, this is not new in the history of Colombia. Gonzalo Sánchez, one of the most eminent scholars of violence in Colombia, and not coincidentally, head of the unit of "Historical Memory" of the CNRR, has analyzed the numerous armistices and peace processes that have occurred in the country during the XIX and XX centuries and been decreed after intense periods of generalized violence (Sánchez 2006). It seems as if the country has repeated endlessly the same cycle of armistices and discussion of postconflict scenarios. But in this new context, what has captured my attention throughout my encounters both with victims' movements, experts and officials, the core of my description here, is the particular form in which the debate is organizing a whole environment for talking about victims' rights in Colombia.

Chapter 4, "Quítate tú para ponerme yo", and Chapter 5 "The best 'corner of America': ethnographies on the protection of "life" are dedicated to describing the conditions of possibility and the actualizations of the very complex assemblage of the

CPSJA. In the first chapter, I will describe the longue dureé of those processes that extend back to the XVI century and refer to how the whole region of Urabá has been constructed, imagined, studied and incorporated to the larger society. James Parsons (1963), an American geographer who did pioneer studies in Urabá and other regions of the country, described in the 1960s that perhaps there is no other region in the country with more studies and evaluations undertaken for measuring the potential benefits that this "marginal" region has for a whole series of national and international capital ventures. In his descriptions, he often comments on the anarchic and disorganized conditions of the region that limit its potential for any sustainable growth, echoing the unsuccessful initiatives undertaken by Antioqueños to civilize their own region at the beginning of the twentieth century. Indeed, I also heard the same laments from retired officers that worked on large-scale development projects in the eighties and mid-nineties later interrupted by the escalation of violence in the region. Steiner (2005), Roldán (2003), Serge (2005) and Gonzales, Medina and Bolivar (2003) have sought to understand the construction of the region through the tropes of the process of civilization, the colonial encounter and the particular state(s) formation project. I want to consider the purchasing power of these approaches to inform us about how the region was ultimately desired and hence constructed in particular ways. I also describe the 'geographies of terror' and the logic behind the escalation of violence in the region during the nineties by pinpointing the recent history of union conflicts, land invasions, migrations, massacres, leftist organizations, political parties, and the influence of NGOs and international agencies working in the area.

Chapter 5 focuses instead on how development projects since the 1970s and more recently peace and both human rights and humanitarian agendas have flooded this region with prescriptions, rationalities and new forms of governance. By focusing on those development projects that targeted the peasants of San José de Apartadó as a primal actor for change and empowerment, I followed those reports that describe the main problems, difficulties and characteristics of this population. What were the main goals of those projects? How did they accommodate and negotiate the previous informal organizational practices brought by these colonizing peasants who had arrived in the region during the 1970s? How do they describe those peasants whose children or grandchildren would constitute the CPSJA one or two decades later? What possible side-effects could be tracked thereafter? In particular, I want to track how specific measures brought by the project "that just seem to strengthen what was already there" as an ex-officer told me, still have a prominent role in the present day organizational practices of the CPSJA. In this chapter, I will also describe how the Urabá region, like many other regions in the country including Barrancabermeja, Arauca and Santander, the Caribbean region of the Montes de María, have been targeted since the 1990s by human rights and humanitarian projects and agendas that brought the white jeeps and the white t-shirts. What are these "doing there" is the main focus of my ethnography of these operations that have converted in key nodes of the CPSJA and PCN complex assemblages.

In chapter 6, "Assembling the CPSJA", I describe the context in which the CPSJA emerged as a response to the escalation of violence in the region. I explain the complex condensation of many vectors arriving at this node which include both the sacred

distinction between combatants and non-combatants, its articulation to the Interamerican Court of Human Rights, but also the solar cells, white t-shirts, and posters of human rights activism, among others. My cartography here follows how the CPSJA is instituted and affirmed through daily practices that include the consolidation and organization of more than 70 working groups dedicated to producing food and organic bananas and cocoa for channels of organic fair trade. Particularly relevant here is the analysis of the same "community economies" (Gibson-Graham 2005) which have resulted in the major strategy and desire for sustaining and producing the CPSJA throughout the years. But also, I focus on those pilgrimages, songs and monuments of memory that remember those who have been assassinated in recent years. I argue, recalling Leach's (1976) dynamic analysis on the Highlands of Burma, that these same actions such as the 'communitarian days' or the workshops on memory given to young children in primary school, can be thought of as rituals that 'perform' an "ideal" society that momentarily make explicit what is otherwise a very powerful and material fiction lived and experienced in very different ways by its members. Here, I also introduce a nuanced narration that illuminates how these performances are enacted and experienced in the everyday life of inhabitants and *acompañantes*.

In my conclusions I end my narrations with a discussion of how these assemblages can inform us not only of the rationalities behind the strategies of national and international organizations for protecting and alleviating the 'human' subject set at the limit, but also of how the CPSJA interacts with these same strategies in complex ways that disturb and interrupt our conventional understandings of sovereignty, human rights

and humanitarianism. Here, my discussion is set within the larger theoretical debate over difference and alterity, whereby those strategies can be 'provincialized' by showing how they respond to particular 'cultural provinces' that incorporate particular answers to the question of what is to be human in contemporary times (Chakrabarty 2000, Foucault 1970). But simultaneously, I want to focus on how the different sets of practices emerging in response to the escalation of violence in their territories are also "cultural" practices informed by very complex arrangements of significations, experiences, and movements across different scales and nodes along the same problem-space. Thus, I want to evaluate or complicate perhaps what we are calling today the 'human rights' and the 'humanitarian' regime when we put it to move and show how it actualizes in different nodes. Are the same diagnosis, preoccupations, desires, and rationalities followed across the whole problem-space or is it actually exposed to new contingencies emerging in every moment to an extent that perhaps what one is calling by the same label actually consists in multiple and variable differences and actualizations? What is at stake in this question? What are the consequences for informing us of the current definition of what it is to be human in the current conjuncture? Thus, I will be introducing the concept of a 'post-human rights and humanitarian regime' as a temporary possibility to think beyond but also to capture the multiplicities and swarming of differences that flow in each node at every moment. My whole idea of this dissertation is that some of the vectors I will be following are evidently and powerfully affirmed in order to determine particular trajectories. But others will perhaps be endlessly mediated and deviated to an extent that we cannot be completely sure about 'what is happening out there'. Perhaps, through the notion of the 'post human-rights and humanitarian regime' I am identifying the failure of

our categories to diagnose and follow this intense movement in all directions, but also, their reconfiguration in unpredictable ways.

Endnotes

1*Acompañantes*: I am using this term throughout the dissertation to refer to all persons coming from outside the communities I am referring to and who have been involved in many different sorts of activities with these collectives: escorting leaders through villages, cities and international offices inside and outside the country; witnesses of their own dilemmas, threats and predicaments; and other sorts of political including *compañero*, *compañerismo*, etc. These latter terms usually refer to the English expression of comrade-in-arms and in Colombia, clearly evoke and presuppose the presence of left-wing interlocutors in the conversation.

2 Some articles of the lcoal newspaper making this explicit reference: "Uraba – la mejor esquina de América". Heraldo de Uraba Por una Uraba líder 30 AÑOS 1967-1997. Agosto 15- Septiembre 15de 1997. "Cuando la paz es anormal", EL Heraldo de Uraba. EL Periódico de la Región. Segunda Quincena de Abril 1999. (Edición No. 221.)

3 Central to this way of approaching the state-making processes are those theoretical and methodological legacies stemming from Gramsci's approaches and enrichment of Marx' (2005) theory of the state better condensed in his 18th Brumarie. Thus, Gramsci presents the vision in which "every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces of development, and hence, to the interest of the ruling classes" (Gramsci: 2003[1971]: 258). From this very complex vision which also problematized the distinction between the state and civil society, focusing precisely on the process by which the great mass of population achieves a particular cultural and moral level, Gramsci (1971) and some of his followers have introduce a whole way of thinking that according to Althusser have added sophistication and a strict conjunctural analysis to the theory of the repressive state. Concepts such as hegemony, persuasion, consensus, passive revolution, war of positions, state apparatuses, among others, are central concepts in this vision. Other concepts informing this same tradition and later developed by the neo-Marxist tradition will gather around the whole set of concepts of articulation, contingency, hegemony, overdetermination and the popular (Althusser 1970, Hall et al 1978, Hall 1981, 1999, 2006, Laclau & Mouffe 1985, Butler, Laclau & Žižek 2001, Laclau 2008, 2008a, 2005, 1996, Mouffe 1993, 2005). Through this set of concepts, the richness and complexity of the 'social' (social relations) prevents a predictable outcome or an absolute closure of any social practice; the state is above all a state-making process always threatened by the absence of an absolute closure. It is always a project for achieving consensus and establishing a 'common sense' among the population. This vision underscores how the economic, social and political forces play simultaneous determinations upon a specific conjuncture defying the traditional infrastructure/superstructure determinations (Williams 1980, 1980a).

4 Since the 1990s, in similar ways as the CPSJA, the PCN has also extended its networks and contacts with a wide international audience which have included sectors of the Black Caucus of the Democratic Party in the US, important figures of the 'civil-rights' movements and other international coalitions and conferences dealing with various themes including 'grassroots development', 'structural racism', 'cultural resistance', and 'women projects' (Escobar 2007). Several scholars and activists have analyzed the emergence of this very complex assemblage within the new configurations of ethnicity and environmentalism of the 1990s (Escobar 2008, Escobar y Pedrosa 1996, Grueso, Rosero y Escobar 1998, Pardo 2001, Restrepo 2007). Others have analyzed how the recent escalation of violence and massive displacements in the regions have interrupted and directly affected the collective life projects of communities along the rivers of the Pacific region (Oslender 2004, Restrepo y Rojas 2004, Escobar 2003)

5 In fact, as I will show in Chapter 2, the narration of events describing the emergence of the IDP problem changes when changing interlocutors working in a typical "human rights" or "humanitarian" agency or NGOs. For some of them, the IDP problem area brings together concerns on sovereignty, the rule of law and the question of the failed or rogue states. For others, the IDP problem area is an old and constant challenge in their operations alleviating the suffering of civilian populations caught in the middle of an armed conflict. See Chapter 2.

6 On August, 2008, the most important newspaper in Colombia explained that a captain of the army recently confessed that by that time, March 2005, he was conducting the counter-subversive operation "Fenix" with 100 soldiers and 50 paramilitaries in the mountains close to San Jose de Apartadó. I had travelled the same mountains in March 2008 in another pilgrimage verifying the situation of a group of families from the CPSJA that decided to return to their abandoned houses. We were told that we were marching through the same "path of death" that soldiers and paramilitaries three years ago had walked searching for their victims. For almost three years, members of the CPSJA had denounced the armed forces for their responsibility in the massacreonly to encounter new threats and accusations of hiding the real assassins. Finally, the captain accepted his men's participation and responsibility in the massacre. I read the newspaper article and remained silent. What sort of consequences would the testimony have? Would the mourning for the disappeared leader and his family stop here? Would it be enough? Perhaps yes, perhaps no. One should always be aware about the effects and limits of these actions for strengthening even more those regimes of power that initially didn't listen to those words. But as one of the leaders of the PCN explained, using metaphorically the image of a boat trying to navigate through a violent sea, these efforts are full of tensions and oscillations, limits and dangerous traps. He said that at the end of the voyage he will decide if those decisions taken were correct or wrong. In the meantime, it was important for these words to move through that network and to arrive to specific nodes.

7 Until now, the anthropology of science and technology has used the concept of biopolitics to demonstrate how the management of life in realms such as bio-medics, audit cultures, humanitarian and human rights interventions shape the contemporary sense of what it means to be 'human' (Rose, 2007, Ong and Collier 2005, Redfield 2006, Strathern 2000, Inda 2005) As such, my research analyses this active construction not in the laboratories and clinics, as has been the tradition within science and technology studies, but in the field of human tragedy, humanitarian operations, and post-conflict resolutions (Nelson 2004, Das and Poole 2004, Biehl 2007, Biehl, Good and Kleinman 2007).

From the “suffering stranger’ to the IDP: the emergence of a new problem area

> “IDP has emerged as one of the great human tragedies of our time, between 20 million and 25 million”(Kofi Annan, Masses in Flight: 1998: 2).

During the mid 1990s in Bogotá, Colombia, I, like many of the inhabitants of the city, noticed numerous people, standing on street corners and asking for money from passersby. Some were Afro-Colombians, others indigenous people. Most generally, all were peasants coming from rural areas of Colombia. 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 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. I soon 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 IDPs.

In this chapter I examine how this new category, the IDP, came into existence. Following Rabinow (1986: 241), I want to anthropologize the configuration of knowledge that made the category possible in the 1990’s as a new problem area worldwide, “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”. Some of the reasons why 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 were people forced to move but who remained within their own country referred to as “internally displaced persons” (IDPs). What I do want to suggest, inspired by Foucault’s (1972) analysis of discursive formations, is that this specific object, the IDP, only came into existence within a specific worldwide problem area in the mid 1990’s. That is the history I want to trace here.

In the following pages, I start by making clear my research strategies inspired by a Foucauldian scholarship interested in the role of discursive regimes for constituting and positioning subjects, subjectivities and subject positions (Sullivan 2006). Here, I want to specify the constitution of a new “visible” object (the IDP) that emerges simultaneously

as an “articulation” of relations of knowledge, forms of government, subject positions and particular practices of subjectification. I am particularly interested in both tracing the conditions of possibility of the emergence of new “visibilities” and “articulations” (Deleuze 1988). Simultaneously, in following their effects and finalized functions not through the whole network deployed thanks to this new problem area, but on those nodes that I have been able to follow in order to answer my specific question over the presence of those ID papers on the street corners in Bogotá. But more than the fact that I was there or by the fact that I cannot be in every place along the network, the set of propositions and phrases examined in this chapter are specifically those which revolve around different focal points of power (and resistance) set in play by a particular problem (Ibid: 17). In the following pages, the key nature of these focal points will be made clear.

But whether these are those ID papers in the street corners of Bogotá, ration cards in IDP camps in Gaza, medical certificates for refugee populations in France or the temporary passports given to refugees in the nineteenth century (Torpey 2000, Feldman 2007, Fassin and D’Halluin 2005), my interrogation here is a clear ‘materialist’ one (Williams 1980, 1980a). Thus, the analysis of the emergence of this new problem area includes the production of new statements and their correlation with new forms and diagrams of power whose ‘effects’ (those key focal points) are traced ethnographically. 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. Hence, the discursive

formation in which the IDP problem area emerges does not only correspond to 'statements', but also encompasses a material dimension required for its operability. This materiality should not be thought as something "external" to the same discourse but integral to it. Statements not only mean something, but also have material and affective forces and effects (Croft Wiley 2005).

The ethnography of discourses and institutions

My research strategy in this analytic of the IDPs attempts is 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 others. 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, 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 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 have devoted part of my research to exploring different types of reports and documents. I've explored the annual reports prepared for the Commission of Human Rights and General Assembly of the United Nations since 1992 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*, amajor study of IDPS at the Brookings Institute published in two volumes in 1998, and his *Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement* published the same year. Along with these official reports from the UN system circulating on the internet, I have also included key interventions made in the form of public conferences or working papers that have been decisive for the form in which the IDP problem area came to be conceived in the early nineties (Korn and Weiss 2006). Although the Representative is a central character here, he will certainly not be the source of action or the central actor for our analysis. Instead, this very important actor as well as the reports produced in this history are in fact moving targets of a vast array of entities swarming towards them (Latour 2005: 46). As I will show in the following pages, some of these entities do have a recent apparition in this assemblage, but others appeared, affected and constructed this assemblage long ago.

Their composition is quite new; but their occurrence in other assemblages does have a long history that I will trace here.

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. Thus, as I could register in my interviews with many of the key protagonists or even authors of the story narrated and repeated in those books and reports, a clear official script seems to emerge to explain the appearance of the IDP problem area. Through the interviews, I could hear from the same protagonist the same concepts that I had read before in reports and documents. Not only the same concepts , but also the same explanations, debates and discussions described in these reports. And this is no coincidence; in fact, that is part of the first conclusions that I want to advance in this chapter: that there are particular and very few clusters of actors that occupy a central role in the organization of this assemblage. This 'revelation' came to me while carrying out an interview with a recently recruited officer of one of the central nodes of this story. I confirmed my durkheimian suspicion but also admiration of the creative power of a very small cluster of people to have been able to affirm this new problem area with far reaching consequences worldwide (Durkheim 2001)[1]. In fact, in the pages below, I will show that some of these interviewees were responsible for introducing keystone concepts within this particular discursive formation decisive for the first 'public presentation' of this problem area in the early nineties (Korn and Weiss 2006). One officer, in a sarcastic

tone that shocked me, referred to them as almost a closed “tribal community” dancing along the fire, chanting and adoring this new idol, the IDP.

The amount of work done for the construction and stabilization of this problem area by these actors is enough testimony of their ‘apparent’ success. As I show below, I also heard some marginal stories narrated by other voices seated in offices of other institutions and agencies which complicate this official narration and also the logical sequences it constitutes. In conclusion, the documents were the ones who took me to specific directions to meet with these protagonists. In this sense, the reconstruction of the story or the different stories narrating the emergence of this new problem area required that many of these same actors recreated and remembered events that had happened one or two decades ago and in which they personally participated. Some questions were answered vividly with a keen memory of this or that situation. Others remained more blurred and hazy in their minds. But even if I went all the way to meet them personally and to revive the traditional face-to-face trope of the discipline of anthropology, I was looking for other ‘things’ as well. Thus, the reports not only took me to these appointments, but they also took me with an enormous sense of serendipity and help from many persons (including the foundation that funded my research) to the headquarters of some of these institutions in Geneva and Washington, to the Museum of the International Red Cross, to those offices stacked with country profiles from countries such as Colombia and Rwanda, to Quaker backpackers in Washington D.C, to the open restaurant of the UNHCR offices in Geneva and the concert of the “Refugee all Star” reggae band playing in its central lobby, among a myriad of other places and events.

The description below combines the products of my archival research with those coming from what can be named as the "ethnography of institutions". This is in fact, nothing new for the discipline of anthropology[2], which emerged within the tradition of the three white men devoted precisely to the study of institutions, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. Weber's classic studies of religions, Durkheim's study of primitive religions in Australia, or the system of capitalist production analyzed by Marx are some of the benchmarks of the discipline's long standing legacy with the study of institutions[3]. Following these trends, I analyze ethnographically those institutions such as some of the key human rights and humanitarian international agencies and NGOs in charge of responding to this new problem area of concern for the international and national community. Using the classic move in the discipline of anthropology of "defamiliarizing the strange" and "making strange the familiar", I demonstrate that these institutions' interventions and the problem they are responding to are cultural/ideological practices for organizing the social in themselves (Bennet 2002, Escobar 1999). Why do we care and spend the amount of energy and resources for 'strangers' that live hundreds and thousands of kilometers away? How and why are we connected with him, her or them?

In fact, and stemming from this simple question, Bornstein and Redfield (2008) made a call for in-depth ethnographic and historical accounts of humanitarian organizations, cosmologies and encounters. For them, this requires a focus on outlining the dominant practices, tensions and beliefs about that human (the IDP) that needs to be protected and to place these same institutions into comparative and historical relief by

providing alternative histories and portraying different practices and beliefs (ibid.). But also, as I show in the following pages, which includes the analysis of human rights organizations, cosmologies and encounters, my ethnography focuses on the same everyday practices that construct the idea or the same effect of *the* institution. How did they come to be possible and what type of "things" they are producing? What is being done in these surfaces so that we can even call these "institutions" after all? What are those practices that we call "institutional"? To answer these questions, I describe in the following pages the construction and alignment of statements but also the organization of spaces and routines and their material correlation with buildings, files, humanitarian kits, ID cards, white jeeps and flags.

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). The same figure of the "suffering stranger" that launches a whole apparatus of discourses, technologies and programs for its protection and alleviation, has a deep tradition in many religions and cosmologies (Bornstein and Redfield 2008). Other current typical practices of human rights and humanitarian NGOs such as record-keeping, writing letters to authorities, travelling to far-away places and achieving a presence in a perilous setting, are also long-standing practices that date back to the abolition movement in the nineteenth century but also to those efforts made by Bartolomé de las Casas or Francisco de Vittoria in the sixteenth century to defend the indigenous population from their extermination in America (de Las Casas (2003, Castañeda 2007). Foucault explains (1998: 232) that these problem areas 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 the perception and evaluation of things. Clearly, the IDP problem area didn't emerge in a vacuum, but as I show in the following pages, its emergence could only be possible and actualized by the disposal, transformation and expansion of other previous problems (i.e. a history of problematizations, Rabinow 1984, Foucault 1990). Conversely, in my analysis of the emergence of the IDPs problem area, I start this chapter by describing its very recent invention through its differentiation from previous, similar but different objects of knowledge and humanitarian interventions (e.g., programs, technologies and apparatuses) such as those of the "suffering stranger, the "stateless people", the "displaced", the "refugee", etc (Malkii 1992, 1995, Arendt 1951, Loescher 2003, Lippert 1999).

The "suffering and caring community"

After talking with an officer of *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors without Borders), MSF in Geneva, Switzerland, I came to the conclusion that one really never "knows" enough of a certain subject even if one has dedicated several years towards its research. What I was told in that terrace of the MSF building under a sunny and blue sky was nothing elaborated or sophisticated. It was rather clear and obvious right from the beginning. I came to that appointment seeking to understand the agency's role in the protection of the IDPs. The interview started by discussing the complex organization of this agency. He told me about the distribution of tasks between the more operational sections and those with the role to provide guidance to its operations in the field. We were

then in the Swiss section in which his unit of reflection of humanitarian operations was in charge of creating the conditions for discussing and reflecting on present predicaments and new situations in the field. Their task was to respond to petitions coming from the same operations in the field. As has been highlighted by Redfield (2006) and also confirmed during the conversation, this image of permanent reflection on their operations is part of the agency's self-portrayed image, which according to this officer makes them "into the best critics of [themselves]". By that time, they were discussing how the MSF operations should deal with the humanitarian impact on climate change. After a couple of minutes, I went to the point and asked: since when and how does MSF deal with IDPs? He stared at me for a couple of seconds before he laughed and answer: "MSF has never dealt with IDPs". I remained silent, thinking to myself: What? Is he joking? Is his answer part of the sarcastic humor typical of this French-born organization? After seeing my sense of perplexity, he would later start to explain what he really meant by saying that "MSF has never dealt with IDPs". What he later explained became a key entrance for starting to bring light to a key and almost obvious difference between the human rights and the humanitarian genealogies and effects that I hadn't considered before. As he argued,

> MSF is not really taking care of the status of the person, by essence even if it's very arbitrary we don't care about who is who, what we look at are the needs, so if the person is in need of medical assistance we see that, whether an IDP, a refugee, or anybody else, that concern, eventually if there is a concern, we come after, the starting point of the intervention is about the needs, and then the status of the person may have an impact on the way we perform our duties, or prolongation of our work, but that is it, it comes after…(…) I say, we would say that MSF doesn't care about IDPs, we care about people's needs, among them there are some IDPs (Personal Communication, June 2007)

In fact, before that day, I had discussed and talked with many of my interviewees working at the UNHCR or the United Nations Commission of Human Rights. I have also read the multiple reports and recommendations coming from these offices. But what this officer explained that day, wearing blue jeans and sandals and whose appearance reminded me of those ex-pats I have seen so many times while in Colombia, contrasting with the more formally dressed officers of the UN, was evidence of my "blindness" at that moment. Perhaps by that time I had accumulated so much information that I just couldn't see well enough those simple posters informing members of the CPSJA about "post traumatic therapy" orientations given by the MSF staff pasted on the wall of the storehouse of the community. In fact, staff from MSF had arrived at the new settlement of San Jose(sito) where the CPSJA had been displaced again in 2005 after Luis Eduardo's massacre and where they had remained for approximately four months. After they left, only the pasted photocopies of those posters were left behind them. I just couldn't see at that time what he explained to me that afternoon. What he told me was that for MSF, the IDP is an irrelevant category for starting their humanitarian operations. As he said, the long- debate over the usefulness of this category (more on this debate below), is "a non-debate" for the organization's interventions and operations in the field. He explained that their operations do not start from this category but from the concept of the basic needs of the suffering population. The fact that they were IDPs or not was neither their concern nor preoccupation. Their type of engagement, following Redfield's (n.d.) analysis on the history of the concept and practice of 'neutrality' within MSF, was not predicated on states nor the legal quandaries of sovereignty. For this author: "Independence, rather than reliance on international law, would serve to guarantee virtue" (n.d: 11). What this

organization worried about was those who suffered and needed clean water or mental therapies during or after a crisis. As simple as that.

I had the same answer later that afternoon while interviewing an officer of the ICRC. In a similar vein, I asked about the ICRC's role in relation to IDPs. For the officer, the Geneva conventions and the 1977 Protocols had already defined the agency's focus on protecting civilian population in the middle of any international or internal armed conflict. Even more, with that similar sarcastic tone of the MSF officer, she told me that right from the agency's beginnings in the nineteenth century they had already worked with victims of internal conflicts including those displaced ones. Actually, in both interviews, I could sense some suspicion over the usefulness of the IDP category and all the recent debates it has launched in the academy and the human rights and humanitarian community. Even more, after I pointed out the absence of a single UN agency dedicated exclusively to this problem area, one of the latter replied by asking if I honestly thought that creating more institutions would improve the protection of these populations. For staff of these organizations, it was clear: the category was irrelevant to legitimizing humanitarian operations; the alleviation of the "basic needs" of the vulnerable populations or their concern for the civilian population in the middle of the armed conflict remained their ultimate goal. The MSF officer had made it clear that afternoon: "the starting point of the [MSF's] intervention is about the needs, and then the status of the person may have an impact on the way we perform our duties, or prolongation of our work, but that comes after" (Personal Communication, June 2007). What matters are those suffering bodies and the profound concern with maintaining and protecting life[4].

The human, before a citizen, and IDP or a refugee, was a living entity whose life had to be protected and alleviated before anything else.

Eventually, the MSF officer highlighted that bringing water tanks to IDP communities may be thought of as responding to a rights-based demand or approach. Hopefully, he insisted, their type of interventions can help to defend the rights of those people. But in their acute sense of pragmatism, that is not their aim or responsibility or starting point of their actions and it will always remain secondary in their list of priorities[5]. But as he reminded me that afternoon, other than taking care and maintaining this minimum *bios*, they also give testimony on what they are seeing in their operations (Redfield 2006). As Redfield (2006) explains when discussing the practice of *termoinage*, this agency would also give testimony of what they are observing in the field from a non-partisan and neutral position. In the MSF officer's words,

> "We know perfectly well that our being present or non-present is a political act in itself, that it has an impact, it may have an impact on the protection of the rights, of the people we take care of (…), but is not the first objective, it is a side effect, a positive side effect eventually, but the main objective is definitely the good health of the person, and if by our *termoinage* which is definitely a political decision to do that, and to be that as part of our identity, if it may have an impact in the protection of the people that is perfect, that is good, but it is a side effect, it is not the main purpose, while we are doing some activities of termoinage like that, we say what we see, what we perceive, what we hear, hoping that the others are going to go further in developing their own response, in the responsibility of providing a response" (Personal Communication, June 2007)

In fact, in March 2006, before I went to Geneva, MSF-Holland in Colombia had published a report reporting the situation of the health conditions and attention of internally displaced and vulnerable populations (Medecins sans Frontieres-Holland.

2006). The report had the title “Living with fear. The Cycle of Violence in Colombia” and was illustrated with impressive black and white photos taken by Jesús Abad Colorado, a famous photographer of war- and displacement-like situations.. The report was meant to call attention to the effects of war on public health and to underscore how the actions taken by the government and other agencies were insufficient to meet these challenges. I remember the fierce critics that the report had in the government agencies. When I told him about the fuss created by the report, in fact, he laughed and just said in his typical ironic tone: “that is pleasant to hear that we had an impact, even if it is a negative one, hopefully there will be some future steps taken by those organizations” (Personal Communication, 2007).

Actually, and in a similar way to the ICRC officer, he claimed that they had been working with this vulnerable population well before the category was put into place in the nineties. As I already described, the MSF officer explained how the agency had in fact started its operations in the context of the internal conflict in Biafra, Nigeria where thousands were displaced without leaving the country in 1971. In short, both the ICRC and MSF started working with IDPs well before the category was created. However, Redfield (n.d.) demonstrates in his analysis of both institutions’ genealogies, that there are also stark differences in the way MSF and ICRC understand and practice ‘neutrality’. As he explains, the former institution was created by French doctors working in the latter agency that disagreed with its methods and rationalities of intervention. The scandals of the ICRC’s work in the Nazi concentration camps became a benchmark of these divisions. These discussions ended with the creation of a new humanitarian organization,

MSF, with a different albeit blurred approach to crisis and human suffering where engagement is no longer predicated on states (Redfield n.d.). But just from their different sort of answers I received and also in the published materials of other agencies, whether in booklets, catalogues, museum exhibitions and also videos, a different set of historical events and protagonists emerged that I hadn't heard in interviews until that moment or read in those reports. My first genealogy of events concerned with the State's responsibility towards its own citizens in the post-Cold war scenario and framed along other events started to become more complex and have different ramifications (see below). A different genealogy seemed to emerge as soon I entered the ICRC museum in Geneva and read in the first text situated right at the entrance of the museum: "the Red Cross came into being through Henry Durant, but civilizations from down the ages have been imbued with concern to preserve human life, as many written texts attest" (International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum 2000: 9).

Immediately after this introductory statement, there was a dark room with long palimpsests displayed from the roof and falling gently throughout the gallery. Some of these displayed sentences written by Confucius in the fifth century BC, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire"; others came from the book of Moses of the Leviticus, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; one more from the Emperor Asóka's 13th decree inscribed on the rock of Mount Girnar in India, announcing that "The conquest of an independent country means murder, death or captivity for the people that live in it, a thought that should deeply affect any one who is a friend of the gods and weigh heavily upon its conscience". The book of Saint Matthew of the 8th century

claimed that “The prophet said: the captive is your brother and your colleague and it is by grace of Allah that he is in your hands. Since he is at your mercy, take care that as regards food and clothing he is treated as you yourself are” (ibid). The atmosphere was silent and dark in that room. One could only stare at those mandates suspended in the air and illuminated with a tenuous light and coming from so many different trajectories and origins. I left the room thinking of my so far crafted and clearly at that moment incomplete genealogy of nation states, human rights and national and international borders.

When I entered the next room, I learned about the role ofHenry Durant, later founder of the ICRC, in treating the wounded and abandoned during the battle of Solferino fought on June 24, 1859. The visitor is informed that the battle was the result of the dispute between the French and the Piedmontese against the Austrians who occupied Lombardy and Venetia in order to achieve Italian unity. Durant, who wrote his memories of the battle when he came back to Geneva, had arrived as a simple tourist to Solferino and was later caught in what the museum booklet states was one of the bloodiest wars of the 19th century, where forty thousand men fell in a single day (Durant 1982, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum 2000: 24). The display included the army uniforms worn by the troops as well as drawings and images of sorrow, dead bodies, fires and scenes from the battle. Next to those images, there were some fragments coming from Dunant’s diary. I read them all but focused on this one:

> “But the women of Castiglione, seeing that I made no distinction between nationalities, followed my example, showing the same kindness to all these men whose origins were so different, and all of whom were complete foreigners to

> them. 'Tutti fratelli', they repeated feelingly. All honor to these compassionate women, to these girls of Castiglione!" (Ibid: 25)

What I want to put emphasis on now is the direction in which Durant's sense of "never resign oneself, but always act!" was framed as indifferent to the nationality of the wounded (Durant 1982). The point was made clear: 'I mind neither your nationality nor birth place, I just want to alleviate you". Similar were the actions of the women of Castiglione towards aiding afflicted soldiers whether they were Italians, French or Austrians. What interests me here, for now, is not so much the extent or the exact delimitation of this suffering and caring community indifferent to the nationality of its members. As the first room of the exhibition clearly shows, there are indeed other trajectories different from Durant's narrative to locate these suffering and caring communities. For now, what I want to convey is the sense in which a 'virtuous practice' (healing the "suffering strangers") not only became translated in the creation of specialized institutions (ICRC) dealing to treat soldiers and the wounded of international warfare, but as Redfield argues (n.d.), it also created a space outside the battle predetermined by a professional status as a medical worker and bodily states related to suffering. It was also in the 19th century, when, according to the same author (n.d: 9), "humanitarianism refashioned a matter of virtue into a moral and legal category focused on health care". It was precisely within these same events where according to Kennedy (2004: 238) we find (within this particular trajectory) the origins of "modern humanitarian law thanks to the work of various nineteenth-century statesmen and diplomats who promoted the codification of rules relating to particular weaponry and types of warfare". Some of these discussions resulted in the 1856 Paris Declaration Respecting Maritime Law for regulating the maritime conflict during the Crimean War.

Efforts to outlaw exploding bullets resulted in the 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration and in 1899 the Hague Convention was declared to regulate land warfare and assert that "populations and belligerents remain under the protection and empire of the principles of international law, as they resulted from the usages of established between civilized nations, from the laws of humanity, and the requirements of public conscience" (Cited in Kennedy 2004: 239)[6].

Within another trajectory of this complex genealogy of humanitarian law, or the suffering and caring communities, Anghie (2005), Castañeda (2007) and Giraldo (2008) analyzed its origins in the context of empire-building practices prior to the nineteenth century or the emergence of those nation-states who signed these international treaties. These scholars review the work of Francisco de Vittoria who in 1565 set up specific instructions and standards to legitimize the use of force by the Spanish empire to intervene and occupy the recently "discovered" New World in the sixteenth century. According to these authors, using Thomas Aquinas' concept of the *justus bellus* discussed in his *Summa Theologiae* written in the thirteenth century, Vittoria articulated the available uses of the "natural law" to discuss when and under what specific conditions there existed a right to intervene in these territories. It is here where he introduces his argument on cannibalism as a major offense to the concept of humanity and the right to bury the dead (rather than ending in a human stomach) (Castañeda 2007). Only in this context and not in any other were the conditions established for granting the rights to intervene and to occupy those territories. For Vittoria, according to Castañeda (ibid.), the right of intervention did not ceased after the war ended. It also gave the invader post-war

rights to continue the intervention to secure peace under a specific definition of humanity, hence, of what it means to be human, that was already coded in natural law (ibid.). As Anghie (2005) also argues regarding Vittoria's defense, this same peace came to be the condition towards the imposition of international trade agreements by which the those indigenous population should contribute towards its harmonic functioning.

Thus, this complex genealogy that condenses trajectories coming from natural law theory but also from the efforts of those diplomats of well established nation-states or just simple individuals like Durant to reduce the suffering of strangers, do pose more subtle and simple questions. Why do we care for a 'stranger'? Why do we want to set standards to limit suffering during warfare? Why do we risk our vacations helping the wounded in the middle of a war of others? Why does Durant have to announce that he made no distinction between nationalities, or that the women repeated feelingly that 'we are all brothers' during their treatment of the wounded? Why are all those mandates talking about the stranger, the neighbor and the treatment of the captives? Why the need to write and engrave those mandates? Why do I, you, he and they, nation-states or empires care? What and why the type of actions launched by Durant, including helping the wounded in the field of Solferino or later founding the International Committee of the Red Cross, or participating in the drafting of the Geneva Conventions of 1864? In fact, as I show in the next chapters, the answers to these questions currently inform patterns, attitudes and moral debates concerning our care of the other and also the type of actions deployed by both religious communities and secular professionals for helping those 'suffering strangers'. As such, they go straight to the dissertation's central dilemma

concerned with the question of what it means to be human, in terms of that human that needs to be protected, alleviated, cured and empowered. Evidently, for Durant and the women of Castiglione but also for Vittoria, MSF and ICRC, “the human”, not even one’s kin, regardless of its nationality or traditional customs of the suffering community, was and still is an *entity* whose life had to be protected and alleviated before anything else.

A long overview of the various histories of “natural” and “humanitarian” law and its preoccupation with the suffering stranger is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Again, what I want to underscore are the effects that this linkage between Durant, religious experiences, Nation-states and empires and the “suffering stranger” have and how can we trace them ethnographically. Whether one starts this exploration through the ethnography of the religious or secular dimensions of humanitarian practices, to an extent that one even wonders about their clear-cut division in the supposedly modern world (Asad 2003), my interest here lies in the effects that particular cosmologies, rationalities, the moral world, etc, have on the type of actions they are deploying. Certainly, as I show through the dissertation, most of the agencies and NGOs working with the IDPs communities have their origin in religious communities, whether Jesuits, Buddhists, Quakers, Lutherans, Jewish, or others. And although I make these differences clear, this dissertation does not discuss extensively the cosmologies of these and other religious or secular communities also working with IDPs. However, at certain moments I signal how the same cosmologies and narrations of some of these religious groups have been central for the type of actions that human rights and humanitarianism perform on the ground. In chapter 2, for example, I show how classic tropes of these religious experiences such as

‘martyrdom’, ‘pilgrimage’, ‘holocaust´ and a particular understanding of ‘justice’ and ‘mourning’ do inform the present day patterns of mobilization of victims movements in Colombia and Latin America. Hence, I focus precisely on the type of practices and reactions these launch and organize different sorts of practices in the name of that “suffering stranger”, in what specific forms and directions and not in other ones.

The citizen and the State(s)?

The day after I landed in Geneva, I decided to find my way using a city map in order find the headquarters of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. I took the map and found that I could actually walk to my destination. After I came down a hill covered by trees and interrupted by offices of other important international agencies, I ended right where I was supposed to be. A huge, open plaza crossed by buses and the city train was in front of me. On my left side, I saw a sculpture approximately 20 meters high that I later could recognize as a gigantic chair with one of its legs missing. I later learned that was a sculpture dedicated to remember those victims of landmines by the artist Daniel Bernstein. Below the chair were water fountains emerging from the floor and falling again, delineating semicircular trajectories. Children played across the elusive and joyful sprinkles of water, and some tourists took pictures of the sculpture. Beyond the fleeting semicircles of water and right behind the giant chair, and across a formidable gate some 50 meters away, rested the palace of the United Nations Office at Geneva . After taking some pictures , I looked to my left side and saw from a distance a blue building that reminded me of the space-shuttles of my childhood. I walked in that

direction and could later figure out a familiarity with the huge sign located right at top of the pyramidal entrance made of glass.

It said ‘UNHCR’ and next to it lay the symbol of the two large hands sheltering someone, “the suffering stranger”. I had found it, the headquarters of the UNHCR. At the entrance there was the visitor center but right across there was a white chamber with another sculpture inside. One could not enter but only glance from the door. This time, the sculpture, a memorial, held those sheltering hands protecting a stranger. On the bottom of the sculpture were some candles and right in the middle a plaque said “In memoriam to UNHCR staff who gave their lives while serving refugees, Aux collegues du HCR qui ont donne leur vie au serives des refugies”. Some days later, other HCR officerstalked about this memorial and especially about the suicide bombing ravaging the United Nations offices in Baghdad. The attack had taken the life of the famous and much cherished Brazilian officer Sergio Vieria de Mello and other colleagues. I had to buy the book made in honor of this official sold in the Library shop to learn more about a man whose memory was still present in the building as my interviews confirmed. In the back cover of the book it described “An uncommon person, both devoted official and rebel spirit, this pragmatic philosopher combined the talents of a brilliant spear and a man of action in the field. Peace activist, he was above all a humanist who, through his tenacity and his open-hearted approach to others, brought a spirit of renewal to the United Nations” (Gordon-Lennox and Stevenson 2004). With low voice and sad eyes, officers remembered him and others who had died in their operations. I came several times to the monument just to think about what I was doing there anthropologizing and

problematizing this institution. I still do. But that first morning, after some seconds of silence, I headed to the main entrance of the building where another sign stated that the "Reception of Refugees and Asylum Seekers 10am to 12am and 3pm to 4:30pm, Reception pur les demandeurs d'asile et les refugies, 10H00 A 12H00 15H00 a 16H30".

In that early morning of my first day in Geneva I thought that I had already seen too much. But with great surprise I heard some music coming from inside the building and learned that a concert of the "Refugee All Stars" group was about to play. I convinced the guard who coincidentally was married to a Colombian from the province of Monteria—another coincidence I thought, precisely one of the provinces that saw the beginnings of paramilitary activity in the country in the nineties—to let me in. Once in the entrance hall and for the following hours I heard the concert of reggae-like sounds and lyrics while dozens of staff in their formal dress danced and applauded the group. Parts of the message conveyed by the artists in their lyrics were meant to thank the UNHCR office for its dedication and concern for the refugee problem. At that moment I remembered something like Althusser's (2001: 122-1) four levels of interpellation: the "interpellation of 'individuals as subjects', their subjection to the Subject, the mutual recognition of subjects and Subjects' and the absolute guarantee that everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be alright (…) so be it". Refugees right at the center of the headquarter office thanked the same institution for their protection. Formally dressed staffed cheered and applauded while dancing behind the formal dresses. Perhaps what all these signs, songs, acts, sculptures and monumental architectures were reproducing and

repeating was something coming from the old times: the sheltering hands protecting the suffering stranger, indeed, a very religious and mystical metaphor. And most importantly, the "suffering strangers" (refugees) thanking those sheltering hands (the UNHCR) right in their house. The whole state simulacrum overflowed with excess (Mbembe 2001, Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). 'So be it'. But only now those hands were located right at the top of building of a major global agency responsible for responding to 31.7 million refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons (UNHCR 2008).

So when did it all begin? Since when had those sheltering hands become very complex and sophisticated international agencies constituted by nation-states with a budget that in 1994 exceeded US$1.4 billion, primarily because of refugee emergencies in the former Yugoslavia, the Great Lakes region of Africa and elsewhere?[7] several scholars working on the humanitarian and human rights regime have gone all the way back to the Enlightenment 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). The difference with the MSF or ICRC 'needs' approaches are indeed evident with enormous consequence in the rationalities and practices behind their operations on the ground. By looking at the way in which the rights of man were endowed for being a citizen of a particular nation-state during the Enlightenment, 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 the 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 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 rights 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. Indeed, a particular cosmopolitan axiomatic of the 'human' seem to have powerfully sedimented here (Cheah 2006). On the other hand, as Gilroy (2000) claimed referring to Kant's (1764) *Observations of the National Characteristics*, these nation-states were racialized entities with specific distinctiveness: the French had a predominant feeling for the morally beautiful, the Spaniard is earnest, taciturn and truthful, the Italian appears a mix of 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). For Quijano (2000), the nature of their races classified these populations according a hierarchy of paid, unpaid and enslaved labor. 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, Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* (1795) proposed the idea of a world citizenship in which any citizen

living outside his/her original territory must be welcomed and enjoy particular rights in another country.

During the eighteenth century, as Foucault (1997) has suggested, the classic theory of sovereignty acknowledged by the right of the sword and linking the king with the sacrificable became complemented by the power to make 'live' and let 'die' (Agamben 1991, Rose and Rabinow 2006). Indeed, this relation between the European republican state and this type of power is one that deserves much deeper analysis in the future (Rose and Valverde 1998). On the other hand, other scholars have complicated this same trajectory by describing these forms of power in the context of colonial history (Scott 2005, Stoler 1995, Castro 2005). For these authors, many of these techniques of power like the organization of spaces and the disciplining of bodies were first introduced in the plantation system by Europeans in the Caribbean. Castro (2005: 168) would point out that the Borbonic reforms of the eighteenth in America established a structure of hospitals oriented towards the prescription of the moral and physical health of *a* population. These reforms were part of the large project of rationalizing the economic and administrative structure of the empire. However, whether we start at the plantation system, the Borbonic reforms, or the new hospitals of France, what is compelling for us is how this type of organization of power targeted the population as both the empirical object and the transcendental subject in relation to the emergence and spread of industrial capitalism.. What is clear for our purposes is how these diagrams of power focused precisely on those marginal populations ultimately unproductive and problematized through many mechanisms and techniques along this direction and geared towards

optimizing *a* population. This reconfigured procedure of a 'pastoral power' was disseminated through hospitals, workhouses, school reforms, Laws of the Poor, but also through the enclosure movement and the vagrancy acts (Polanyi 2001, Marx 1976, Rose 1999, Foucault 2000, 2000, 2000b, Castro 2005).

The classical dual head of the king of repression and persuasion came together to organize matter into this specific form required by this new conjuncture of maximizing the efficiency of *a* population (Gramsci 1971, Deleuze and Guattari 1987). In the continent of Latin America, Castro (2005), Pedraza (1999) and Rojas (2004) show how this efficiency was organized along the aegis of the 'purity of the blood' and the process of civilization which deployed different techniques ranging from the more subtle to the more violent for the 'whitening' of the population. Through these subtle and violent mechanisms, according to Foucault's notion of govermentality, the finalized function of these diagrams of power was "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"[8]. Now, the empire, the nation-state or the civilized elites of the country were given the task of taking care of its citizens (not just "suffering strangers") through practices that introduced mechanisms such as forecasts, statistical estimates and overall measures whereby the will to govern became intertwined with the production of truth (Foucault 2000a, 2000b, 1997: 246). For Rose (1999), with the introduction of these

techniques, the characteristic modern triangular geometry of power composed by discipline, govermentality and sovereignty became finally assembled.

The Refugee as a new problem area

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 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.

What is remarkable about these events, as Lippert (1999: 298) illustrates, is that before these 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." Moreover, 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 movement, or even the refugee category did not exist before. In fact, as noted by Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989), this term, the *refugee*, was first used to refer to the 200,000 Huguenots expelled from France and arriving in England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1589) by Louis XIV in 1685. The Edict had declared that different religious traditions would be tolerated in France. After its termination, thousands of Huguenots were expelled from France and arrived in England to be referred to in this way. For Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo (1989), the notion also carried a distinction between those well-received populations such as the Huguenots who in fact shared the same religious traditions of the host populations, and other similarly fleeing populations such as the Iberian Jews. For these authors, the latter were clear examples of the unrecognized refugees[9]. For Soguk (1999), this event makes evident how from the beginning the deployment of this category became central for those state-making-practices in the Westphalian world that in this case were meant to organize religiously homogeneous populations. "*XVI Siècle. Le Herault Accuiell Ici les Refugies Huguenots*" [Sixteenth Century, Hérault[10] receives the Huguenot refugees] was written on a plaque I saw in Geneva underneath a huge mosaic depicting soldiers and a group of persons in great sorrow including mothers feeding their children and other men with great long black hats. I came to the mosaic without intending to finish there; it just happened. So these were the first refugees, I thought, I have finally found them. I just had to take a photograph, it was an important moment: it all seemed to start here.

In conclusion, the category *refugee* did exist well before the nineteenth century, but never with the simultaneous and dense materialization of a series of programs, technologies and apparatuses that only emerged in the first decades of the 20th century. Rather, in a very Foucauldian way, Lippert (1999: 299) 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". But very soon, along with the events surrounding the First World War, as I soon show, a series of programs, technologies and apparatuses, both as discursive and material practices, emerged during the first decades of the 20th century to respond to these problematizations. Indeed, the offspring of such a preoccupation would precisely be meant to incite, statize, inscribe, represent, regiment, formulate and channel these flows of people escaping an armed conflict under the tutorial governance this new problem (Soguk 1999). Needles to say, as this author argues, confirming the importance of the margins for the same production of the State (Das and Poole 2004), it can be argued that the array of technologies and techniques spring-boarded by this problem have become in themselves key sites for modern state-craft (Soguk 1999).

Accordingly, it was precisely this conjuncture that in 1920 led the League of Nations to commission the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen[11] as the First High Commissioner of Refugees with specific responsibilities for Russian refugees only (Loescher 2004). After some years, he was also asked to deal with the consequences of Kemal Ataturk's counteroffensive against the Greek army in Asia Minor (Barutciski

1998). Throughout his mandate, however, Nansen received very limited political and economic support from donor countries (Barutciski 1998). Even more, as Lippert argues, refugee relief consisted in philanthropic endeavors financed through private means, with the League's office 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 became a notable achievement precisely in a period that apotheosized the nation-state. Not only did it identify and make intelligible thousands moving across national boundaries, but simultaneously created something entirely new at that time: international refugee law. For Soguk (1999), on the other hand, the advent of international refugee law in which the Nansen Passport occupies a central place within the whole set of state-making practices. For him and many others (Arendt 1951, Malkii 1992, 1995), refugee discourse is embedded within a statist regime and epistemology (and hence a particular order of the world), producing boundaries and normalizing the figure of the citizen subject. In the following pages, I make clear how this statist epistemology and ontology is confirmed in official discourses

and practices of international and national agencies today. Through this technology, the passport, in which an international agency could act for those whose countries of origin had rejected them 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 had already materialized by this time. As I show throughout the dissertation, the figure of the IDP could not emerge from these trends but would have to wait for other 'ruptures' and 'transformations' of these same conceptual manoeuvres to take place.

As noted by Skran (quoted in Loescher 2004), the Commissioner's 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 far from what Chandler (2002) calls a broadening humanitarianism that involved a developmental approach fostered by NGOs and international organizations since the 1980's, one can trace 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 the rationality of this early humanitarianism, there is no political debate over the root causes of why people, in the 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 the 1980s that separated the legal and political spheres represented the perfect embodiment of this depolitized discourse.

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)[12]. In 1945, argues Ishay (2004: 268), 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-sovereignty-citizen inherited from the Enlightment, which secured protection under the territorial jurisdiction of its own state, at least theoretically, had to be reorganized. 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. That 'suffering stranger' had become a problem to the extent that those sheltering hands needed to transform into large international agencies to enable their protection.

Almost a year after I visited Geneva, I went to the UNHCR headquarters in Bogotá. I had some contacts there and wanted to know more about this institution in a different setting. An informal, inspiring, passionate and energetic Colombian officer

whom I had already seen in several conferences on internal displacement in the country was waiting for me in his office. When asked about his functions and roles in the institutions\, he took a sheet of white paper and started to draw what after what a couple of seconds came to be an irregular pyramid formed by different parallel horizontal lines with circles between each of them. He asked me if I was familiar with that “structure”. He insisted after my silence, “Did I come from a family affiliated with the armed forces?” “No”, I said. Well, he explained to me: this is the classic structure of a military unit with different ranks and a strict hierarchy of distribution of spaces and control of activities. He pointed at a circle right in the middle of the sheet of paper. That was him. That circle was his boss and that other was my other contact inside the institution. He explained to me that there were strict roles distributed along a very firm structure. I remembered the UNHCR headquarter building in Geneva, and thought for a moment of its particular architectural form: a huge glass cylinder of approximately 100 meters in diameter composed with circular corridors ranging from the first to the last floor. One could imagine that from the highest corridor, one had the best view of the whole building. Indeed, from the central hall of the building where the “Refugee Stars” were playing, one could feel the gaze of those officials. “We are here”, said my contact working at that building in Geneva and pointing at the first and second floors. “They [the bosses] are up there”. During my interview in Bogotá, I was thrilled by what this Colombian officer pointed out: I should not forget, the UNHCR was created and designed by militaries after the Second World War. Its structure and organization just had to follow the military script that had fascinated Foucault (1977) in his analysis of the penitentiary system.

But next to this military metaphor, I now remembered that introductory talk given by a South American UNHCR officer in his sixties in the headquarters in Geneva to young interns coming from very different parts of the world. Most of them were from countries of the North, including North America, Europe, China and Japan. I recognized a couple of them back in North Carolina: they were actually undergraduate students from Duke University. When narrating how he had actually arrived to work in the UNHCR, he confessed that everything started while flirting with a neighbor who was at that time working in this institution in San Salvador. After talking with her and being curious about what she was doing and why she went to bed so late, he volunteered to help her with her tasks. Several days later he found himself being sent to the border with Honduras to volunteer on a massive return operation with 5.000 refugees coming back within a highly politicized situation. For the next hour, he told the audience how from there he had been later transferred to many other countries including Mexico, Costa Rica, Mozambique, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Bosnia. He warned the young interns: you will have to move a lot, approximately every two years; you can be sent to Geneva or to the heart of Africa. He made clear that it was a difficult job for families and couples, one had to move a lot, and your family or spouse would not always like to go to attend humanitarian crises in war-torn countries.

He pointed out that in UNHCR life expectancy is very low, with a lot of single people and bored colleagues. But not to discourage the interns, he later explained that in fact: "(…) a lot of colleagues found their spouse in the middle of nowhere, a Spanish colleague found a Norwegian spouse in the middle of nowhere, in Rwanda, they were

sent there, fell in love, and got married, met people who met in Afghanistan, then went to Philippines, there is also a private life in the organization (…)" (Personal Communication 2007). He also talked about the difficulties and frustrations of working with other agencies that had a more developmentalist approach to emergencies that had to be attended immediately. He referred to these projects as NIP (no impact project) or ZIP (zero impact project). Actually he recommended the agency for those people who like to see the results on time. He was indeed proud to be in an agency that he described was making a difference for those vulnerable populations and that combines field operations with work at the headquarter office. Although he insisted on the dilemmas of many colleagues:

> "I think this can be very difficult for some spouses, it is also very difficult for colleagues to have children, like in Costa Rica I had a colleague with a child with Down Syndrome, so he had move only in that country so that the child will only learn Spanish and then they want him to move to a French speaking country and he said no because my child is going to regress in terms of his learning process, he quit UNHCR, went back to Spain, and now is a mayor of the town, and his son is now 19 and he is doing extremely well (…) but he had to quit UNHCR and I think because of the rotation system, now we have something, we didn't have at that time, that you can present your case and say that you don't want to be in Geneva because of X, Y and Z (…) now that is a problem, because if you are lucky enough, that means you get a waiver, that means that **som**ething out in the field is being preventing you from coming to Geneva, so there is a big fight in UNHCR, there are the pro-rotation system and there are the against rotation system, interestingly, the against rotation system are mostly women because I think that it is more difficult for a professional woman to cope with all the rotations (…)" (Personal Communication, July 2007)

It was indeed marvelous to hear this officer narrating all these events. The conversation was not in my plans. A colleague who was doing an internship at the UNHCR office that I met coincidentally invited me to enter and listen to the talk. When he finished, he reminded the audience that everything had started through an informal

and innocent visit to his neighbor. He said that at that time things were much easier, one could get hired without having a professional degree, and even having some basic computer skills would be enough for working with the institution. “But things are not like that any more”. He said and continued: “You need to earn a degree, a master’s as minimum, and also, very important, practice and improve your English”. Things had changed; the profiling of new employees is now much tighter, there are more standards and requirements that have to be met before being hired by the agency, even on a temporary basis, the most usual case . In fact, while having dinner with another officer one week after, he explained to me that the most common professions at the agency are lawyers, political scientists, social scientists, social services and technical, shelter food-engineers among others. He explained that people in the headquarter offices are highly educated but that there is also a large rotation between offices and operations. In conclusion, the agency at least from the testimony of the South American officer had not always been like that: he had started his way in the institution almost by luck. But not any more, he warned the interns. It had transformed itself in recent years into an efficient diagram for exercising power, with strict hierarchies, control of activities, rotations and distributions. Now back to the description.

Loescher (2001) lists several international agencies created during these years to address the refugee problem. For example, institutions such as the Intergovernmental Committee 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 t 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 refugees vis-à-vis the sovereign prerogatives and interests of states (Loescher 2003). These documents defined a refugee as someone who has 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 specifically Communist regimes. In this context, Nyers (2006) argues, these refugees were perceived as “voting with their own feet”. During the meetings, as Loescher (2001: 45) describes, 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 Latin American and other delegations to change their position (Ibid: 45)[13].

In the post Second World War period, as well, new flows of people outside the European border led to the formation of other institutions such as the 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 meshed together in relation with refugee recognition and protection in Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories (Farah 2003, Feldman 2007). As both of these authors suggest after reviewing the difficult distinctions arising from the complex situation by which any person could be a refugee in one moment only to be excluded from this category afterwards, not even the term “Palestinian Refugee” has been adopted by the United Nations or is included within the populations of concern of the UNHCR. Interestingly for us, the agency came after years of work by the American Friend Service Committee in Gaza (Feldman 2007a).

Haskell (2001) explains that Quakers had a determining influence in the formation of the humanitarian conscience that interestingly coincided with their role in the abolition movements but also in the design of the Eastern State Prison in Pennsylvania in 1829 which consolidated "the ideology that would isolate specific forms of human misery, allowing issues of freedom and discipline to be faced in a relatively simplified model" (Davis, quoted in Haskell 2001: 346). Indeed, the classic model of panopticism was meant to alleviate suffering and believed in the capacity of single individuals to improve their present conditions (Haskell 2001). As Feldman (2007a) suggests but also as indicated by the titles of the book in the shelves of the William Penn Quaker backpackers next to Capitol Hill in which I stayed during my fieldwork in Washington DC, their actions for the advancement of peace and justice have turned them into key actors in humanitarian relief, where they deploy their staff in emergency crises but also in becoming fierce critics of those in power. Interestingly enough, the same backpackers where I was staying was founded to host anti-Vietnam war protesters in the late 1960's. As I show in the following pages, the Quakers became key actors for the emergence of the IDP problem in the mid eighties; not coincidentally, as recipients of the Nobel Prize, they nominated the CPSJA and other displaced communities for the Nobel Prize in 2007 (Quaker Action 2007).

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

Enlightenment 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 the emergence of the refugee was the simultaneous appearance of a heterogeneous network of events such as the Nation-state, the Nansen passport, The League of the Nations, and the Minority Treaties, at this moment and not before. Suddenly, those sheltering hands had become bureaucratized institutions in charge of responding to this new problem. In conclusion, as Lippert (1999: 299) shows, refugees came into being as the category refugee was being invented.

The Post-war and a an emerging ‘sovereignty’

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 lay 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 "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, "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).

For some of these human rights NGOs, a whole reconfigured notion of sovereignty had to be brought within the UN system that, among other things, would impede the ability of governments like that of Sudan "to invoke state sovereignty [in 1988] when it obstructed or denied outside relief assistance to displaced persons" (Cohen 1991: 16). As I argue in the following pages, this key discursive and non-discursive strategy mobilized by specific NGOs in Geneva, New York and Washington in the late 1980s was paramount for the early history of the emergence of the IDP problem (Weiss and Korn 2006). 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 through additional programs of refugee development[14]. Together with new orientations on refugee law which favored the enforcement of policies of containment in northern countries, as argued by Chimni (1998) and Vidal (2007), these events facilitated the shift of focus from refugees to IDPs as well as the justification of humanitarian intervention[15].

Here, it is important to locate within this tendency the appearance of some other important actors that figure in this story in the following chapters. Until now, I have focused mainly on the history of the UN system and humanitarian agencies created for protecting these populations. Now I need to include other actors that converged during this period to make new problems and type of interventions possible. These new actors are precisely connected with those same conflicts of the Post-Cold War decades that were apparently producing these unknown victims later recognized as IDPs. As I could learn after some interviews with staff of these organizations such as the Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA), Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Fellowship for Reconciliation (FOR) deployed in the PCSJA but also accompanying pilgrimages of the PCN and other victims' organizations in Colombia, their historical legacies are connected with the conflicts of the eighties and the role that volunteers had in these situations (see also Nelson 1999). Experiences in Chile, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala figured in the narrations of WOLA, FOR and PBI officers when I asked them about the first steps of these organizations. While in Washington or Bogotá but also when navigating the rivers of the Pacific region with international delegations, I was told that the first volunteers of both organizations had also been part of the "international human rights movement" of the late 1980s working with anti-war movements and human rights organizations in the Central American and the Southern Cone regions during the eighties. It was striking to confirm that some individuals now working in any of these organizations had actually previously volunteered in the others as well. It was a 'small family' indeed. For example, a particular Argentinean-born staff member working now in WOLA not only had worked with PBI in Colombia where she met the same communities

focus of this dissertation, but had also been part of the 'small cluster of people' working at the Brookings Institution (see discussion below) responsible for the whole drafting of the first reports, books and principles dealing with the IDPs.

On the other hand, WOLA had been crafting reports of human-rights abuses of Nicaraguan contras in the early eighties, had sponsored US delegations to monitor elections in several countries in the region, and also "helped secure passage of the 1999 Leahy Law, which requires the vetting of soldiers and officers to ensure that human rights abusers do not receive US military training"[16]. From its origins as a project of US churches, "WOLA had emerged at a unique moment in US and Latin American history. (…) the immediate spark was the September 1973 coup in Chile, which provoked both sorrow and anger amongst those who witnessed or learned the atrocities that resulted" (Youngers 2006: 2). When I visited the WOLA offices in Washington D.C., I screened a documentary that I had co-produced with my partner on the current situation of Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region. Several afro-Colombian activists that had participated in the drafting of the Law 70 which gave collective territorial rights to Afro-Colombian communities were invited to discuss the documentary. They came to Washington after being persecuted and threatened in Colombia for their role as leaders of the first IDP Afro-Colombian organizations in the Pacific region. The screening of the documentary and the discussion were set within a whole campaign and lobby initiated by WOLA and targeting the Democrat Black Caucus and other historically aligned sectors, in order to stop the approval of the Free Trade Agreement. Bookshelves with more country reports and posters against FTA agreements covered the walls of the improvised

screening room. With important key contacts in the Senate and Congress, WOLA, in coalition with other organizations and through delegations heading to Colombia and visits of these same leaders to Washington, had been until that moment successful enough to freeze those agreements.

PBI was also deeply influenced by religious movements. As remembered by a PBI officer in Washington, the influence of Buddhist and Gandhian principles of non-violence and non-partisanship on some of its founders had enormous influence in the formation of PBI and its main activities right from their beginning. Ranging from the international accompaniment practices organized around the principle of non-partisanship and non-interference, PBI had in 2006 an average of 65 volunteers from 25 countries working in Indonesia, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia and Nepal who were financially, logistically and conceptually backed up by an international structure of 15 country groups[17.] The PBI officer narrated,

> "PBI started out as a group of Quakers and Gandhian disciples; like Gandhian disciples, they started to talk about ways to have non violent accompaniment projects for human rights defender that were threatened by violence in the belief that international attention was needed so that these people will be able to continue to work but in a way that was not intervening with their own processes, so various human rights defenders started petitioning PBI, (…) this was the late seventies and then in the eighties that is when we first started accompaniment in Salvador Guatemala, at one time we were in Sri Lanka so there you can see the time frame where there was civil war in El Salvador, the basic philosophy was first of all we are not partisan, we don't interfere in the internal structure or work of organizations we accompany, non –violence (…)" (Personal Communication, July 2007)

While in Washington, I visited the PBI Colombian office with walls covered by posters of memorabilia of human rights activism and from the same communities they are

working with. As was explained to me and also could confirm by watching those white shirts silently accompanying threatened Colombian human rights activists or by their strict mandate to not interfere in any of the PCSJA activities, their principles of non-interference and non-partisanship have allowed them to work in these countries. On the ground, as I could hear from different interlocutors, these same principles are also constantly discussed, scrutinized and challenged both by acompañantes, leaders and communities they are working with. On May 2008, I was invited to join a meeting in the coastal and predominantly afrocolombian city of Turbo, Colombia, center of PBI operations across the whole Urabá region. The meeting was meant to celebrate but also evaluate their ten years of presence in the region. Some veteran PBI ex-volunteers that had participated in many of these first operations appeared. Others sent their descriptions by email. I guess I was invited because my presence and even physical appearance in the CPSJA was somehow similar to that of the "internationals". Once in the meeting, some of these old acompañantes narrated some of these tensions emerging from their strict mandate for exclusively protecting leaders while leaving the same communities without their accompaniment. For them, accompanying whole communities would precisely violate the organizations' principle of non-interference. They felt how this same principle had created ambivalent situations which felt utterly uncomfortable and frustrating. For example, during the launching of countersubversive operations throughout the Urabá region, they just couldn't be there while members of these communities were been assassinated. They were protecting leaders; they just didn't have enough staff to "cover" both communities and leaders. But with a limited budget and staff, that was all they could do.

Unlikely, for FOR, who accompanies the whole community at least in one vereda (hamlet) in San José de Apartadó, some of their activities had begun right at the beginning of the twentieth century supporting conscientious objectors (CO) and contributing to the legal recognition of CO rights[18]. With similar religious origins, FOR was also founded by Christians who gathered in Cambridge, England in December 1914. With what I can call the "American-like stereotype of fierce human-rights activists", FOR (and also WOLA) has and still organizes tours by US senators and peace activists to these same communities and organizes protests and vigils at the School of Americas for its role in training militaries, among other activities[19]. These organizations had been in fact fundamental for pressuring US senators and congressmen for vetting the 17th Military Brigade in Apartadó to receiving any US funds and pressuring the Colombian government for prosecuting its infamous and ill-famed general, Rito Alejo del Rio[20]. After the general, had eventually been freed in 2001, he was re-captured in September 2008, accused of directing and leading military operations (Genesis operation) with paramilitary units for persecuting and cleansing the Urabá region any leftist organizations[21]. While differing in their histories and trajectories, rationalities and mandates, scales and operations (more in Chapter 5 below), these organizations together with others such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch, would continue with the same tradition of keeping a physical presence in those perilous settings with the commitment to "talk loud" to those in power (Hopgood 2006).

A newspaper cartoon pasted right behind the desk of the officer of Amnesty International dealing with Colombia in Washington caught my attention. Interestingly enough, she had been a PBI volunteer working with the CPSJA in Colombia some years ago. She was part of those delegations that searched mountains in order to find the bodies of the March 23, 2005 massacre. She told me that she had passed through difficult psychological stress after that event. She had to quit the job and come back to Washington after the massacre only to find a new job precisely in the Colombian desk of Amnesty International in Washington. In fact, other volunteers I interviewed in their field operations, also mentioned the desire of returning to the US only to work towards reorienting the US aid and foreign policy programs in South America. From gossip talk, I later learned that she was closely related with Senator Patrick Leahy's top aid at the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. True or false, it doesn't matter; the same Committee decides and approves funds for the Colombian military brigades according to their record of human rights abuses. In that moment, I remember that when I invited one of the leaders of the CPSJA together with FOR to the US tour that took him to Washington D.C, San Francisco and also Chapel Hill, he actually had stayed for two nights in the house of this top aid who had also visited the CPSJA several times. Signed by the famous cartoonist Grosso, the cartoon behind her desk depicted a soldier running to inform his general and shouting that "They are attacking our position!!!". The general answers: "Who, the FARC or ELN [Colombian's largest guerrilla groups]? "No sir", said the soldier: "Amnesty International and Americas Watch!!!!" I laughed silently. In fact, these same actors will become key protagonists in the consolidation and mere survival of the same internally

displaced and threatened leaders and/or communities focus of this dissertation. Needless to say, they would also introduce those white shirts, flags and jeeps in the landscape of these same communities.

The Decisive (Epistemological and Cultural) Turn: Sovereignty and Human Rights

By the late eighties, a whole series of actors, including many of the previously mentioned, colluded to compose and stabilize the IDP category. As recalled by central protagonists of this story in Geneva, New York and Washington still working in some of these key NGOs such as the World Council of Churches, the United Nations Quaker Office and the Refugee Policy Group, their offices were receiving reports of a new phenomenon that did not quite fit within the established frameworks of humanitarian and human rights crisis. These reports from the "grassroots level", as it was recalled, coming mainly from Sudan, Sri Lanka and Guatemala, described the forced displacement of thousands of inhabitants by the armed conflict who did not abandon their country of origin22. As noted by Weiss and Korn (2006: 17), church groups were "among the first to feel the impact of the growing number of internally displaced persons"[23]. Not coincidentally, it was these same NGOs which started to prepare conferences, reports and documents to be circulated within the UN system. In fact, these were launched to meet the objective of highlighting the plight of this new particular population [this new and unknown "suffering stranger"][24]; and I will add, to think and feel compelled about it in particular ways. In my conversations with one of the key person in this area, the task was not simple: there was no "place" for this new problem within the UN system. Hence, a whole series of strategies (to be discussed below) had to be put in place to make this new problem thinkable and namable: the decisive (epistemological and cultural) turn.

Two international conferences addressed this emerging issue: 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 at Guatemala in 1989 (Cohen and Deng 1998). These publications would become relevant for starting to stabilize the identity of their 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 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 substitutes the actual relations and practices of the "beneficiaries, burying the latter's experience in the matrix that organizes the institution's representation". From this perspective, the conference in Guatemala is important because it gave a first 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 disturbing 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 upon the issue a year later, requesting 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"[25]. In what would later be known as the Cuenód Report, prepared by Jacques Cuenód, a recently retired UNHCR

official, the evidence was clear: “within the United Nation system there is no entity entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that aid is provided to needy internally displaced persons”[26]. By the same year, the Commission on Human Rights, in which many of the protagonists working in the above-mentioned NGOs had important links going back to the “international human rights movement” of the late 1980s, “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-eighth session an analytical report on internally displaced”[27]. 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 and for projecting this new problem area within the “human rights” lenses. 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”[28]. By 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights emphasized the importance of United Nations human rights bodies giving special attention to the IDPs problem area[29].

The rarification of the discourse: the representative

Thanks to this report and the number of conferences occurring simultaneously in Geneva, New York and Washington, the Commission requested the Secretary-General “to designate a representative to seek again views and information from all governments on the human rights issues related to internally displaced persons.” This representative (and

not a rapporteur) should submit annual reports and compile country profiles to understand more fully the issues related to IDPs[30]. Apart from this mandate, the representative should develop a comprehensive global strategy for providing effective support, protection, assistance, reintegration and development support to IDP's (Deng and Cohen 1998: IX). Indeed, the production of knowledge, as Redfield (2006) claims for the case of MSF (Doctors without Borders), is to a great extent what his mandate is about. As the future representative (Deng 2003) argued much later, an important pillar of the mandate was the development of research into of internal displacement. Books, international conferences, reports, statistics and surveys would become central in his mandate. But in order to claim its moral and even technical authority, the representative should also visit "the field", give "voice" to the victims and presents "facts" during his mandate (Redfield 2006).

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 (Cohen and Deng 1998). This institution, the Brookings Institution, located right next to DuPont Circle in Washington DC, would become a fundamental player in the emergence of this discursive formation. I was indeed thrilled after entering the building and passing security to meet the "place where everything began". One of the oldest think tanks of the United Status, the Brookings Institution was 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"[31]. The website continues describing that 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." Indeed, I saw those offices packed with reports coming from all over around the world but especially many from the US.

As Deng told me in the interview we had in December 2005, the Secretary-General at that time, Boutros-Boutros Gali, 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).

As described by Korn and Weiss (2006), Deng consulted with the Brookings Institution over the possibility of combining his own position as head of its African Program with that of the Representative of the Secretary General[32]. It was clear from the beginning that the position of the Representative was "unsalaried" and would receive few resources from the Commission of Human Rights (Korn and Weiss 2006). Hence, the Representative first devoted his actions to gather enough partners for the mandate: not only the Brookings Institution and the Refugee Policy Group, but also the governments of Norway, Great Britain and Austria and former colleagues of the Yale and Harvard Law Schools. 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 that of IDPs into 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' and not just on the 'needs' of the person as the staring point of their interventions.

As was described by several protagonists of this story in our interviews, a key move for mobilizing this new agenda was to locate this representative and his mandate outside the "UN system". For them, this external location gave him and the small group of persons in charge of the mandate independence and freedom from the limitations enunciated within the UN system. In several conversations, officers involved in the Mandate recalled these early years in nostalgic and vivid terms, stressing the intense work loads, the limited resources and the cramped offices. Between 1992 and 1998, with his small team of collaborators of the Brookings Institution and other International Institutions, the Representative commenced the first global research on internal displacement based on country profiles (Deng and Cohen 1998), published the Compilation and Analysis of Legal and Normative frameworks for Internally Displaced Persons (Deng 1998) and finally, elaborated the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement in 1998, a "soft law" in charge of orienting governments on how to respond to the problem of IDPs.

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."[33] The second report this time prepared by the Representative and, which included several consultations with other agencies, states that controversies on the first definition emerged. Specifically, controversies were raised over 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 of 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 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 Committee for the Red Cross replied that this definition "is too general to serve as a basis for a specific instrument"[34]. As I already argued, for some participants of the "humanitarian" family the category debate was not a primary concern for their operations. But for those early years and in fact, very important for starting to stabilize this particular object, the Representative suggests in 1993[35] that what

is needed is to identify the main features of a working definition and the initial one should serve this purpose36.

However, for other voices still situated within the UN system today, the category was understood as an important "advocacy tool" that helped to raise awareness and mobilize resources to address the needs of this specific population. As a UNHCR officer argued,

> "I think the term was very useful as an advocacy term, because it was part of this infringement of state sovereignty, this process of responsibility to protect and the guiding principles and the idea of the IDP was a very important tool for advocacy purposes, I think that when the institution is not set up, more or less, it becomes more problematic and more difficult, but from a humanitarian perspective and also from an operational perspective, because refugees for UNHCR have a clear legal status, have clear criteria for determining who is or who is not a refugee, there is always a subjective element in terms of saying who is a refugee or not, but it is a clear legal status, whereas IDP is not a status, it is a description, it is basically an attempt to ascribe to all individuals the rights they are entitled as citizens or nationals of their own country (…) (Personal communication, 2007)

For the latter voices, the situation of IDPs remaining within their own country required unusual measures for guaranteeing their protection. Usually, as they also argued, the same Nation-States would be held responsible for those displacements or would be unwilling or without capacity to respond to these crises. Such an argument in itself legitimized a separate and distinct category from the one of other vulnerable operations (Kalin 2000, Cohen 2006). In Colombia, at least, as a recent survey of the situation of the IDPs in 2007 confirmed, IDPs are the most marginalized population even among the traditionally poor strata of society (CODHES 2008). According to this logic, they (IDPs) cannot be handled or protected with the same measures of normal poor populations; they

need special measures. But in 1993, the Representative suggested that what was needed was to identify the main features of a working definition and that the initial (above) one should serve this purpose[37]. Although independent humanitarian organizations and observers in non-African states might disagree, his decision started to stabilize this particular object within the UN.

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 arrive at a conceptual platform for making the mandate operational. Foucault's comment that the formation of strategies is not external to the discourse, but is essential for its deployment, is crucial here (Foucault 1972). What one is looking for then is those necessary strategies that made something enter into a discourse the way it did, how it was even operationalized and how it became constitutive of it. Accordingly, I want to analyze how the IDP problem area appeared in the way it did, how a series of statements came together and how they were operationalized and discussed right from its beginning. In this sense, 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 in internal violations of human rights, had to be reworked.

Upon taking up the UN mandate, the Representative and other international researchers and lawyers of the Brookings Institution had to come up with a conceptual platform for making it operational. Among the people recruited by Deng in these early years was Roberta Cohen, “a pioneer of the international human rights movement” and former executive director of the New York-based International League for Human Rights that I also could meet in Washington DC (Korn and Weiss 2006). Together, they introduced three major components of a proposed international system to benefit IDPs (Cohen 2006). The first of these was a conceptual framework to address the fact that IDPs remain within their own countries and are subject to the authority of their own governments. The second was a legal framework to set forth the rights of the IDPs and the obligations of governments and other actors towards these populations. The third and final component was a set of institutional arrangements at the local, regional and national level to create a more predictable and stable response.

As Deng’s 1994 annual report states[38], he followed some basic principles and assumptions to be able to fulfill his mandate. Indeed, many of these stemmed, in Deng’s words, from the “culmination of work begun in the late 1980s to see how the end of the Cold War changed the way conflict and conflict resolution were perceived in Africa” (Cited in Weiss and Korn 2006: 24). First, his efforts were geared towards enhancing the prospects of providing effective protection and assistance for IDPs. Second, since IDPs fall under domestic jurisdiction, this can best be 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. The implication of

sovereignty as responsibility had been previously worked out by Deng and other scholars writing about the notion of good governance in Africa (Cohen 2006). Indeed, as Deng (1993) suggests, 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[39]. In fact, this link became a fundamental conceptual maneuver for the actions and recommendations of the Representative, together with his diplomatic preference for engaging government officials in dialogue. As Korn and Weiss (2006: 24) describe this decisive epistemological and cultural turn:

> "It was a new way of thinking about an issue that was central to the problem of assistance and protection for the internally displaced persons. It was a way of squaring the circle, to reconcile the seemingly clashing principles of state sovereignty and nonintervention, on the one hand, with the need to halt the worst kinds of abuse of human rights, on the other hand, and even to intervene militarily in the most egregious of cases."

As I also mentioned, an important direction that the mandate took in these early years was precisely to choose the UN Commission of Human Rights as the best prospective venue in which to lobby for intergovernmental action (Korn and Weiss 2006). Other options considered included the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (Ibid). From the beginning, as many of my interviews confirmed, this meant that the IDP problem was framed within a "human rights perspective" and not just one of a "humanitarian" emergency. In fact, at an international conference in Washington in 1991 that many participants would later look back on as "'the place where it [the IDP problem area] all began'" (Weiss and Korn 2006: 25) Roberta Cohen explained in one of her first

key papers that “the international human rights community can play an important role in improving the protection afforded to internally displaced persons”. Not only did IDPs become intelligible under this vision, but it also prescribed appropriate measures for alleviating and protecting this population: “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). When governments are incapable or unwilling to provide protection and assistance, however, then some of international action becomes an imperative (Deng 1993: 20). In fact, for the Representative, echoing what had become a 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).

Finally, the 1998 report states that in consultation with experts it was agreed that to remedy the situation, a major review should be undertaken to develop the comprehensive approach needed for an effective international protection for internally displaced persons40. This review was published in two books and a compilation and analysis of existing normative frameworks and legal standards (Deng and Cohen 1998, 1998a). A caveat is thrown onto this project: it should not be merely a theoretical study, devoid of practical application: “Research and operations take parallel but intersecting paths”[41]. 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.

Beginning in 1993, the Representative also initiated the coordination of international legal standards and the institutional arrangements addressing the case of IDPs with a team of lawyers from different European and American universities. As Deng (2003) argued much later, the defense of sovereignty and the fear of international interventions in domestic crises were responsible for never building enough leverage within the international arena for creating one single institution dedicated exclusively to the IDPs problem area. Instead, the default approach corresponded to a cooperation coordinated by the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) which included the different international institutions like 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 (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization of International Migration (OIM)[42]. Within the existing UN system, however, as the 1994 report suggests, the UNHCR was considered the most pertinent to the needs of IDPs. In fact, as the report notes, this agency had already extended its mandate on refugees to include the internally displaced in specific operations in response to requests from the Secretary-General[43].As I will describe below, it is interesting to note that Colombia was one of those first operations where UNHCR came with the mandate of working with IDPs in 1997.

In the summer of 2007, as I was told by the UNHCR officer in Geneva, some reports made in the years 2002 and 2003 found enormous gaps within humanitarian assistance programs. In this context, the Humanitarian Reform appointed the UNHCR with the responsibility for the protection of IDPs in 2005. The humanitarian reform (2005) was launched by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Jan Egeland, another Norwegian who coincidentally, had been also in Colombia from 1999 to 2002 as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser. The reform was meant to assign specific tasks and make more predictable the protection and assistance in complex emergency situations. As discussed in my interviews, rumors suggested that actually the whole humanitarian reform was oriented towards the IDP problem but this version was never meant to be official. Due to the lack of any single agency oriented towards this particular problem, or problems stemming from the lack of coordination between agencies, the IDPs still seem to be an unresolved problem for those sheltering hands in 2002 and 2003. The lack of a timely and effective response in Sudan in 2004 was in the memory of the humanitarian community (OCHA, n.d.).

Another “eye-opening experience”, as it was called by an UNHCR officer explaining the reasons behind the humanitarian reform, was the 2004-2005 Tsunami in Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. “There”, he said, “you had a huge inflow of money, everyone tried to do it in their own way, and [we had] very poor coordination of the response” (Personal Communication 2007). One would wonder if in Egeland’s memories of the Colombian state’s negligence and abandonment of the IDPs protection and assistance in 2005 also helped to legitimize the whole reform. “To enhance the

predictability, accountability and partnership between agencies and to point at a specific agency for responding to particular problems in the context of complex humanitarian operations" (Personal Communication 2007), were the common reasons used by many of my interviewees when describing the objectives of the reform. Indeed, the humanitarian family had entered into the audit cultures (Strathern 2000). From then on, the UNHCR would be held responsible and accountable for the protection cluster approach.

When asked about what exactly was meant by 'protection', I received an obvious answer: it depended on the context of the emergency situation. Framed within a "human rights configuration", protection could include camp management in order to ensure that IDPs receive the assistance that they are entitled to. Within this particular configuration, the advantage was to get away from a charity scheme operating in a top-down direction. It can also include those remote operations where United Nations staff cannot be employed because of security. But in other contexts, it can mean strengthening the legal standards or promoting the access to documentation for IDPs. In his account, and also in many others given both in Geneva and Washington, the description of the different contexts focused generally on the difference of working with "strong" or "weak" states. There were the cases of Somalia where there was "no State" and where operations were much more difficult in the absence of clear "duty-bearers" and "right-holders". As he said, "what if duty bearers are not around to be strengthened?" (Personal Communication 2007). In the most obvious sense, his words echoed those same arguments of Kant and other thinkers from the Enlightenment for describing the almost sacred link between the State and its citizens for precisely defending, protecting and assuring those rights. "There

is a social contract between a citizen and a state" was his sentence while quoting Jurgen Habermas'44 argument that "needs to come between the subject and the state". In one word, 'protection' meant that there is a Nation state protecting its own citizens displaced by internal strife. But for him, the ambivalences were still there:

> "I think the way we think of protection, in humanitarian work, is so new, and is such a novel concept that we really haven't dealt with all these dilemmas, that is why I think in a classical case Colombia makes more conceptual sense to everyone, and this is more maybe on what we have done in a refugee situation at least from the UNHCR perspective, where you try to build the capacity of the states, to accommodate and to receive to fulfill their obligation in international refugee law to take in asylum seekers (…) I think it is much more difficult when we get in this difficult scenarios, where you have a situation like Sudan, Somalia and Cambodia, what we are trying, you know, how do we define protection, protection is all activities aimed at ensuring the full respect for the rights of the individuals, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, so we define protection as the full respect for all rights, so it can mean everything, economic, social, I think one of the huge problems of the humanitarian community as such is to definition, if that it is a broad definition of what does it mean by protection or not" (Personal Communication July 2007)

For him and for other staff interviewed in Geneva and Bogotá, UNHCR actions coordinate different kinds of efforts towards meeting this same goal: strengthening the role of this entity to protect its own citizens. And in certain contexts, this includes simultaneously providing humanitarian assistance in emergency situations where nation-states do not have the capacity to respond to them. In less than 24 or 48 hours, he said, they can activate the protection cluster approach as for example in Pakistan because of the 2007 floods. But in other situations, like Colombia, many of their actions are precisely directed towards the goal of "strengthening the state". In other contexts like in Turkey, both the UNHCR efforts but also those of the new Representative of the Secretary General for Internal Displacement, the effort first needed is oriented towards

overcoming a legacy of mistrust between the state and the displaced (IDMC, TESEV 2006). “At least in Colombia”, as an officer working with the current United Nations Commission of Human Rights said, “the state is there” (“el estado está”) (Personal Communication 2007). Explaining the ´human rights approach to protection, the UNHCR officer affirmed,

> “(…) this human rights based approach has two fundamentals, one is strengthening duty bearers and strengthening the rights holders, sometimes you do that in combination, what if duty bearers are not around to be strengthened, so then you have to focus on the rights holders, these people to be able to exercise their rights to health, education and also to be protected from violation of their human rights… I think in the context of Colombia, (…), you have a strong state, you have a strong institution, you also have a strong civil society, so for an external agent to be a facilitator of that process, it becomes apparently easier, than when it is much more blurred, which capacity are you suppose to build?” (Personal Communication, July 2007)

In fact, this same vision was actually confirmed by an internal document reviewing the UNHCR Best Practices of the in the country: “Colombia, despite its long-standing armed conflict, is far from being a failed State: (UNHCR n.d). In that precise sense, the UNHCR officer argued, “in a classical case Colombia makes much more conceptual sense to everyone” (Personal Communication 2007). In this context, UNHCR energies focuses on helping the nation-state to count (better), identify (better), relieve (better) and protect (better) the IDPs. In fact, not only his words and vocabularies were channeled through this entity, “the State”, but ultimately, also the institution’s desires and beliefs, as Nelson (2004) and Stoler (2005) argue, pushing us to also include desires and affects into our analysis of this “fleeting entity”. But later in the night he confessed: “it maybe a myth that we actually can work with a human rights approach, we can believe

that it's a human rights approach, but I am not sure whether at the end of the day it gives the desired impact that we believe it is" (Personal Communication, July 2007).

At the end, while I skeptically asked if that was enough for the protection of IDPs, he said that because UNHCR reports directly to the community of Nation-States, "they have too, that was all they can do". "UNHCR is accountable to the executive committee which are [precisely constituted by] States, this is the United Nations, (…) you always have to draw the line" (ibid.)). And "in contexts where several staff working in other countries had been declared as "persona non grata" and had to leave, they have too". He took the example of Darfur and talked about the real ability for the international community to protect people in this context where people had been physically attacked and there were great breaches of humanitarian law precisely because "we are unwilling or unable to protect". With great frustration he said, "Why cannot we do more in Darfur?" he asked. And he later interrogated me fiercely, "I am asking". I just didn't have words; I thought to myself: "I'm an academic, a postructuralist, a deconstructionist and a critical thinker, I am suppose to problematize everything, not to give solutions or set policy orientations". I felt for a moment in front of the abyss. I didn't know what to say. My advisors back in Chapel Hill had also put this same question to me. I remember I had also remained silent for a while and then tried to escape the question by saying something like my ultimate role as an academic was precisely [much to my comfort] to analyze the hegemonic articulations of power (Mato 2000). Fortunately he broke the heavy silence and confessed to me: part of this fascination of working in the UNHCR was precisely to see how policies are made. He remembered Bismarck's tale about the fact that if you

have seen how policies are made, you will never sleep: "There are two things you don't want to see being made—sausages and legislation"

Enunciative modalities: the Post-cold war and problems of nation building

The analytical report of 1992 identified six causes for internal displacement worldwide[45]. 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[46]. This neither is an irrelevant event. For Deng, appreciating the underlying causes of these conflicts is crucial for taking appropriate measures and initiating ameliorative actions. The 1993 annual report starts by 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"[47]. 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 marginal explanations, appearing in just a couple of single paragraphs in these foundational works, note the telecommunication revolution which helped to make public the plight of internally displaced persons mainly in Iraq and Sudan (Cohen and Deng 1998). In fact, the 1989 Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) established a precedent for

UN action with displaced persons albeit with reluctant agreement from Khartoum (Korn and Weiss 2006: 17). Also, the emergence of an international human rights movement that denounced the government of Sudan receives mention and the 1991 Gulf War, which authorized military intervention after recognizing the Iraqi government's failure to fulfill its responsibilities to its citizens (Cohen and Deng 1998: 4). As Chandler (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 (2002: 50), for example, the NATO assault on Kosovo was the first internationally military action conducted in the name of human rights and international questions of governance rather than international security (see also Weiss and Amic 1998).

Following a series of visits carried out in 1995, Deng issued a provocative summary of their findings: "common to all of the countries visited, the main cause of displacement is violence in the context of internal conflict"[48]. Interestingly, they were not victims of earthquakes or natural disasters; they were victims of internal conflict and very often abusive governments. As noted by Chimni (1998), discussions regarding causes of population displacement have been oriented towards internalist explanations that while relevant, are one-sided and fail to capture the complex reality of the root causes of refugee flows. As he argues, the massive displacements in both Yugoslavia and Rwanda were also prompted by the implementation of policies dictated by international institutions. For Duffield (2002: 1052), following reports of international institutions such as the UNDP in the nineties, the pattern of the description of conflicts worldwide

reinforces a series of “implicit ‘them’ and ‘us’ dichotomies”. Their conflicts are internal, illegitimate, and identity-based, 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. For this author 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 that then led to the massive flows of people.

The 1998 annual report: the stabilization of the problem area

By the time of the Representative’s 1998 report, the IDP problem had almost become a fully stable object. In its first paragraph, the report 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[49]. In 1998, both the compilation and the research study of the Brookings Institute were published. On these grounds the report suggests that the challenge now is largely an operational one of monitoring and translating the normative and institutional progress achieved through research into effective action on the ground50. To this end, new actors are brought into the scene. The report recommends links between relief and development agencies, in which the World Bank provisions for operating in post-conflict scenarios will be welcomed51. Nansen’s vision of linking aid with development and economic solutions has thus officially materialized, at least on paper.

Also, the report notes that a global survey of the internally displaced persons is in preparation by the Norwegian Refugee Council, "in which a global information network has been created for this purpose"[52]. Later renamed as the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), with offices in Geneva, this effort developed into a key protagonist specifically dedicated to the production and dissemination of knowledge on IDPs worldwide. As I was assured in their head offices in Geneva, this center seeks to be the main provider of information related to IDPs, covering more than 50 countries. It not only updates the existing data base with country visits and recollection of all materials related to IDPs, but also organizes workshops and provides information to decision makers in governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. Finally, the IDMC publishes books for advocacy purposes and conducts campaigns to complement statistical information with "[personal] narrations, recuperation of feelings and the spirit behind these vital stories" (IDMC-NRC 2006).

Despite the rapid increase in knowledge about the problem, and although several existing institutions had begun to respond to it by 1998, there were still no signs indicating the future formation of any single agency for IDPs. In fact, the mandate of the Representative still lacked clear institutional ground, and would remain in limbo in subsequent years. As an external consultant to the Secretary-General for the IDPs, his office also lacked financial stability. In his 1994 annual report, for example, he described how the resources available to him are minimal in comparison with the monumental challenge of his mandate. In his 1998 annual report, he explains he had to rely on external support initially in the form of an intern from Harvard, extended by short-term

appointments until her departure the previous year. The report mentions that an associate expert, who had been “generously provided” by the Government of Norway, but whose contract had since expired, helped to supplement this position. Another problem highlighted in this document was the limited amount of time that the Representative himself could devote to the responsibilities of his mandate. The position being voluntary, according to his agreement with his employer, the Brookings Institution, the work of the mandate should not exceed one quarter of his work time[53].

These are some of the leaks and fragments of this story. On one hand the emergence of the IDP as a recognizable problem displays all the hallmarks of expanding, bureaucratized discourse, rapidly disseminated and stabilized. On the other hand it remains institutionally ambiguous, filtered through existing frameworks and part-time endeavors. Throughout these early years, the primary actors devoted to the issue repeatedly stressed the significance of its global scale. The report of 1998 finishes by saying that although the numbers have fluctuated, a modest estimate places the world’s IDP population at 25 and 30 million persons, spread over 40 countries. 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 magnitude and global dimensions”[54]. 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”[55].

By the same year, the “Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement” are produced, a “soft law” designed to contribute over time to the creation of a moral and political climate necessary for improving responses, a benchmark from which to monitor and measure the treatment of internally displaced persons worldwide[56]. For Deng and Cohen (1998: 7), the guiding principles “set the standards that should put all groups on notice that their conduct is open to scrutiny and will be measured”. The report of 1998 describes them as an attempt to articulate the meaning and nature of protection for IDPs[57]. In fact, as was confirmed by both my interviews in Geneva and by the same folders in the streets of Bogotá, they have introduced a particular rights-based language that not only makes the IDP problem area intelligible worldwide, but also prescribes an appropriate course of action to be taken by IDPs themselves. It is interested to not that the reformulated definition in the guiding principles eliminates both the temporal and quantitative criteria with regard to IDP status. Instead it adds a new right that had never appeared before: the right not to be arbitrarily displaced[58]. It also mentions large-scale development projects not justified by public interest as a potential cause that would qualify as legitimate for considering any persons as IDPs, and calls for 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 correlation 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) confirms, 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 finally has a normative and institutional foundation upon which to build a more effective and sustainable system of international responses to the crisis of internally displacement[59]. They are not just words; literally, they do things. Thus, they are already part of the training models for field staff60. As I described before, they are also mediated by those IDPs standing outside the offices in Bogotá. Specifically, Principle 18 of the Guiding Principles was pasted on the door of the old and abandoned cooperative used for refugees by the CPSJA in San José de Apartadó in 2005 before they started a new displacement:

Principle 21

1. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of property and possessions.

2. The property and possessions of internally displaced persons shall in all circumstances be protected, in particular, against the following acts:

(a) Pillage;

(b) Direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence;

(c) Being used to shield military operations or objectives;

(d) Being made the object of reprisal; and

(e) Being destroyed or appropriated as a form of collective punishment.

3. Property and possessions left behind by internally displaced persons should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use.

Endnotes

1 It is interesting to note that Korn and Weiss (2006), in their recent book about the history and politics behind the emergence of the IPD category between 1992 and 2005, in which both authors worked as consultants with work on IDPs, start their work with the famous Margaret Mead's quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Although this dissertation clearly moves away from granting specific individuals as the sources of action, I still consider them as key targets where an array of entities, discourses and materialities flow around.

2 I will argue that the analysis of these particular responses embedded in games of truth, institutions and practices of control has been one of the dimensions of the Foucaultian analytic more influential in the discipline of anthropology in recent years (Escobar 1984). Although I do not claim that the analysis of games of truth, institutions and practices of control can be equated to a strict analytic of the state since the former one is precisely informing a different theory of power, one can still contend, as a whole recent scholarship of the state suggests (Das and Poole 2004: 5, Vincent 2002, Sharma and Gupta 2006, Nugent and Vincent 2007), that it is precisely through the language of the state and the economy that anthropologists have traditionally constituted the tropes of social order, rationality, authority, and even externality for defining their subject. In fact, one could think of those ethnographies that have analyzed the institutional interventions arising in response to problems such as 'underdevelopment', 'overpopulation' or 'less developed countries' (Escobar 1995, Ferguson 1994, Mitchell 2002). Building on notions of biopolitics and govermentality precisely devoted to answer the question of how particular subjects are created by certain games of truth around particular problematizations (Foucault 1997, 2000), these ethnographies have attempted to anthropologize those institutional responses for governing populations through a close attention to the relation of discursive and non discursive practices, institutional apparatuses and techniques of control. The problem of how to govern populations, with what techniques, programs and rationalities, indeed, the trademark of studies using the Foucaultian notions of biopolitics and govermentality (Rose 1999, Gordon 1991), was the central question addressed by these anthropological studies. More recent ethnographies have focused on how these interventions get assembled through time and how they travel physically and materially through different places and objects by using perspectives coming from actor-network-theory (Latour 2005, Mosse 2005, Tsing 2005, Raffles 2002, Hull 2003). They have brought also more richness, tension, friction and texture to previous analysis of globalization (cf, Appadurai 1996). Other ethnographies have integrated into their analysis more (legal and illegal) actors different from the ones located in international organizations and have included national politicians, political parties, religious groups, NGOs, etc. (Sinha 2006, Medeiros 2005, Tate 2005, Bornstein 2005, Nordstrom 2004). An interesting group of works have historicized them by linking these interventions to the much earlier "Laws of the Poor" of the seventeenth century (Rose 1999), to colonialism and the plantation system in the Caribbean (Redfield 2005, Scott 2005), or have analyzed their spatial properties of "vertical and horizontal encompassment" (Gupta and Fergusson 2005). Particularly relevant for my work are those ethnographic analysis of humanitarian operations relevant to the refugee problem such as those classical works of Malkki (1995, 1996) in Tanzania, Farah (2002), Kelly (2005) and Feldman (2006) in Gaza, Pandolfi (2003) in Kosovo, Fassin (2005) in France, Fassin and Masquelier in New Orleans (2006), among others. For ethnographies of internally displaced persons in Colombia set in the intersection of global, national and local forces, I can mention the works of Uribe (2004), Castillejo (2000), Salcedo (2006), Osorio (2001). Together, these ethnographies have placed their analysis in contexts of forced migration, resettlement and return at the juncture of global and local forces, while bringing ethnographical detail to the diverse actions these populations undertake in order to survive.

3Several recent collections in the discipline anthropology precisely recognize this long lasting legacy with the state and the institution. Ranging from ethnographic studies of the state, to new theoretical approaches combining the Weberian, Gramscian, Foucaultian and Postcolonial scholarship, among others, see Vincent 2002, Sharma and Gupta 2006, Das and Poole 2004, Nugent and Vincent 2007.

4In fact, for UNHCR officers in Geneva and Bogotá, the same reflection on their operations has made them also focus on those vulnerable populations that surround IDPs and their communities. By analyzing the

"difficult distinctions" (Feldman 2007a) in warn-torn societies where it is almost impossible to differentiate IDP from other citizens, they argued about the need to integrate their attention on these populations. In fact, one of these officers asked me, what will be the usefulness of this category in context such as Iraq or Sudan where one doesn't wants nor should prioritize the attention to specific clusters of the population. In fact, this same analysis has made them integrate into their programs in Colombia the attention and protection of these other vulnerable populations. This officer in Geneva, by discussing these and other complex emergency situations, was even suspicious about the future usefulness of this category in the years to come.

5Redfield's (2005) analysis of the MSF main rationalities and commitment for informing and organizing their humanitarian practices in the field concentrates on analyzing this 'pragmatics of life'. For him, the commitment of MSF focus on life in itself can be explained by Agamben's (2000) effort to bring light into an essential division coming from the ancient Greeks between zoē and bios with a powerful occurrence and permanence in contemporary times. The first term expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, humans, or gods) and the latter one signified the form or manner of living peculiar to a single individual or group (Ibid: 3). In the light of this division, Redfield (2005) argues that what MSF (or Duran) cares about is zoe, not bios. For Agamben (1998), according to the Greeks, the power of the sovereign was precisely to make this division between life and the form of living. In fact, he will argue that by signaling this division or what he calls the essential ban uniting the sovereign with the victim, the remaining naked life could be disposable and sacrificed by the sovereign without committing any crime or offense to society. The sovereign could strip the one who would be sacrifice from any form in order to make him *sacrifiable*. Working along these lines, this same condition of nakedness was also suggested by Arendt (1951) in her analysis of the refugee condition in which those persons that were displaced and forced to leave their country were stripped off their own citizenship by moving to another country. For her, the power of the totalitarian regimes that displaced citizens out of the protection of their countries materializes in the nakedness of that bare life without the protection of any states. In fact, and in response to this strange link between the humanitarians and the totalitarian regimes for both working on the same nakedness, Agamben's (1995: 133) claim says that not only humanitarian organizations, in the name of the "sacred and inalienable rights of man", are absolutely incapable of resolving the problem and even of confronting it adequately, but that they also maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they seek to fight. For now, I don't want to arrive to Agamben's conclusions. I want to first see what type of 'things' are they actually doing. See more in the chapters below.

6 Along the walls of second level of the ICRC museum a chronological strip details the major events in the history of humanitarianism and the same organization beginning in the nineteenth century. Only in 1899 it lists the Philippine war of independence, the Chinese war of boxers, the Southafrican war of Boers and the civil war in Colombia. Next to these conflicts are listed the earthquakes in Minor Asia and Russia and the Indian famine and cholera epidemic. In the third column are listed the International Conference of Peace in The Hay, the adoption of the Conference of The Hay of July 1899 to adapt the maritime war to the principles of the Geneva Conventions and the adoption of the declaration concerning the usages of the dum-dum bullets and the creation of the National Society of the Free State of Orange, an independent Boer state in South Africa.

7 UNHCR website, www.unhcr.org, last consulted, September 18, 2008

8 As such, the deployment of this diagram 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).

9For similar examples of these contrasts between welcome and unwelcomed refugee populations in contemporary times such as Canada, see Nyers (2005).

10Hérault: A province of France in the southern coast.

11When interrogated about the role that Norway has had in the refugee regime, a UNHCR Norwegian officer responded that the country has always had a strong idea about the protection and assistance needs of refugees. The officer thought that the country is one of the most per capita consistent and predicable donor supporters of UNHCR but also of humanitarian assistance in general. In fact, the Norway is consistently listed in the agency website as one of the most frequent donor countries. In 2006, it was listed as the second donor ranking per capita with a total contribution of US$: 55,196,801 (UNHCR Website). The officer thought that the reasons for these efforts do have a historical root but also a root in a clear foreign policy oriented to have a high humanitarian profile as well as trying to help people where they are rather than work in coming to Europe. More on this restrictive regime and containment policies below.

12Interestingly 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.

13An 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).

[14] 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.

[15] 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).

[16] From WOLA official website: http://www.wola.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1 . Last visited on September 29, 2008.

[17] From PBI website, http://www.peacebrigades.org/about-pbi.html. Last visited on September 23, 2008

[18] From FOR Website http://www.forusa.org/about/history.html. Last Visited on September 23, 2008.

[19] A recent report prepared by FOR and Amnesty International reported the US training of some of the militaries of the 17th Brigade in Apartadó who were directly or indirectly connected with the March 23, 2005 massacre described earlier (FOR Amnesty International 2008).

[20] "Veto de Estados Unidos a la Brigada XVII" El Tiempo, December 2, 2005.

[21] "La Captura del General del Rio" El Tiempo, September 7, "Dictan Medidas de Aseguramiento contra General (r) del Rio por crímenes de paras en Urabá", El Tiempo, September 12.

[22] For anthropological works dealing with the larger connection between humanitarianism, human rights and religious groups, see: Feldman (2007a), Hopgood (2006), Bornstein (2005).

[23] As I will argue in Chapter 3, the Colombian church was also one of the first actors that recognized the emergence of this problem in Colombia with a publication of a survey in 1995 made through their local parishes between 1985 and 1995.

[24] For a detailed description of these events, see Weiss and Korn (2006).

[25] Cited in E/CN.4/1993/35: 4

[26] Report on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Returnees, Prepared by Mr. Jacques Cuénod, Consultant, UN Document E/109/Add.1, 27 June 1991, para. 109, Cited in Weiss and Korn (2006: 16-17).

[27] Cited in A/48/279 1993: 3

[28] Cited in E/CN.4/1993/35: parr 9

[29] A/50/558: parr 76

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

[31] Information taken from the Brookings Institution official website: http://www.brookings.edu/. Last accessed September 2008.

[32] 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 (Deng and Cohen 1998: ix). The Project on Internal Displacement of the Brookings Institute, as the official website informs us, "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".

[33] "Commission on Human Rights, Analytical Report of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, E/CN.4/1992/23, para 17.

[34] E/CN-4/1993/35: parr 37

[35] Much later, 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.

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

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

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

[39] For a whole discussion on the reconfiguration of the concept and practice of sovereignty in contemporary times, see the special issue of the [POLAR] Review of Legal and Political Anthropology, Volume: 29: 1, May 2006.

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

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

[42] See also E/CN.,4/1994/44: parr. 61.

[43] A/50/558: parr 63

[44] Chantal Mouffe (2005: 84-85) argues that in fact Habermas' aim is to establish the "privileged rational nature of liberal democracy and consequently its universal validity". For her: "the implication is obviously that all societies should adopt liberal democratic institutions which are the only legitimate way to organize human coexistence"

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

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

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

[48] A/50/558: parr 14.
[49] E/CN.4/1998/53: parr. 1

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

[51] 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."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 1990s: convergences and emergences in Colombia

> "Many things are happening today in Colombia. And one of the more important ones is that even though the structures of fear, victims, society and institutions are starting to talk. It is time to make memory. Trujillo: una tragedia que no cesa" First Report of the Group of Historical Memory of the National Commission of Reconciliation and Reparation, September 2008.

On September 16, 2008, the national and international press, representatives from NGOs and international agencies, academics and members of victim's movements, were invited to the presentation of the first case study produced by the *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* (Group of Historical Memory), GMH of the *Comisión Nacional de Reconciliación y Reparación* (National Commission of Reconciliation and Reparation), CNRR created on 2005. The first case study of the GMH covered the violent acts taking place in the Southwestern town of Trujillo, Valle in the early nineties. The venue chosen for the presentation of the study couldn't be more excessively symbolic: the auditorium of the National Museum of Colombia, formerly a panoptic prison constructed in the nineteenth century. When I sat, I started to see who the other invitees to the reception were. I had met quite a few of them through my own research trajectories in recent years. Some representatives of embassies that I met a week before during a breakfast meeting

organized by the CPSJA in Bogotá were there. They had been invited to inform these delegations about the recent episodes that had occurred in the region and provide a follow-up to the investigations of the March 23, 2005 massacre.

At the museum, there were also representatives from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and other similar NGOs and agencies that have come to be usual and frequent actors in recent year dealing with internal displacement, transitional justice and human rights advocacy. Before I entered the museum, I also saw the leader of the *Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado* (the Movement of Victims of Crimes perpetrated by the State), MOVICE, Iván Cepeda. His father, Manuel Cepeda, had been one of the most visible human rights and left-wing advocates from the *Unión Patriótica* (Patriotic Union) in the early 1990s. A left-wing political party that emerged after the Peace Talks of the early 1980s between the government and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the FARC guerrilla group, the Patriotic Union had later disappeared after approximately 3000-5000 members were killed into what today has been known as the 'genocide' of the *Unión Patriótica* (Dudley 2008). As I will show in chapter 3, this new political party also had strong affiliations in the Urabá region. And part of the reason for its extermination will be found in its historical detour in this region. I didn't see him inside the museum. I guess he didn't enter or didn't wish to sit at the same table next to state officials.

The auditorium and the whole museum were secured by bodyguards, policemen and soldiers. Important personalities were going to make an appearance. Vice-President Francisco Santos, coming from one of the most publicly known families in the country, controlling the largest newspaper in Colombia and kidnapped a decade ago, was about to arrive. Once liberated, he founded one of the most recognized and visible NGOs in the country, *País Libre* (Free Country), in charge of leading discussions and actions for the liberation of hostages and the termination of kidnap's in the country. According to several scholars of the human rights movement in Colombia, *País Libre* became a major actor in the nineties in the peace movements in the country; its clear right-wing agenda, where it focused on victims of guerrilla actions while not condemning the State's direct responsibility in other similar crimes like disappearances or displacement, would characterize it (García-Durán 2004, Orozco 2005, Romero 2001). Santos had been appointed by President Alvaro Uribe to be in charge of the whole "human rights" agenda and specifically, for dealing with embassies and international organizations. He sat in the center of the table located right in the middle of the stage. Behind him were bodyguards who passed him his cell phone approximately every five minutes. When he talked, after the initial words of the head of the GHM, he repeated firmly what the former president Ernesto Samper had already accepted some ten years ago when confronted with the conclusions of another commission created to investigate the murders of Trujillo, Valle between 1988 and 1994.

In 1995, the *Comisión de Investigación de Sucecidos de Trujillo* (Commission for the Investigation of the Trujillo events) created by delegates from the Colombian

Goverment, the *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* (Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace) and representatives from the victims, and created thanks to the recommendation of the Interamerican Court of Human Rights, found that almost 107 murders that had occurred between 1988 and 1992 in which State actors were directly responsible had been left in total impunity1. For several authors, both the work of the Commission and the President's declaration became one of the first hallmarks of the human rights movement in Colombia (Orozco 2006, Tate 2006, Romero, 2001). Repeating what was already heard almost 20 years ago, the vice-president clearly said that day at the museum: we ask the Trujillo victims' to forgive us because we were responsible for the 'permanent massacre' (the term coined by the GHM 2008), that had occurred in the region between 1988 and 1994. "We ask forgiveness". I watched the families of the victims present in the auditorium. Some minutes before the lights of the stage had turned on, a friend of mine working in the GHM told me that members of the group were actually afraid of the reactions of the victims' families to the report presented there. They have been famous for their strong and vocal activism. But this time they remained silent. When the Vice-president finished, I just looked towards them and wondered what they could be thinking at that precise moment. Precisely when the whole simulacrum, produced by the fact that the relationship between rulers and ruled had been forged around this particular event, had just begun (Mbembe 2001, Comaroff and Comaroff 2004).

"It is time to make memory"

Right next to Santos sat the Attorney General. At the left corner of the table sat the head of the GHM, Gonzalo Sánchez, an academic recognized as one of the most

important violentologists (Villaveces-Izquierdo 1998). He had also been internally displaced from his original town of Libano, Tolima during the Period of La Violencia (1946-1965) (Sánchez 2006)2. Right next to the vice-president sat the head of the CNRR, Eduardo Pizarro, also shot and injured some years ago. His brother Carlos Pizarro had been one of the leaders of the M-19 guerrilla movement coming also from a middle-upper class background and who had studied in the Jesuits' University in Bogotá. The M-19 had been famous before laying down arms in 1991 for its spectacular acts such as stealing a whole cargo of arms stored in one of the most secured battalions in Bogotá. Also, for taking hostage the embassy of the Dominican Republic for several days and stealing Simón Bolívar's sword right from the Libertador's house that had been turned into a Museum for exhibiting his more private and intimate space. In 1985, and I can still remember the chaos that occurred at my primary school in the opposite end of the city, our teachers were not even sure of what was happening. They didn't know when or how (upper-middle class) kids should return safely to their houses after guerrilla group took the Palacio de Justicia (Palace of Justice) hostage with magistrates and public servants inside. Although the same scenes have been presented in television perhaps a thousand times, I remember vividly the image of military tanks entering the Palacio and firing indiscriminately at every corner of the palace. Today, the events that led to the retaking of the Palacio de Justicia by the military on that day have scrutinized after some accusations of forced disappearances and tortures. Commonly known as the "holocaust" of the Palacio de Justicia, indeed, an intriguing label (see discussion below), several investigations have accused members of the military for their direct responsibility in these acts[3].

In several public events that happened during the period of 2007 and 2008, the head of the CNRR and brother of this charismatic guerrilla leader, later shot during an airplane flight as a presidential candidate, would repeat the same idea in front of disappointed leaders of organizations and members of victims' movements: "He was a victim too, he had been shot and his brother had been assassinated; he was then entitled to talk as a victim". He normally continued his talk and in fact he did in the museum's auditorium, by suggesting that the present government's efforts to honor the victims had no comparison in the international scene. When compared with other similar efforts of Truth Commissions in South Africa, Central America and the Southern Cone, he insisted, the Colombian situation was awkward. The Commission operated without a formal end of the internal conflict or any peace negotiations. He explained that the armed conflict continues in parallel with the Commission's efforts to find the historical truth and provide a grand narrative for the historical memory of the victims of Colombia. He also underscored how different were the outcomes of this effort from those of the Southern Cone which terminated with a general amnesty for all responsible for disappearances and torture.

However, in Colombia, he said, "justice will prevail". For him, the International Court of Penal Justice made ultimately impossible the granting of more general amnesties like those issued in the early 1980s in the Southern Cone and Central America for crimes perpetrated against humanity. And finally, he suggested that the concept of the victim was a very recent invention emerging in the mid twentieth century and related to the Second

World War and the experience of the concentration camps. Despite the other suggestions which I would normally oppose, that particular idea explaining that the concept of the victim was a recent invention was indeed remarkable. Indeed it was, notwithstanding the palimpsests I saw at the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum which precisely suggested an everlasting preoccupation within different cosmologies for that victim, the "suffering stranger", and way before the entrance of the nation-state to the scene (see Chapter 1). Certainly, during the 19th century, the "suffering stranger" was not yet to become a "victim" in the way it was perceived after the World War periods.

In this chapter, I want precisely to connect this recent discovery of the victim as a state preoccupation along with the short history of the human rights and peace movements in Colombia with the previous preoccupation over that other "suffering stranger" discussed in Chapter 1. I follow these vectors in order to locate properly the arrival of the IDP problem area in Colombia. The first section of the chapter covers the emergence and convergence of the first preoccupations (the victim, human rights and peace movements) while the second focuses on the arrival and the emergence of the IDP problem area in Colombia through the passing of the first law in 1997. Above all, I describe precisely how these preoccupations have become in themselves a central aegis where the State has deployed and executed power in Colombia. At the end of the chapter, I hope to make clear the "perverse confluences" (Dagnino) of popular demands and movements and State policies and interventions for the deployment of new forms of government in the name of human rights, the victim, peace and the IDPs (Alvarez 2008). Although I certainly describe the main vectors by which these problems came to be

thought and organized in the country, a dense description of their emergence and destiny in the country is out of the scope of this dissertation. Fortunately, important works in this regard that range from the more ethnographic to others that present a more historiographic version of these events have been recently published (see specially Tate (2005), Romero M (2001, Romero (2000, Orozco (2006)). Hence, the four sections of this chapter analyze separately the emergence of these new four preoccupations, the victim, the human rights agenda, peace and the IDP. However, it is evident that their geographies are deeply connected: some of the most prominent actors, discourses and objects transverse them. Certainly, their frequency in specific regions in the country like the eastern regions of Barrancabermeja, Arauca and Santander, the Caribbean region of the Montes de María, and very prominently, the larger region of Urabá, have also populated these regions with national and international NGOs, white t-shirts, jeeps and other memorabilia of humanitarian and human rights organizations. Needless to say, these have also been the regions most affected by the armed conflict in the country in recent years.

In this chapter, I want to interrogate the consequences of this convergence for the way of thinking, governing and responding to these same problems in specific ways. Also, to shed light on the difficult and complex articulations between the state, popular demands and social movements beyond the concepts of cooption or top-down dominance. Following Alvarez (2008), I want to think about these same four sites (the victim, peace, human rights and the IDPs) in which multiple political and cultural struggles over competing meanings of their importance in public matters have been and are strongly

being waged today. Among a myriad of events, I am precisely interested in those events occurring at different scales that created and disputed the opportunities, frames and even scripts for those vectors to be codified in certain forms and not in others. Certainly, the story I describe is interested in mentioning some of the events, the continuities and discontinuities and the power effects that the articulation of these vectors has created. Thus, I hope to demonstrate that the emergence of each of these came to be possible by the other vectors as well. Throughout the chapters, I analyze this confluence in Colombia through interviews, reports, archives, observations and the personal memories of some key protagonists of these same events, but also coming from my own memories.

Very importantly, the 1990s was also the decade when I finished high school and undergraduate studies, where I could observe "from a distance" many of these same events. It was precisely at the end of my third semester of undergraduate studies, when I decided to take leave by going for six months to work as a primary school teacher in the Serrania de La Macarena, Meta. Coming from a middle-upper class and white background, my information about this region and, to a larger extent, of everything that remained outside the borders of Bogota and its neighboring surrounding area, was reduced to those representations, imaginations and desires of a peripheral savage frontier area (Taussig 1987, Serje 2005). The usual images depicted this region as a stronghold of guerrilla groups inhabited by colonos who had almost paved their way through "empty territories" since the mid twentieth century. They described one of the main regions of cocaine production in the country. Some years later, in fact, the region was chosen for the peace talks that took place between 1998 and 2000 between the FARC guerrilla group

and the government. After some months living in this new environment, where I could interact and spend time with these colonos, I recognized not only the symbolic violence implicit in many of these images, but of multiple and even antagonistic "countries" to be found in Colombia simultaneously.

In the 1990s, this meant that on one side, for many citizens in Colombia especially coming from the middle and upper classes, there was 'the normal country' with long-standing institutions and a more or less stable economic behavior. In fact, this 'normality', when compared to other countries in the region, led some scholars to name the country as one of the most stable democracies in Latin America. But with my visit to this "peripheral" and "savage" region, all these images fell apart; no longer was I living in a 'normal' country but in a country of violent contrasts and inequalities created by the same state-making process (Bolívar 2001, Gonzales, Bolivar and Velásquez 2003). Perhaps, what I was starting to be conscious of was my violent blindness but also, of what Teresa Caldeira (2000) describes as the "disjunctive democracies" of Latin American states, making reference to the coexistence of stable institutions, progressive and liberal constitutions and an average economic growth with staggering social, political and economic inequalities. And just when I returned to school, those families and groups of people with paper folders started to occupy the street corners in Bogotá. As I said in the beginning, forced and massive displacements from the rural areas to the cities had been present (or perhaps normalized?) in the history of Colombia at least since the 1950s as the testimonies recollected in the famous book La Violencia en Colombia (1962) confirm. But never before the 1990s did something like the problem area of IDPs exist. In

fact, by the mid 1990s, 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). The country was shocked.

To be sure, the 1990s was precisely the decade where various peace and human rights mandates, agendas and discourses were incorporated and actualized in different levels yet with enormous frictions, tensions and predicaments ("the perverse confluence"). It also was the decade where paramilitaries emerged in different regions in Colombia, unleashing massacres and displacements while they were persecuting guerrilla groups and/or any popular alternative movements and left-wing political parties in the country. In the run up to the 1988 presidential elections, the notorious young leader of the Liberal Political Party Luis Carlos Galán and two candidates coming from the Patriotic Union, Bernardo Jaramillo and Jaim Pardo Leal and another coming from the M-19 (the above mentioned brother of the head of the GMH), Carlos Pizarro, were assassinated by sicarios paid by famous drug traffickers like Pablo Escobar and with the direct complicity of paramilitary leaders. Declarations of neutral peace zones, civil resistance actions, strikes, sit-ins, dialogues and negotiations, commissions to follow-up those same negotiations, seminars, national awards, public policies, religious, artistic and cultural acts, massive marches, the creation of grassroots but also national organizations and military campaigns like those mentioned before (Genesis Operation), were some of the most path breaking events of the decade. Within this context, the country saw a mushrooming of acts carried out in the name of peace and human rights in the middle of

the escalation of violence in the country (García-Durán 2006). Also, following perspectives coming from the Gramscian and Foucauldian analysis of power and its role in producing new subjectivities and whole environments, it was when a civil society emerged and was produced (Alvarez, 2008, Gramsci 1971, Foucault 1978, 1977, 1980). And lastly, let's not forget, the 1990s, according to the GMH, was also the decade when "victims" apparently started to talk and become visible in Colombia.

The "emergence" of the victim in Colombia

However, as the head of the CNRR rightly pointed out, a whole scholarly production had already described the birth of the 'victim' in the international scene by focusing on the events that took place immediately after the Second World War (see for example, Agamben 1998, Reyes Mate 2003, 2008, Orozco 2005). For these scholars, the images of dead bodies and survivors of the Nazi concentration camps and a whole literature of victims' testimonies epitomized its public presentation (e.g., Amery 1987). For critical thinkers of the Frankfurt School who experienced these wars in very different ways, the events that surrounded the wars had perfectly demonstrated the fact that behind any narration of civilization there lies another narration of barbarism (Benjamin 1968). In Benjamin's classic image, indeed, another victim of those times, the 'angel of history' could thereby only progress by leaving behind the traces of death and destruction: in his famous words, every document of civilization is also a document of barbarism. Marx (1976) had already denounced these same specters in his essay on primitive accumulation and other works and written about their everlasting presence in the subsequent phases of the capitalist formation (Derrida 1994). The specters were there to stay. On the whole,

critical theory described the phantoms and specters that lay behind those monuments of progress and civilization and the strict relation between knowledge and power materialized by using the Marxist concepts of ideology and false-consciousness (Castro 2000). But along these various events, what is most important for our arguments was the fact that victims were neither narrated nor painted: by the achievement of the photography of war and the same concentration camps, they were foremost "seen" (Sontag 2003).

As such, the Jewish experience and its everlasting presence in the discourses on victims and human tragedy, and also in the images and narrations of those survivors who retold the process of 'the "muslim-ization" of convicts in the concentration camps in which they were stripped off any humanity (Agamben 1990), certainly became a crucial vector thereafter for organizing affects, discourses, images and desires (Alexander 2006). Susan Sontag (2003), in her classic essay on photography, suffering and war, has precisely pointed at that moment where the concentration camps were opened and the detainees were for the first time photographed as a decisive moment for spectators across the world for reaching that "suffering stranger". Redfield (2008: 151), somehow problematizing this lineage, would argue that although "the close of the Second World War may have ushered in a new political configuration, along with categories and institutions of governance, but its massive relief works transpired in a less visual and instantaneous era of communications". For him, the "conventional demarcation of televised suffering would have to wait for the Nigerian Biafran war at the end of 1960s, when satellite broadcast brought starvation into middle-class living rooms worldwide".

Wherever we set the benchmark be it the Second World War or Biafra, or the Crimean War or the Spanish civil war, what is important to highlight is that these photographs of the concentration camps or broadcast images of Nigeria became in themselves central for the ways the "victims" and the "suffering strangers" were first experienced by the general audience. Also, for legitimizing the work of those 'photographers of war' and the humanitarians while normalizing the same representations of violence and how as spectators we experienced that "suffering stranger" (Kleinman & Kleinman 1997). Very importantly, the same Nuremberg trials were also mentioned by the head of the CNRR for understanding the origins of the Colombian and other Truth Commissions. Nor is it coincidental that some of the events described before are commonly known as the 'holocaust' of the Palacio de Justicia and the 'genocide' of the Unión Patriótica.

Meanwhile, the Jewish imprint on the way victims became possible and thinkable after the Second World War was later expanded and also problematized by figures such as Fanon (1968) who showed that the horrors of European civilization had historically produced millions and millions of wretched victims in other countries well before the First and Second World Wars. Even more, one could think of figures such as Quobna Ottobah Cugoano (1999) who wrote at the end of the eighteenth century a whole treatise about his life starting with his capture in Africa and covering his whole period of slavery that ought to be included in this legacy. In Colombia, at least, the simultaneous emergence of liberation theology, participatory action research and popular education

programs in the 1960s and 1970s pointed precisely at those victims (not Jews) as primal protagonists of their intellectual and political efforts (Arias 2003, Fals Borda 1979, Freire 1972, Aparicio and Blaser 2008, Mato 2000, Dussel 2000). Indeed, the influence of the progressive church very often aligned with the radical Jesuit sectors in the human rights movement in Colombia have also been highlighted by several scholars (Romero 2001, Tate 2005). As such, it is no coincidence that the recent session of the International Permanent Tribunal of the People held on July 2008 was headed by the progressive Jesuit *Padre* Javier Giraldo, a key figure in the human rights movement in Colombia and strongly connected with the CPSJA (see next Chapter). Right in the small indigenous village of Atanquez in the Southern region of the enormous mountain range crawling through the Caribbean coast, padre Giraldo reminded the audience of the origins of the People's Tribunals in the famous Russell Tribunal. In front of the audience made up of indigenous people coming from different regions of Colombia and the world, but also, by those white shirts of international agencies and NGOs including PBI and the UNHCR, padre Giraldo explained how Bertrand Russell in 1966 organized this tribunal of opinion for denouncing the atrocities of the US during the Vietnam war[4].

Fals Borda's (1979, 1984, 1986) several volumes of the *Historia Doble de la Costa* (Double History of the Caribbean) narrated the invisible story behind the colonization, industrialization and civilization of this region of the country. For the first time, victims' stories ranging from the first creation of maroon communities in the sixteenth century to those peasant organizations who led the rural invasion movement in the 1970s became protagonists in this hidden story of the country (Fals Borda 1979,

Zamosc 1987). In fact, at the end of his third volume he narrates the stories of a group of radical Spanish priests associated with the liberation theology movement working in the Caribbean coast during the 1970s who were later forced to leave the country by the government. But these local intellectuals were not only described and analyzed by these intellectuals. Quite the opposite, the idea was to integrate the same objects of the research study into subjects analyzing their own situation and historical background[5]. The research program advanced by the *Historia Doble de la Costa* was constituted by local school professors, priests, academics, members of local organizations and lay intellectuals as well. Fals Borda and his colleagues including the priest Camilo Torres working at the Faculty of Sociology of the Universidad Nacional (National University) would be responsible for the creation of the Juntas de Acción Comunal (Communal Action Boards) that spread throughout the country empowering rural grassroots communities and a local spirit of self-reliance. This surely was the era (1960s-1970s) of the 'Latin American committed intellectual' working hand in hand with the subaltern or victims' population (Aparicio and Blaser 2008).

I could attend Fals Borda's funeral on August 2008 that took place at the Universidad Nacional parish once headed by Torres before he joined the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, National Liberation Army) guerrilla movement where he would later die during his first combat. Not only important figures from the left were there but the actual mass was presided over by the above-mentioned Jesuit *Padre* Javier Giraldo. After his coffin entered the church, groups of singers and musicians and representatives of popular movements from the Caribbean region but also from the interior departments

of Boyacá and Cundinamarca with whom he had worked closely came to honor the maestro. Fals Borda's ideas of the *Juntas de Acción Comunal* were later made official in Law 19 of 1958, during the presidency of Alberto Lleras Camargo. He himself came to be the minister of agriculture between 1959 and 1961 where he led many innovative reforms in this same direction throughout the whole country. Ironically, in the next chapters, I will argue that these Juntas have become key devices for governing marginalized communities and fragmenting more radical political organizations in the same region of Urabá. Moreover, these are precisely the complex arrangements and correlated effects initiated by the state and by its progressive policies implemented to incorporate and organize these popular sectors. Within these new vectors, subaltern and victimized subjects could enter the already configured "scene" as full-blown knowledge producers – a capability needed for their own liberation from the prevailing banking-model of knowledge distribution (Freire 1972). They too had become visible in the country way before the GMH declared that 'victims had started to talk'. In the following chapters, I will show the imprint of these vectors in the emergence of the CPSJA in the mid-nineties.

For Orozco (2005), together with the victims' public presentation of the post-world war period through these different lineages, so too was the introduction of a vertical model of 'dictatorship' and 'administrative massacres' as the basic metaphors to frame the actions and repertoires of the human rights movement in Colombia since then. For him, another key member of the GMH, this model is still the most common enunciative modality that would shape the common repertories of human rights and victims movements' in the following decades in Colombia and Latin America6. As such,

this model was indeed terribly actualized through the years of repression of Turbay's administration (1978-1982) which created the *Estatuto de Seguridad Nacional* (Statute of National Security) that gave extraordinary and exceptional powers to the armed forces to detain and prosecute sympathizers of left-wing organizations. In fact, Fals Borda and his wife were tortured and detained in the legendary horse chambers of the Escuela de Caballería (Military Cavalry School) in Bogotá. Still today I remember the rumor that some high school teachers from my school had appeared in some blacklists of suspicious followers of these agendas. Indeed, in those dirty years of the 1980s and 1990s where a "culture of terror" seemed to sediment in the country, many public intellectuals disappeared, were assassinated or ended in torture chambers and others even had to go into exile (Taussig 1992). In fact, Padre Giraldo told me that he had to flee the country after receiving threats and experiencing persecution. He was able to finish his studies in France where he published his dissertation on human rights and Christianity (Giraldo 2007). For the rest of the continent, the actualization of this model could not be made more dreadfully clear: dictatorships characterized by their brutality and persecution of leftist parties and organizations were established in Guatemala 1954, Brazil 1964, Bolivia 1973 and Uruguay 1973, followed by the gruesome experiences in Chile and Argentina.

For the purposes of the argument, what is relevant here is Tate's (2005) explanation of how the flag and scripts of these movements in Latin America but especially in Colombia were primarily proclaimed and written by the Colombian Communist Party and liberation theology. And even more, written by intellectuals akin to the vision of victims of State's repression. Alvarez (2008) points at these types of

organizations better exemplified with the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo as examples of the characteristically vibrant Latin American civil society opposed to dictatorships and military regimes. In fact, the second session of the Russell's Tribunal held between 1974 and 1976 inquired into the repression exercised by Latin American dictatorships. In 1978, the first National Meeting for Human Rights in Colombia closely scrutinized the human rights violations of Turbay's Statute of Security (Romero 2001). Tate (ibid), after interviewing Colombian veteran human rights activists, argues that these leftist intellectuals learned from the Southern Cone experiences through the publication of human rights reports and the direct accounts of exiles. Romero (2001) also points at the influence of Amnesty International for launching many of these human rights campaigns in Colombia. In 1980, as this author recalls, Amnesty International came for the first time to the country to denounce the violations of human rights under Turbay's government and it was accused by the latter of being part of an international attack on Colombia. But on the other hand, Romero (ibid.) also mentions as one of the first hallmarks of the human rights movement the organization of the Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (Solidarity Committee with the Political Prisoners), CSPP in 1973. The commission came to be constituted by important personalities such as the famous Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, the co-director of the largest newspaper in Colombia and recently elected head of the Society for International Press, Enrique Santos Calderón, and also the cousin of the aforementioned Vice-President of Colombia, and other important academics and influential popular leaders associated with the peasant movement in Colombia.

In fact, in 1974, the CSPP published the famous book, the *Libro negro de la represión* (The black book of repression) which narrated the tortures, disappearances, persecutions, displacements and massacres that had occurred between 1958-1974 (CSPP 1974). With photographs of famous scenes of torture and dismembered bodies, letters of political prisoners, budgets that clearly showed the cooperation between the US and Colombian armies, images of the new military equipment donated by the US army, photographs of the leading politicians of the Frente Nacional (National Front) and newspaper headlines, the book could actually be interpreted as the continuation of the above-mentioned two volumes of La Violencia in Colombia written by Guzman, Fals Borda and Umaña (2005, 2005a). La Violencia in Colombia, as I already suggested, documented for the first time the atrocious cycle of violence that led to the assassination of more than 300,000 people during the 1946-1958 or 1948-1964 periods according to different academics, and commonly known as La Violencia. The detailed description of bloody tortures and executions perpetrated by the famous death squads, "pájaros", became publicly known in the country. The Libro Negro de la Represión concentrated on the era of the Frente Nacional (1958-1974) initiated right at "the end" of La Violencia". During this period, the two larger political parties decided to share and monopolize power in order "to end" violence. From this moment on, the presidency would be shared between the two parties by a system of rotation in which every four years only one party would nominate its candidates for President. It was in this context where general armistices were signed. But also, where other political alternatives such as the famous small peasant self-defense movements commonly known as the Repúblicas

Independientes (Independent Republics) of the central departments of Cundinamarca and Tolima were persecuted by the State.

As the *Libro Negro* describes, famous counter-subversive campaigns influenced by the US army like the "Plan Laso" (Latin America Security Operation) were precisely oriented to destroy these groups through a combination of psychological war using the same Juntas de Acción Comunal mentioned earlier, as well as economic and military blockades and punitive actions (CSPP 1974: 46, see also Sánchez and Meertens 1988: 339). Interestingly enough, I have also heard about this "Plan" in Padre Giraldo's "orientation session" directed to those "internationals" that came to the 2006 pilgrimage commemorating the ten years of existence of the CPSJA. Very notoriously, the 1964 military assault of the Marquetalia hamlet in the province of Tolima, where a small group of rebel peasants including the leader Manuel Marulanda Vélez was attacked by various battalions of more than 16,000 or 2000 soldiers according to the different sources, became the FARC guerrilla foundational myth (Uribe 2007). The guerrilla's descriptions of blue eyed and blond soldiers would help to expand the rumor of the US aid in the famous attack (Ibid.). In conclusion, it was precisely in this context of the lack of political opportunities and of state repression that the CSPP (1974:1, my translation) emerged in 1974. In the *Libro Negro*, the Commission explains its own emergence as a "revolutionary agitation against the repression, the state of siege, the penal military justice, the verbal military courts, the existence of innumerable political prisoners and the application of torture and violation of human rights publicly known". In fact, the book explains that many of these repressive acts were made possible by almost ten continuous

years of a permanent State of Siege. During the 192 months of the National Front, the book describes, 126 months, which corresponds almost to two of every three months, were lived under the "sinister modality of the State of Siege" (Ibid: 9, my translation). In this context, as the first page recalls, the Commission's efforts have worked around the constant denunciation of state violence" (Ibid 1, my translation).

Lastly, another key moment where victims had previously talked or at least been seen before the event in the National Museum was the whole campaign launched by the *Proyecto Colombia Nunca más* (Colombian Project Never more), CNM and also chaired by padre Giraldo. Indeed, the whole set of processes involved with this effort would translate into a perfect example of classic Latin American contestatory civil society as argued by Alvarez' (2008). Its two direct predecessors were the campaign *Colombia Derechos Humanos* (Colombia Human Rights) organized by different NGOs to denounce impunity and the continuous violation of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and a conference on Truth Commissions held on September 8 and 9, 1994 in Bogotá. As padre Giraldo told me while we were walking through the inclement mountains of Urabá, this effort was influenced by the same exercise done in the Southern Cone and Central America to counter the general amnesties given to military units and officers responsible for disappearances, assassinations and rapes of civilians. While I was almost out of breath due to the long walk, padre Giraldo explained to me with great tranquility and with no glimpse of a similar exhaustion, the famous Sábato commission named after the famous writer who headed it, Ernesto Sábato. He confirmed that it turned out to be an important inspiration for denouncing the state's violence and the direct responsibility of the military

in the human rights violations. With that inspiration and focus on state violence, he continued, a group of NGOs including the Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos de Colombia (Association of families of disappeared detainees in Colombia) -ASFADDES- , the Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo (Lawyers Collective Jose Alvear Restrepo), the Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz (Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace), the above-mentioned CSPP, the Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights) -CPDH-, the Comunidad de los Misioneros Claretianos de Colombia (Community of Claritin Missioners of Colombia), and many more of the still today most prominent and vocal pressure groups in Colombia, created the Colombian chapter of the Commission. With the same objective as the Sábato report, in 1995 this collective started to research and document facts, names and testimonies of victims starting from 1965 and which had been left in total impunity.

Interestingly enough, the date of 1965 does not correspond to the classic years of 1946 or 1948 to mark the beginnings of the characteristic period of violence in the country. In their published volumes, the Nunca más commission explains that the choice of this year corresponds to the "official" launching of counter subversive campaigns promoted by the US army and the Department of State in Colombia. For the Commission, the choice of this year also makes sense with the passing of Decree 3368 which placed the monopoly of justice in private hands. The Commission reports divided the country into different zones corresponding not to the political-administrative divisions but to the areas under control of the different military brigades accused of human rights and

humanitarian violation. Indeed, with this legacy of books and reports, victims of state repression started to be counted and registered. In similar ways to those in which the ICRC or Amnesty International had stored the information of prisoners and detainees in prisons and concentration camps during the Second World War, the 'suffering stranger' will not be forgotten but will survive by his or her name and personal story printed in books, letters, photos and reports.

Although working in a different scenario with no dictatorships and a "stable" democracy, the Commission organized a database on human rights and humanitarian violations in Colombia and published several books with their own conclusions. They divided their reports between the periods of 1965-1982, 1982-1986, 1985-1990, 1991-1994, and 1994-1988. Each one corresponded to the subsequent phases of the legal repression period, the para-state repression period, the articulation between the para-state and legal repression period, the urban expansion of the paramilitarism period, and the model of legitimation of the paramilitarism period. The Commission has also been persecuted and their actual offices were occupied in 1995 by the armed forces7. Today, the data base jealously safeguarded in the previously mentioned Jesuit NGO CINEP, has become a key reference for human rights allegations in the country by activists and grassroots organizations. Also, it has recently influenced the creation of other vocal NGOs like the MOVICE of Iván Cepeda in 2005 mentioned before. In fact, the latter organization, headed by the son of the famous left-wing intellectual assassinated in 1994, has become in recent years in one of the most public references of the victims' movement in Colombia.

A culture of rights and the fetish of the law

While talking at the elegant Wilson Palace in Geneva with the new Secretary General for Internal Displacement (SG), the Swiss lawyer and academic Walter Kalin, he gave me his impressions about what he thought was unique to Colombia when compared to other countries with similar problems of internal displacement. Interestingly enough, the place of the meeting is not coincidental in our story although I did not plan it to be that way. In fact, the offices of the High Commission for Human Rights where the SG offices are found are hosted in the Wilson Palace. In fact, the website of the Commission informs us that: "the hotel was renamed Palais Wilson after the death of US President Woodrow Wilson and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who played an important role in the establishment of the League of Nations during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference after World War I"[8]. In the same building other thematic mandates of the High Commission for Human Rights such as that on internal displacement but also others on arbitrary detentions or the right to development, among many others, had their offices too. His office was rather small. Once inside I could remember the leakages of this story mentioned by Deng in his reports discussed before about the cramped spaces.

He had just arrived from Colombia where he was invited to report on the IDP situation. His conclusions on his visit were similar to those highlighted by Deng both in his country reports but also in our interview in Chapel Hill. It mainly followed the same lines. What the representatives visions shared was the fact that even though persecutions, new displacements and threats to IDPs organizations and their leaders do continue to

exist, people were and still are fighting to defend their "rights". As Kalin argued in our interview describing this Colombian situation:

> "(…) in a way I have never seen it in any other place, you really go to remote areas and meet these communities living in remote parts of the country speaking in socially really marginalized areas and they know about the constitutional court decision, they can quote the guiding principles by number, they know that they have rights, and this really empowers them, and you see that they are invoking these rights, they feel empowered in the sense that they know that their struggle is not just kind of reacting to a situation (…)" (Personal Communication June 2007)

They in fact agreed with me on that particular scene described in previous chapters where IDPs and their families carry folders with pasted photocopies and official documentation about their situation, legal status and official letters written to State institutions claiming their "rights". For both of them but also for other officers of the UNHCR I interviewed, this was certainly unique to Colombia. In fact, both of them were satisfied that the Guiding Principles were part of the repertoires of IDPs in the streets and in their daily itineraries through State offices and institutions. When I told them about how had I found them both in the street corners and outskirts in Bogotá but also in the doors of the abandoned cooperative in San José de Apartadó, they seemed to be actually pleased to hear this information: that scene confirms the existence of a strong "culture of rights" in Colombia in which IDPs could appear. And not only in national courts but also in international ones, most prominently, in the Interamerican Court of Human Rights.

However, for both of them, and much to my comfort, they still argued that the "culture of rights" was not enough to secure the protection for their rights. But it still was a necessary and fundamental step in that direction. As such, their statements but also the

photocopies of official documents at the street corners in Bogotá or at the entrance of the abandoned cooperative, will also confirm Nelson's (2004) comment on the dual face of the State which can at the same time appear in the most violent ways through the form of state repression, death squads and human rights violations. But also, it can appear as the desired state that recognizes its own faults, registers its victims, distributes responsibilities and channels resources for the protection of that 'suffering stranger' (e.g., the victim, the IDP). In the end, it is actually this desired entity that all these documents were addressing. In fact, for scholars like Sassen (2006), the advancement of an international human rights regime would demonstrate the constitutive tensions in liberal democracies by which the same State can be scrutinized when it comes to treatment of individuals within its own territory.

But for others, the same the fetish of the law implemented during the 1990s in many new constitutions (Colombia included) which made visible these new civil and well-behaved, cultural and political 'rights-bearers', indeed, a central component of the neoliberal agenda, had the ultimate effect of displacing 'the political' discussion into realms of 'legality and the courts' (Alvarez 2008, Kennedy 2004, Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). Remembering the introductory words of the GHM, it is clearly enough that it was precisely within this 'culture of rights' and 'fetishism of law' where and when victims started to talk and became visible for the first time in Colombia. With acute sincerity, Comaroff and Comaroff (2007: 134) describe the postcolonial predicament emerging from this new configuration from where victims could talk and become visible:

> "At the same time, and here is where the paradox appears to lie, many postcolonies make a fetish of the law, of its ways and means. Even where those ways and means are mocked, mimicked, suspended or sequestered, they are often central to the everyday life of authority and citizenship, to the interaction of states and subjects, to the enactments, displacements and seizures of power. New constitutions are repeatedly written, appeals to rights repeatedly made, procedural democracies repeatedly reinvented, claims of inequity repeatedly litigated. (…) All this in spite of the fact that more and more rulers show themselves ready to suspend the law in the name of emergency or exception, to ignore its sovereignty, to franchise it out or to bend it to their will"

When I asked the Representative about how could he explain this appropriation and actualization of a "culture of rights" in Colombia, he cited a conversation to me that he had had with a famous Colombian magistrate Manuel Cepeda recognized by his effort to privilege a vision and philosophy of emancipatory law for the defense of marginalized sectors of society. In fact, during his term, the Constitutional Court would become a central actor of activism and critical thinking (Santos 2002). According to his dialogue with this Colombian magistrate, the decisive shift that made all these legal decisions and claims possible was the introduction in the 1991 Constitution of the *acción de tutela*. The *tutela* is still today the prime legal mechanism by which common citizens defend and struggle for their rights. It has become a common routine to interpose tutelas for assuring health treatments not covered by health insurance companies. Although claims about its actual usefulness feature prominently in idle conversations in Colombia, nothing similar was there in the old nineteenth century constitution that ruled before. Now common citizens, whether poor or rich, white, black, indigenous or of any other ethnic/racial/gender affiliation, i.e., that suffering stranger, could interpose an acción de tutela to public institutions for defending his/her own rights.

For Uprimmy and García (2005: 474), this protagonism of the Court was not coincidental. In a country where there are indeed many risks and threats for social and political mobilization, and where the new constitution guaranteed costless access to justice, it is no coincidence that many social actors have preferred to channel their actions and demands through the Constitutional Court. For Kelin (indeed, another lawyer) and according to this magistrate, the Constitution of 1991 became a central protagonist in the history of Colombia giving rights to Colombian citizens not included in the 1886 Constitution. For them it was clear what this meant: a culture of 'rights' was thereby created by which any citizen ("suffering stranger") could defend his or her rights. Following Alvarez (2008), this meant that 'civil society' and the same victim were produced to become visible and to talk within this particular script. The 1991 Constitution also created the National Ombudsman (*Defensoría del Pueblo*) which has become another important player in this problem-space in Colombia for defending the rights of persecuted individuals and populations. Another current and progressive magistrate of the Constitutional Court of Colombia was appointed to take this new position for the first time. Before he came to office, he had actually been the first functionary of the public ministry (*Procuraduría General*) specifically delegated to handle human rights issues. In conclusion, what all these lawyers were suggesting was that the whole new configuration brought about by the Constitutional reforms created the conditions of possibility whereby victims of human rights violations could turn to the state for securing and demanding their protection.

I could talk with some of the magistrate's students now working in many lawyers' collectives and NGO's specifically related to human rights, health rights, labor rights, structural racism, debtor rights and IDPs rights. These range from CODHES (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement) to *Dejusticia* (Center for the Study of Law, Justice and Society). In many victims' meetings and assemblies not only were these two NGOs present but also a wide range of others as well. In most of the meetings I have attended, lawyers and staff dressed with white shirts of logos of other organizations have become common participants. In fact, their presence and mushrooming occurrence throughout similar meetings and assemblies of other NGOs and lawyers' collectives in relation to these debates in recent years, confirms Alvarez's (2008) observations on the increasing NGOization of civil society in Latin America during these years. Not coincidentally, external funding has become fundamental for the growth and stability of these vectors. In fact, Tate (2005) describes how the important lawyers' coalition, the Comisión Andina de Juristas (Andean Commission of Jurist) was actually funded by the Ford Foundation. As I could learn, others would be funded by European and the Canadian embassies as well. Throughout these years, this funding would allow the Comisión Andina to carry out a key lobbying activity in the UN Commission of Human Rights in Geneva.

Some of this magistrate's students and colleagues cite Duncan Kennedy and his legacy of critical legal studies but also Boaventura de Sousa Santos and his notion of cosmopolitan legality; for them both are fundamental sources of inspiration and action for conjuring up equitable, ethically-founded polities (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). It was

precisely the former collective which confirmed in 2007 that Colombian IDPs are the most marginalized population even among the traditional poor strata of society (CODHES 2008). In fact, Boaventura de Sousa Santos came to be co-author and co-researcher in several joint investigations with these Colombian colleagues (Santos and García Villegas 2004, Santos and Garavito 2007). I have seen these Colombian lawyers in academic events but also in other forums such as the Third General Assembly of the PCN in Cali, November 2007. I also saw them at the International Seminar for Forced Disappearance in Bogotá, June 25-27 2008, giving talks about their vision of emancipatory law regarding structural racism, disappearances and unequal development. Their students and colleagues work today as assistants, researchers or professors in the same faculty of law which this magistrate once chaired in one of the most prestigious private university in Colombia, the University of Los Andes.

They have also created research centers like that dedicated to investigate racial discrimination in the country. I saw this magistrate and one or two of these students in November 2007 chairing an open session of the Constitutional Court of Colombia dedicated to listen to the current situation of displaced Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region. From a distance, amidst hundreds of Afro-Colombian grassroots activists, members of NGOs, government representatives and journalists, the magistrate, dressed in the usual black gown of judges, sat for hours and hours listening to the claims of activists and government representatives regarding the dire situations in the rivers. I had been actually on these rivers a week before the hearings with other Afro-Colombian activists and members of NGOs collecting information for this session. After several

meetings on the rivers with communities, the situation was tense. New threats and displacements had been reported. In fact, in one of those meetings, I later heard, some paramilitaries dressed in civilian outfits were present. Some weeks later, at the end of the hearings at the Constitutional Court, and with a severe tone that inundated the whole court, the same magistrate whose figure seemed small amidst the large courtroom, scolded the government representatives for not taking adequate steps for the protection of leaders and whole communities. It was precisely these kinds of events like the legal actions, the hearings at the Constitutional Court, which made the Colombian case unique when compared to other situations of IDPs. In other countries, according to many interviewees in Geneva, IDPs did not have the same mechanisms or interlocutors to relate for the purpose of defending their rights.

In what has turned to be a hallmark in the recent legal and political history of the country, the Sentencia T-025 of 2004 declared after receiving hundreds of legal actions interposed by 1150 IDP families demanding their rights according to the same Constitution, that there was an *estado de cosas inconsitucional* (unconstitutional order of things), ECI, in the way the government had handled this massive problem. From then on, the Court transformed itself into the same collector of information and would receive reports from the same IDPs organizations but also from other national and international agencies regarding the action the government would take to reverse this situation. The Court decision did not only point at the central problems of this response: but suggesting a radical change in the judge's responsibilities, it also ordered and highlighted the steps that the government should advance in order to overcome the ECI (Uprimmy and García

2005). In a future report of 2005, the Court, for example, found that for the period between 2001 and 2004, for the 170,262 families registered in the IDPs State census, humanitarian assistance was given only to 9.71% of families (Corte Constitucional Auto 178, 2005). In fact, while I was writing this chapter, this same magistrate made the headlines by pressing again the government almost three years after the Sentencia T-025 was issued and a series of new government responses and Court's evaluations had been made that hadn't yet lifted the ECI, to attend, respond and promote and give adequate protection to IDPs minors9. Many activists indeed with whom I had recently talked shared their preoccupation about the fact that this group of critical magistrates would finish their period in 2008. For them, and observing the government intentions to place less-critical candidates in their positions, a whole opportunity for advancing progressive policies in the country could be lost. Indeed, for Rajagopal (2007), the unique nature of many individual progressive magistrates that made various constitutional courts worldwide important targets for human rights activism, runs the risk of losing their emancipatory potential when they terminate their position.

Indeed, as one of my interviewees could confirm, it would be very easy to ascertain who is working where and with what agendas according to what faculty of law they attended and who the advisors were. This small group has turned to be in recent years a very vocal, visible and dynamic human rights network with positions in important NGOs and other institutions in charge of following, crafting and recommending policies and progressive legal frameworks in the country. They have been educated in Colombian private and public Universities. They have also attended PhD programs at Columbia

University and Wisconsin-Madison University in the United States and also at the University of Paris in France and the Catholic University of Louvain-La-Neuve in Belgium. Highly educated professionals, this cradle of lawyer-activists with links to other transnational nodes of human rights activism, epitomize in themselves an epistemic community in the realm of a rights-bearing modernity (Merry 2006, Comaroff 1998, Riles 2006). Even when I called her frequently asking for an interview, I just couldn't interview one of these students due to her continuous travels to international conferences, meetings and other venues of international human rights activism. Interestingly enough, it was precisely this same magistrate with the help of some of his colleagues and students working with him in the Constitutional Court who drafted the Sentencia T-025 of 2005. According to many, this legal decision broke the history of the State's relation with IDPs in Colombia in half.

The Civil Society (CS) agenda, as Alvarez (2008) suggests, had now become successful for dictating that actors, in this case, victims or the 'suffering stranger', should now focus their efforts on occupying and influencing participatory spaces and arenas by presuming that their participation in such arenas is an absolute good. Following the author, the new configuration dictated by the new international scenario of the "Washington Consensus" emphasis on civic participation, prescribed what these victims should do and how they should act and participate. Indeed, as I noted when interviewing the UNHCR officers in Geneva (Chapter 1), this belief in the State's actions would become a powerful myth lived by that epistemic community experiencing a rights-bearing modernity of lawyers, officers, public servants and also popular organizations,

victims and IDPs themselves (Merry 2006, Comaroff 1998, Riles 2006). It also would also bring the fetish of law to new domains (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006): other transformations were also present in the Constitutional reform as well. Interestingly enough, the Constitution declared for the first time the existence of a multicultural and pluriethnic nation and gave collective territorial rights to indigenous groups (Laurent 2005, Gros 2000). Two years later, it would also grant collective territorial rights to black communities in the Pacific region, including to those I visited before the hearings at the Constitutional Court of Colombia.

For the first time, with the 1991 Constitution, the State turned against its own tradition of homogenizing the Colombian nation and would now tolerate and recognize ethnic differences within its own borders[10]. According to several authors, within these transformations also carried out in other countries, a whole regime of alterity with these new subjects and objects of knowledge and intervention came to be formed (Restrepo 2007, Ulloa 2004, Nelson 1999, Povinelli 2002, Hale 2005, Alvarez 2008). Indeed, the result of many of these transformations ended in having good and well behaved "indigenous" and "black communities". In fact, along this dissertation, I want precisely to evaluate if this culture of rights also terminated by producing well-behaved "victims" and IDPs. For now, I can just briefly mention that the complex and contested nature of these "perverse confluences" in Colombia have not always terminated in these same directions. A good example of the complexities of these articulations is the effort during Carlos Lleras Restrepo's (1966-1970) presidency to govern the peasant popular organizations through the consolidation of the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (National

Association of Peasant Users), ANUC. As Zamosc's (1986) classic study of the peasant movement illustrates, this government initiative effectively terminated in the disciplining and monitoring of particular branches of the peasant movement like the ANUC-Armenia section. But it also saw the radicalization of other branches of the peasant movement that led to their official break with the State in 1971. This rupture led to the creation of the famous ANUC-Sincelejo section which coordinated many land invasions through the country in the late 1970s, especially in the Caribbean region (Archila 2003, Zamosc 1986, Fals Borda 1986)[11]. It also spread its influence in the Urabá region (see next Chapter). In the following years, as I could hear from the testimony of veteran peasant leaders, the ANUC-Sincelejo radicalization away from the desires of the central government and the large land-owners interests led to the persecution and assassination of many of their leaders.

On the other hand, it is important not to forget that the new Constitution came to be the condition for the M-19 guerrilla group and other groups for laying down their arms during the peace talks during the 1980s. Carlos Pizarro, the leader of the M-19, later assassinated and younger brother of the head of the CNRR, signed the peace negotiations. I can still remember the image broadcast by the national news where Pizarro laid down his revolver covered with the Colombian flag on a long table where other weapons had already been left. Interestingly enough, right on the same day in which the first sessions of the Constitutional Assembly set to design this new Constitution was happening, Casa Verde (Green House), the FARC central headquarters created to host the peace negotiations, was bombed by 46 airplanes of the Colombian Air Forces[12] (Archila 2003).

Simultaneously, the State performance by which a new Constitution was going to be discussed got strangely connected with this excessive and surprising bombardment. The dual-face of the State of coercion and persuasion had been perfectly actualized in those acts (Nelson 2004). Meanwhile, the FARC leaders, having been targeted by the same bombardments of what came to be the first and almost mythic stronghold of what were no more than a dozen rebel peasants, Marquetalia, Tolima in 1954, survived the attack and swore their vengeance on the Colombian State (Uribe 2004).

The peace movement in Colombia during the 1990s

For Romero M. (2001), it was precisely in response to the declaration of war by the Gaviria administration that important coalitions and networks of the human rights movement and peace movements consolidated in Colombia. One of the most important ones, *Redepaz* (Network of Initiatives for Peace and against Violence), became constituted by Jesuit organizations like CINEP and the *Fundación Social* (Social Foundation), and by lawyers' human rights committees including the Colombian Commission of Jurists and other organizations as well. Ex-guerrillas coming from the M-19 and the ELN) also figured in this coalition. According to one of their leaders interviewed by Romero M. (ibid: 412), the network became one of the most prominent interlocutors demanding the termination of the armed conflict through peace agreements and negotiations. For García Durán (2006: 193), Redepaz became a space of articulation of very different initiatives in the country, including the Week for Peace celebrated every year, the working groups on peace, the passing of article 22 of the National Constitution

which established peace as a right and a obligation, the experiences of the Mandate for Peace (see below) and the territories for peace.

For Romero M., Redepaz's direct predecessor was the coalition of the *Movimiento por la Vida* (Movement for Life) also influenced by the Jesuit *Programa para la Paz* (Program for Peace) launched during the presidency of Belisario Betancourt (1982-1986) and created around the experience of survivors of the holocaust of the Palacio de Justicia. The famous "lettuce", a colonial relic made out of pure gold and covered with emeralds was sold by the Jesuits to fund the *Programa para la Paz* (Romero, M 2001). Interestingly enough, as I could learn while chatting recently with padre Giraldo, some other Jesuit initiatives made in the name of peace during these years, epitomize for him a particular vision of peace over-determined by development schemes and desires. For him, the equation of peace and development by which some later Jesuit programs in the eastern region of Barrancabermeja were overdetermined evacuated any discussion of justice and what Mouffe (1992, 2005) referred to as "the political" when describing the inherent and irreducible antagonism in any social formation. He quoted the conversation he had had with one of the leaders of these projects which assured him that development came to represent a river where all passengers (communities) should navigate following its flow. There was no point in struggling against that tide; communities, and especially, marginalized and impoverished ones, had to embark in this journey. With this vision, which prevailed even within the Jesuit community, he insisted, there were strong differences over what counts as peace and how to achieve it. He in fact abandoned the same *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* (Intercongregational Commission of

Justice and Peace) he had founded and chaired since 1988 after perceiving these and other antagonistic visions.

Even before Gaviria's presidency, this link between peace initiatives, human rights and development schemes had been actualized through the launching during Betancour's administration (1982-1984) and continued by Barco's (1984-1988) Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación (PNR), (National Plan for Rehabilitation). Following the latter vision that "the search of peace is a commitment of all", and hence, that "its success depends on the fact that we construct a more just society so that all Colombians can live in an environment where we can live in peace, progress and democracy" (Presidencia de la República 1988: 1, my translation), the government deployed this national plan to respond to the structural problems that seemed to rest at the basis of the armed conflict. For Bejarano (1990: 7), the PNR reach across the country signaled its ultimate importance: from the 177 municipalities covered by the Plan in 1986, it increased to 297 municipalities in 1988, attending to a total population of 5 million. A Consejería Presidencial para la Reconciliación, Normalización y Rehabilitación (Presidential Council for the Reconciliation, Normalization and Rehabilitation), organized under Barco's term, would be responsible for heading the PNR. Interestingly enough, the Consejería would in fact be headed by figures that were directly involved in the peace negotiations with the guerrilla groups in the early 1980s in the Urabá region (see next Chapter).

In particular, the PNR focused on the unequal development of the country as a major source for violence, and hence, directed its main interventions in those regions that have been characterized by violence and guerrilla presence in recent years (ibid.). These criteria included enclave areas that have been targeted by large economic enterprises like oil or banana plantations but also regions that had a recent process of colonization. In fact, as I show in the next chapter, both reasons were present in the Urabá region in order to include it within the PNR's scope. But what definitely became its major novelty was its participatory model of approaching these problems and crafting their solutions. From the beginning, it conveyed that "the PNR is pioneer to put in place decentralized mechanisms for the decision-making processes and for the execution of its tasks not only for the benefit of the poorest, but with the active participation of the community in the Consejos de Rehablitación (Consejos de Rehabilitación) (Ibid: 1, my translation).

As Garcia (2006) also explains, the PNR was meant to confront and alleviate the objective causes of guerrilla violence[13]. The Comisión de Superación de la Violencia (Commission for the Superation of Violence), created by the Councils of Peace and Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic in order to follow up the negotiations of the agreements with the guerrilla groups Ejército de Liberación Popular (Popular Liberation Army), EPL and the Indigenous Movement Quintin Lame, reviewed the outcomes of the PNR. The Commission was constituted by a group of scholars and experts including Francisco Pizarro and Francisco De Roux, one of the most vocal Jesuits in charge of mobilizing those programs of Peace and Development in the region of Barrancabermeja mentioned above. In many ways, but also, by the repetition of other

peace agreements in Urabá in 2006 this time not with the guerrilla groups but with paramilitaries, the recommendations and analysis of the situation in the region could perfectly be considered and applied to the present situation (see next Chapter).

The Commission (1992: 154) reviewed the PNR's three main objectives: first, to become a component of the general strategy of economic and social development. Second, of becoming an instrument of the policy of recognition and normalization in relation with the strengthening of three goals: participatory democracy, local autonomy and democratic institutions. And lastly, of becoming a regional instrument for strengthening the local and sectional units regarding their planning capacity and institutional development. As I will show in the next section, the focus on participatory schemes and communitarian participation became central aspects of this government initiative in the Urabá region. In fact, as the PNR project in the city of Apartadó, Urabá funded by the United Nations Development Program clearly expresses, the key aegis of their interventions was to include civil society in the participatory schemes opened and secured by the project (PNUD 1990). With a strong tendency towards making those same populations responsible for their own futures, the PNR project in Apartadó in fact celebrated the successful participation of many sectors in creating and promoting self-managed and collective enterprises for paving roads and creating local food markets (PNUD 1990). On the other hand, the local stories of the first inhabitants of those marginalized areas were also retold in PNR publications that precisely were aimed to include and retain the memory of the first town settlers (Universidad Nacional 1990).

In fact, after evaluating the effects and conditions in many of the areas where the PNR operated, the Commission concludes with the similar arguments cited by padre Giraldo in our informal chat to criticize those schemes of development and peace: the disappearance of questions on justice and the privileging of economic and imposed solutions for these regions and problems. What is more decisive about this important vector for our story is the fact that the PNR was later renamed and expanded into what came to be the Red de Solidaridad Social (Network of Social Solidarity). As I explain in the next section of this chapter, it was precisely this State agency working under the direct line of the Presidency, the one responsible for leading the State's policies and responses to the growing problem of IDPs in the country in the late 1990s. In the year 2002, the Red de Solidaridad Social would again be replaced and renamed as Acción Social which until today coordinates and follows up the national system of protection and response for IDPs situations in the country. According to its director whom I could interview on June 2008, they have been able to convert the agency into a powerful political actor attending and governing more than 150,000 IDPs in the whole region. But from looking at its most visible interventions focusing on strengthening cooperatives and IDPs organizations and building bridges, hospitals, schools and other infrastructure needs, I can just mention for now that there seems to be a strong continuity between the PNR schemes and the one of Acción Social. In conclusion, the link between development schemes, human rights and peace through the combined combination of State and civil society actors would certainly become one of the most important vectors of the 'government of the social' (Alvarez 2008, Rose 1999) in the country in recent years. Here, the discourse of peace would be mediated by development as a governmental tool.

Differences within the larger movements of peace would also become visible in the 1990s. According to several scholars, particularly evident was the difference between Redepaz and País Libre, the first one aligned with leftist organizations and the second one, organized by the above-mentioned Francisco Santos, the current vice-president of Colombia (Romero M 2001, Orozco 2005). The former focused on those human rights violations, disappearances and massacres perpetrated by all armed actors, including State and para-State armed forces.The mentioned "genocide" of the Unión Patriótica and the 'holocaust' of the Palacio de Justicia became the more common tropes in these discourses. País Libre focused instead on guerrilla human rights violations exemplified in the various kidnaps of important personalities, including that of the current vice-president Francisco Santos and Andrés Pastrana, would will become the president between 1998 and 2002, among other figures aligned with the elite sectors of the Colombian society. According to Romero M (2001), on several occasions where these two forces forged temporary alliances, including the Mandate for Peace which collected more than 10 million votes in 1997, many observers were openly perplexed.

As such, the legacies of these differences were also made evident in the very recent two national marches launched by different collectives in February and March, 2008. While the first march was openly coordinated by the government against the FARC guerrilla movement and had as a central protagonist the images in captivity of Ingrid Betancourt and other victims of kidnaps, the second, promoted by the above mentioned MOVICE and other organizations, focused on State and Para-State actions responsible

for disappearances, tortures and internal displacement. While I just saw a short version of the first one while I was in the city Apartadó, I participated in the second one in Bogotá. Images of the protests of the first march from different cities in Colombia but also in other countries like Spain or the US showed a massive support and convergence of a common enemy, the FARC guerilla group. Once in the second march, much less supported by the general public when compared to the first one, one could hear comments and rumors referring to the tension between these two approaches and types of victims. Even more, comments about the existence of a supposed hierarchy of victims where the image of Ingrid Betancourt was able to break the ethical-shelter (Haskell 1985) of average Colombians, pushing them to the streets, while the hundreds of anonymous desaparecidos and desplazados could not do the same in the recent history of the country. Indeed, these differences would continue current efforts made by particular congressmen from the opposition to pass the National Statute of Victims. Two particularly crucial sections of the projects have created enormous uproar among the larger traditional parties and government representatives: the recognition of "victims" of State actions and the responsibility (and not just solidarity) that the latter has with these same victims. While I write these pages, these two crucial points for the opposition and which the government hasn't conceded, seem to declare the premature death of the legislative project.[14]

In fact, García Durán (2006) describes the great differences and internal tensions between the different types of organizations, scales and meanings of what counts as 'peace' and 'human rights' regarding the distinct approaches within grassroots organizations, social movements, national associations, political parties and the same

subsequent governments between the period 1978-2003. The lack or impossibility of hegemonizing particular visions of who was the enemy or to create a chain of equivalences among the different demands (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Laclau 2005), characterized this period of the peace and human rights movement in Colombia. As I said, particularly relevant were the differences between allegations of direct State responsibility in many human rights violations and others who focused more on the responsibility of guerrilla forces. Another prominent debate was the one between development and/or justice initiatives like those mentioned before. But even between these differences, García-Durán, coming precisely from one of the most important actors within these events, the Jesuit NGO' CINEP (Center of Research and Popular Education), concludes his analysis of the peace movement in Colombia by suggesting that never before did something like this happen in the country. Certainly, for him and other scholars, with this unprecedented number of actions fought, negotiated and discussed in the name of human rights and the peace agenda, the 1990s could be precisely described as the 'peace decade' (Tate 2005, Ochoa 2003, García-Durán 2006).

Different scholars have identified the Presidency of Ernesto Samper Pizano (1994-1998) for opening new channels and opportunities to deploy the peace and human rights agendas (Romero M 2001, García-Durán 2006, Tate 2005, Ochoa 2003). As I will immediately show, it was also under his term that the first Representative for the Secretary General for Internally Displaced Persons, Francis Deng, came to the country for the first time. During his presidency, UNHCR would also be invited to start operations in 1997. In fact, many scholars rightly argue that Samper's record in signing

human rights treaties and conventions and inviting international commissions was an excuse to deviate the attention from major scandals of important drug cartels financing his presidential campaign. Ochoa (2003) argues that one of the best examples of these tendencies was the creation of the Ministry of Culture. In fact, she comments that the Ministry's original name was the one of "Ministry of Peace" and that its rationality and vision were inspired by the UNESCO that came to orient and frame the links between "culture", "development" and "peace". Most importantly, it also had the task of creating a governmental and presidential language legitimizing not only the creation of the Minister but also the actual field of "culture" within the government sphere.

A new victim: the internally displaced person in Colombia

In this last section, I want to analyze how the emergence of the IDP problem area was positioned precisely within this conjuncture of "human rights" and "peace" initiatives within President Samper's term. In June 10-18, 1994, the Representative of the Secretary General for Internal Displacement would visit the country for the first time. He would visit the country again in May 1999 and July 2002. For the purposes of this section, I want to follow his own observations and descriptions of his visits to Colombia almost as a "paraethnography" to recall Marcus' term, focusing on assumptions and how they are recycled into the material realm orienting action, policies and also particular interventions from a wide range of actors (Downey and Fisher 2006). As I already mentioned, Deng's own background working and living in Africa was paramount for linking the concepts of sovereignty and responsibility as a major device to understand both the State's failure to respond to this predicament and also, to orient the major steps

to be taken by international agencies, national governments and other partners in order to redress many of these situations in Colombia and elsewhere. As such, much of what he would be doing in his country visits would be the same type of "things" that anthropologists usually do. The difference and the actual vantage of his own point of view, now that we "hopefully" seem to have left this period behind, as it came to be recognized by Asad (1973) in his classic article on colonial anthropology, is the position of power from where he speaks.

Interestingly enough, 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"[15]. Of course, the government didn't recognize it before the 1990's because it was not "there": forced displacement has been common in the history of Colombia but it was not named like this, nor did this very complex institutional apparatus created to respond to this problem area exist before. The necessary events were not just there for creating its conditions of possibility. But they did emerge soon, and more than that, as Foucault (Rabinow 1984) clarifies in his analysis of problematizations, they emerged simultaneously. In his 1995 report, the Representative knew about the above mentioned report made by the Church which reported for the first time that there was a crisis of internally displaced persons in the country. At the end of his report, he actually comments that the results from this research are expected to be the most comprehensive documentation of internal displacement in the country[16]. As I already said, the Church published its research results from a survey of 1.170 displaced persons in parishes throughout the country. For the first time it estimated in the history of Colombia that

586,261 people had been displaced between January 1985 and August 1994 (Conferencia Episcopal 1995).

On the other hand, UNHCR arrived in the country in 1997 equipped "with one office with 8 staff and a budget of approximately 200,000 USD when our [their] presence was formalized in 1999" (UNHCR, 2007). In fact, and confirming my previous conversations with officers in Geneva, one of its main and first activities in the country was devoted to advising the Colombian Government on the drafting of legislation to protect the IDPs. They needed those 'sheltering hands' and the UNHCR would make sure that they would have them. In the future years, the agency expanded to have approximately 90 staff which corresponded to 17 internationals, 59 nationals, 20 UNVs, 3 JPOs and 3 deployees distributed in 12 offices throughout the country (including Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Cúcuta, Barrancabermeja, Bogotá, Soacha, Villavicencio, Medellín, Apartadó, Quibdó, Pasto, Mocoa) with a budget of approximately US$14m in 2007 (Ibid.). Once in the headquarter offices in the North of Bogota, located at the ninth store of yet another monumental and futuristic-style building where international banks and other large corporations also have their offices, the Colombian officer who discussed the military organizational model of UNHCR mentioned before explained the agency's main tasks in Colombia. Basically, he mentioned that they had worked closely with the government in order to point at the deficiencies and inadequacy of certain approaches of the national system for the protection of IDPs through their overall evaluations of the national public policies carried out every three years (UNHCR 2007). As such, he even recognized that this decision had converted the agency in Colombia into one of the few

respected agencies with credibility for many interlocutors. Needless to say, he was comparing the agency to stronger and more vocal international human rights NGOs that have chosen to have a more oppositional relation with the government. He said that this approach gave the agency some space to carry out its actions and even to point at problems in the government policies for protecting IDPs.

Without a budget that does not allow them even to think of actions that would include large and permanent humanitarian operations, he insisted, the role of becoming one of the more recognized State counselors regarding IDPs protection has turned the agency into a key actor in the IDP discussion in Colombia. I reminded him about how the Colombian operations caused enormous admiration and satisfaction back in Geneva for its innovative and creative approaches. He answered rather ironically: "yes, the queen of the jewel [the Colombian operations] that no one ever dares to touch or even observe more deeply" (Personal Communication, February 2008). He argued that by using this approach they not only have pointed at those problematic areas, but have also recommended specific actions to be taken in order to redress many of their insufficiencies concerning IDPs legislation, registration, ID cards, differential attention according to the ethnic, racial and age origin of IDPs, etc. Another important task of the agency has been to help consolidate and give logistical leverage to IDPs organizations across the country regarding their claims, economic projects, and so on. In fact, as I could learn while talking with UNHCR staff in the Apartadó office, much of their work has been oriented to help channel demands into the state's regular conduct, advice IDPs organizations on their course of action and finally, inform the IDP population about the rights that they

have and are entitled to according to national legislation. Very much, as Soguk (1999) critically assesses, these same practices have become central state-making-practices in Colombia.

Recently, the agency has led the emphasis on incorporating into the National System a differential approach to the whole human rights and humanitarian operations and legislation according to the gender, ethnicity, race and age of the IDP populations (UNHCR 2007). In their most recent report published in 2007, the UNHCR has argued and denounced the ongoing processes of violent deterritorialization of indigenous and afro-Colombian communities. They mentioned the armed conflict but also large scale development projects and air-spraying coca fumigations as major causes of these displacements and have opposed state-oriented returns of IDPs to their homelands for not considering the principles of voluntary return, security and dignity. Only in 2002, they argue, using figures from reports coming from CODHES, 94.7% of the indigenous reserves still awaiting legalization produced displacement. As such, they have brought into their very poignant but diplomatic evaluations a series of reports, national and international court decisions and international treaties dealing with indigenous rights and against any form of discrimination. Interestingly enough, they have also talked about the need to consider government protection within the whole debate of Afro- and indigenous reparations in a scenario of a pervasive structural violence and uneven development (ibid.). Not coincidentally, the personal biography of some of these very vocal Colombian officers is not coincidental. During their lifetime as ‘civilians’, they used to work with the participatory methodologies of Fals Borda and Freire mentioned earlier while working

closely with popular movements. Indeed, they have given the agency in Colombia a particular, clear, strong but dissimulated activist approach that wasn't so evident back in the diplomatic and technocratic head offices in Geneva. A Geneva-based officer now working in the UN Commission of Human Rights who knew the Colombian UNHCR operations well, described it in this way: "For me, the Colombian operations is not a good example of what UNHCR does in all parts; it is an exception that can be explained by their staff" (Personal Communication, July 2007). Only in this sense, I guess, could a statement like IDPs differential protection be thought as a way of reestablishing within this institution the possibility of justice and equity among marginalized populations (UNHCR 2007a: 243).

During his visit in 1995, Deng didn't listen just to one source of information, but as a "good ethnographer" engaging in fieldwork, he endeavored to hear a variety of views on 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"[17]. The range of visits illustrates 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"[18]. 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 one IDP showed me a folder with 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”[19]. He also suggests that there are doubts on the accuracy of figures. In 1994, there had been no methodological 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[20] that would inaugurate the official state policy on IDPs, including many of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary (Aparicio 2005, Vidal 2007). It also handed the responsibility for IDPs to the Office of Disasters and Calamities that responds to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. Not coincidentally, other humanitarian agencies mentioned earlier such as Doctors without Borders had first arrived to the country during the 1985 Armero earthquake. Indeed, remembering this event, I can still recall the image of the young girl and her large dark eyes published in mainstream media who slowly drowned for weeks in front of cameras in the lava. The rescue teams had not been able to save her due to the imminent danger of any attempt to remove her from the mud. For sure, during those days, those intense dark

eyes and curtailed hair drowning in the mud were enough to initiate campaigns to collect funds and donations for those unsuccessful and underfunded Colombian Red Cross operations. In fact, I can dare to argue that she was one of the most visible "suffering strangers" during those years. For Uribe (2001: 29) and Vidal (2007), this decision to link IDPs attention and protection to a victim of natural disasters during these initial years, led to the direct assimilation of the forced movement of people with the problems incurred by natural disasters. The main consequence was of 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 phenomenon of massive displacement of the civil population should be understood in similar ways to the one cause by disasters and calamities". In fact, one could in fact ask why the "three months" in which the IDPs are supposed to receive aid designated by the humanitarian attention could be enough for them to reestablish themselves in territories that were devastated by violence and where armed groups are still openly settled. Why "three months"?

These first normative frameworks together with the influence of UNHCR will later become fundamental for passing 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 Law 387 the National System for the Comprehensive 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

were set. It also assigned responsibilities to the major institutions in charge of offering a coordinated protection and assistance to IDPs. It created the national, regional and municipal levels where State functionaries and IDP leaders would sit to discuss their situation. 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 emergency aid for fifteen days. After information has been cross-checked, the IDPs receive Humanitarian Assistance aid for the ”three months” mentioned before, occasionally extended for another three months (Law 387, 1997). Indeed, this particular “truth-telling and verifying” process would become a major filter through which IDP persons would have to prove their condition; and much more, following Vidal (2007: 181), it would allow experts take the control of their rights, destiny and culture.

In fact, according to Vidal (2007: 207), who makes a careful reconstruction of future decrees and state responses to the IDP problem, the latter legal maneuvers made IDPs’ access to legal rights and benefits depend on their inscription in the government register. For him, this created the practical effect of making their inscription the basic condition for enjoying these rights and benefits. With this enormous power, as he also states, the state has been able to carry out a political control of IDPs by making the threat of being excluded from the register. In fact, as different scholars have argued, these practices ended by producing in the institutional setting a difference between “well-behaved” IDPs and “not so well-behaved” IDPs. A powerful disciplining machine has indeed been put into place. This would be also the same machine that absolves the

government from its responsibilities and obligations to IDPs: in fact, those same decrees clearly stated that the humanitarian attention will be given during the above-mentioned periods depending on budget availability. Only in 2007, another of those progressive magistrates of the Constitutional Court of Colombia eliminated this section and will instead declare that the humanitarian aid will be given until the IDP is capable of assuming his or her own self-sufficiency (Sentencia C-278/07, 2007). In conclusion, the simultaneous consequence of these transformations was the attributions to those entities of the National System the expertise to evaluate IDP declarations and establish that the supposed displacement entitles the person to State recognition (Vidal 2007). As such, these are the same powerful mechanisms by which the IDPs would be forced to stand in line from early morning waiting for the humanitarian kit made out of some portions of rice and beans, mattresses and kitchen and cleaning utensils. Their desires and needs are made to coincide with the State's interventions. In fact, every time I have seen this image of people standing in the line with their folder since 2000 and 2008 I have realized the 'success' of the State intervention to discipline bodies and, recalling Foucault's (1978) panoptic models, to organize spaces and distribute activities.

Several eye-opening moments during my fieldwork have brought me to this conclusion. In September 2000, 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) to follow up IDPs who had received the humanitarian aid. By that time, this NGO had formalized an agreement with the government's *Red de Solidaridad Social* (Social Solidarity Network), to decentralize

the provision of humanitarian aid to IDP 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 head of the family - sharing with me a folder with very thick documentation kept with great care- showed me letters he had personally written to the office of the Presidency of Colombia. There he demanded his rights 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 the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. One by one, almost following a ritual and very slowly, he showed me each and every letter he had sent to different institutions. He also showed me the two or three responses he had received, in which they inform him of the lack of enough funds to respond to his demands. The whole scene perhaps was meant to verify his condition and certify the veracity of his whole story.

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 the Proyecto Productivo (Productive Project) (Aparicio 2005). This project is to be designed and submitted to institutions by IDPs for obtaining small loans and micro-credits for capitalizing their new business initiatives for improving 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. On November 2008, I also saw posted enormous signs along the tar road of 10 km that links Apartadó with San José de Apartadó promoting the new cacao productive projects. This time, they were funded by USAID. 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 that of linking humanitarian aid with development alleviation, are repressive or liberating. 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.

As such, the occurrence of these forms seems to confirm but also problematize Agamben's (1998) notion of biopolitics where power seems to operate not only to reproduce life or kill it, but specifically, to reproduce it at its minimal levels through the allocation of 'humanitarian kits', mattresses and folders that certify the IDPs condition. Indeed, the fact of holding an IDPs certificate does not only mean State recognition, but also, the basic possibility of receiving the humanitarian kits needed for surviving once in the cities. Not only in Colombia with IDPs but also in refugee situations, the nature and power of these certificates have also converted them into objects of mimicry and dispute (Fassin and D'Halluin 2005). A "low-intensity biopolitics" offering minimum recognition to those bodies in order to keep them 'alive' and moving through the bureaucratic channels, has become one of the most common effects of these diagrams that do not end up in the rationalized and complete 'humanitarian kits' needed to survive during disasters

(Redfield 2008). Instead, they end up in those residual mattresses I have seen handed to IDPs since I started doing fieldwork in 2000. No complete humanitarian kits, just mattresses. I have seen them in the hamlet of San José de Apartadó where they were being given in the open plaza to IDPs. The only difference now from the scenes I saw almost ten years ago was that functionaries were making sure that these certified IDPs (because only until now they have been certified) signed the official documents after receiving them under the umbrella of a new humanitarian audit culture. Indeed, extending the prevalence of this low-intensity biopolitics, two of the most powerful images of IDPs in Colombia are that of the street corners and the folders containing documents, and the debate around the official rates of IDPs in the country. In Laclau's (2008) comments on the uses of Agamben's notion of bare life, these same scenes precisely confirm the sovereign powerful ability to strip life to its minimum levels, that is, to reduce the possibility of extending a human being's life to those mattresses. What is eliminated here is any sense of "the political" here understood as the dimension of antagonism constitutive of human societies (Mouffe 2005). But in others, as I show in the last chapter, those same excluded and stripped-off populations can also participate in antagonistic social practices.

Throughout these recent years, I have constantly witnessed how these people in most cases 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 proving the ultimate "truth" about their situation (for other refugee-like situations, see also Feldman 2005, Fassin and D'Halluin

2005). 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 institutions. As I also show in the next chapters, pre-fabricated houses have also become in the region of Urabá the most important finalized functions of these State responses. Together with the mentioned signs in Apartadó promoting cacao productive projects, these other materialities have indeed become key peformative devices for condensing the State's presence in the region. But also, as I will discuss later, they will also serve to strengthen particular responses and rationalities for alleviating the "victim".

Certainly, as I have shown in this chapter, IDPs have also been incorporated and made legible by 'a culture of rights' and 'a fetishism of law'. In fact, in the most recent government decree 2505 that sets the new Plan Nacional para la Atención Integral de la Población Desplazada (National Plan for the Integral Attention of the Displaced Population) in response to the above mentioned T-025, makes clear that the new plan rests on the "aseguramiento del ejercicio y goce de los derechos humanos" ("in making sure that there is an effective exercise and fulfillment of human rights", my translation) (Ministerio del Interior, 2005). The new Plan sets specific instructions from this human rights perspective to include IDPs leaders and organizations in the different regional and national spaces to diagnose early alerts and implement humanitarian and relief schemes

for the socioeconomic stabilization of families and individuals. Although staff from UNHCR would point at the lack of measurable outcomes and a previous diagnosis of the situation of particular IDP populations, it also establishes the need to have a differential attention according to the gender, ethnic, age and racial origin of protected IDPs. Certainly, a whole rights-language and uses of national and international laws have also been a central vector on how the problem has been thought and talked about in the country. With this vector, both lawyers and some of the human rights NGOs and international agencies that I have mentioned before have become central protagonists in this story. In fact, they were designated by the Constitutional Court of Colombia to review and evaluate the progress in government actions after the T-025 and further legal decisions had come to a standstill where many of its inquiries and instructions had been utterly neglected by government functionaries.

A group of the most important human rights NGOs was actually appointed by the Constitutional Court of Colombia to create a follow-up commission to evaluate the government's responses to the subsequent interrogations of the Court. CODHES and other committees of human rights lawyers and the department of Law of the University of Los Andes and the National University were responsible for presenting their evaluations and, as I heard from the gossip, they were heavily funded by European governments. I was able to attend the forum where they presented their reports. The forum was held in one of the most recognized hotels in downtown Bogotá. The hotel lobby was fully packed with IDPs leaders from all around the country, together with reporters and lawyers. The first official speeches were made by some of the previously mentioned progressive

magistrates who have interposed more questionnaires and legal orders to the government in order to comply with its own legal mandate for protecting IDPs (Law 387, 1997). There were not as many academics as I thought there would be, but some of those who had worked with agrarian reforms and popular movements were certainly there. The report was actually read by its head, a well-recognized Colombian economist and critic of the government, Luis Jorge Garay, from Spain by video-conference. The whole atmosphere was indeed dreamlike, the Commission, the experts, the video-conference, and the hundreds of IDPs leaders remaining silent while listening to the main conclusions of the reports.

The blurry transmission from Spain started by explaining the methodology they used in order to carry out a survey made in November 2007 through fifty municipalities and 6616 households where there is at least one person registered in the official State census (Comisión de Seguimiento 2008). In a highly complex technical language that he in fact tried to dissimulate, he talked about the statistical approximations and margins of error and the further steps taken to keep their conclusions within a very reasonable framework of representation, probability and certainty. In fact, once he finished his exposition, the Government official who continued declared that in fact those conclusions, methodologies and figures were accurate and could not be mistrusted. Interestingly enough, the Commission decided to follow the same criteria of the Constitutional Court of Colombia of the goce efectivo de derechos (effective holders of rights) for evaluating the government's actions. The figures of the report include the main actors responsible for the internal displacement (paramilitaries, 37,5%, guerrilla 25%,

among others), the rather young characterization of the IDPs population (54,3% below twenty years old compared to the national rate of 40,3%), the “feminization” of the IDP population (54% compared to the national rate of 41,8%), the fact that only 0,2% of the family groups registered in the National census have received the first immediate humanitarian aid, on how only a 7,5% of the IDPs population have actually been able to obtain a dignified house according to particular standards, and how only 40,9% of the population does not present signs of inadequate food provision (insuficiencia alimentaria), among many other alarming figures (Ibid.).

When he ended, the whole atmosphere remained silent. No applause. Even while using technical language, the message could not be made clearer: the ECI denounced by the Constitutional Court of Colombia since 2004 had not yet been lifted despite several legal orders from the court, follow-up missions and recommendations. “Now what?”, I thought to myself, and even more, what will happen when those progressive magistrates are removed next December and very surely, other more conservative ones will replace them. “Where to go then?”, I insisted silently. After some tense seconds, the government representative of Acción Social came to give his speech. He started by approving the just-mentioned figures and he tried to continue with his talk. But the angry audience didn’t let him continue and he had to finish after many interruptions of the crowd whistling to his conclusions and figures. From the opposite side where I was seated in the auditorium, two leaders of the CPSJA that I hadn’t noticed before were there. I tried to wave at them to catch their attention. I wonder what they might be thinking of the whole event when precisely one of their main leit motifs of their recent process has been precisely to declare

their “rupture with the State” (see more in the next Chapter). What may they be thinking about this ultimate legal strategy when even after having such strong support and leverage from a ‘culture of rights’ and the Constitutional Court of Colombia the extreme vulnerability of the IDP population seems to continue and even worsen (Comisión de Seguimiento 2008).

Some final remarks

One certainly has to acknowledge that these side-effects like the vulnerability of this population 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 problematizations 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). But also, of a powerful stripping machine that would contend with reducing and governing life at its minimum levels (Agamben 1998). For sure, this governing machine is not a ‘well-oiled machine”, but their side-effects are clear and evident, albeit unpredictable, in terms of what are they accomplishing. Mattresses 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?

Finally, a constant pattern seen through the 1995 Deng report is 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[21]. He argues that it is impossible to understand the situation of IDPs without analyzing the context in which it occurs[22]. In fact, he goes on to list specific events of the internal history of Colombia like the presence of guerrilla or "self-defense" armed groups, the Coca Cartels and the "dirty war" of the eighties against certain political parties of the Left. The comprehensiveness of the Colombian case seems to be elusive[23]. As the Representative says, there are stark regional differences. Instead of the massive population 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[24]. In the interview we had, as well, he repeatedly asked me to help him make sense of the IDPs situation in Colombia.

With this information in hand, he makes very provocative 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[25]. Second, he observed that internally displaced persons in both rural and urban areas share in the poverty of the local population[26]. In his report of the year 2000, much more critical of the whole situation, he claims that the areas from where the majority of IDPs come from coincide with not only with where guerrilla and paramilitary activity is most intense, but also tend

to be rich in natural resources[27]. 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”[28]. Indeed, if one takes this statement seriously, 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”[29].

On the information and allegations by internally displaced persons on human rights reports, he concludes that there is a perpetual violation of international human rights by all actors[30] . IDPs lack adequate housing and basic services. And third, as he suggests, there is no hope of return for the internally displaced persons. In fact, as he says: there are very few solutions to the fundamental causes of displacement[31]. 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[32]. Even more, he mentions as that the new Constitution of 1991 brought certain measures for the general protection of human rights in the country. The 1995 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 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 confirms that country profiles and visits are of importance in both understanding the generic problems of internal displacement as a worldwide problem, and 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"[33]. What the report shows and what would 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. For his mandate, indeed, 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"[34].

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 which 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 it might be.

Or perhaps, there are in fact other ways of thinking about the IDPs problem that counteract these side-effects in very complex ways. One could suggest that they have been always there, although surely, not on the radar of my previous perspective on the IDPs formation and actualization[35]. Until now, the dissertation has been devoted to understanding the conditions of possibility of the IDP problematizations and the Law 387 of 1997 in Colombia. For now, I have shown what the conditions of possibility for there simultaneous emergence in Colombia were, what have been their scripts, enunciative modalities, internal tensions and different rationalities. Now is time to move to the CPSJA. Thus, through the following chapters I analyze how this complex assemblage became possible where all these vectors and others I will delineate in the next chapter converge together. Thus, the CPSJA does not stand 'outside' those vectors but is complexily articulated to them. Not only do they use a 'rights-based language' and carry out mobilizations in the name of 'peace', but have also talked about 'victims' and 'perpetrators', attended national and international courts to defend their rights, and talked about the need to dignify that "suffering stranger", etc. Therefore, the next chapter would offer, following Scott's (2005) argument on the narrative tropes of romanticism and tragedy of the postcolonial literature, a 'tragic' narrative that allows one to understand the complex arrangements and directions that these same ongoing processes have been taking in Colombia. But also, to take seriously these directions in order to understand how the radical projects and deviations taken by the CPSJA in Colombia today are signaling a

drastic interruption and challenge to the epistemological and ontological precepts of the modern state-making project.

Endnotes

[1]Just a few articles in the largest newspaper in Colombia from a long list of more articles: "Negocian indemnizaciones por Trujillo". El Tiempo, July 13, 1995, "Coronel implicado en masacre de Trujillo trabajó hasta el martes pasado en inteligencia militar", EL Tiempo, October 3, 2008.

[2] In a book that would inaugurate and characterize the careful reconstruction of the regional analysis on violence in Colombia (Bolívar 2003), he described how his own town had also been a stronghold of legendary leftist guerrilla groups known as the Bolcheviques del Líbano (Libano Bolcheviques) in the 1920s (Sánchez 1976).

[3] Just a few articles in the largest newspaper in Colombia from a long list of more articles: "Abren Pliego De Cargos En Contra De Alfonso Plazas", El Tiempo, October 11, 2007, "Por Caso Del Palacio, Sigue Detenido Ex Jefe Del B-2", El Tiempo, Augusto 5, 2007, "Capturan A Mayor (R) Por Caso Del Palacio", El Tiempo, February 9, 2007. "Fiscalía ordena captura del general (r) Jesús Arias Cabrales por los hechos del Palacio de Justicia", El Tiempo, October 10, 1008.SAME AS NOTE 1

[4] More info on Giraldo's thoughts on the importance of the Russel Tribunals in Latin America, see his article "Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos sobre Impunidad – 2" posted in his official website last accessed October 22, 2008:
http://www.javiergiraldo.org/spip.php?article50&var_recherche=Tribunal%20Permanente

[5] The corollary of this premise was that the knowledge produced by the dominated (subaltern knowledge) can be critical to transform society and the relations of domination that characterize it (Fals Borda 1991:5; Colombres 1996:29). Yet, given the hegemonic power of dominant knowledge, the liberating potential of subaltern knowledge is submerged by the history of repression and humiliation through which the present order has been naturalized (Fals Borda 1979, 1979a, 1984, Freire 1978). And it is here where the 'committed intellectual,' with his/her methods, is necessary as a catalyst for subaltern knowledge to become realized. The limitations as well as the potential of each, the dominated groups and the 'committed intellectual,' can be overcome in their dialogical collaboration, for as Fals Borda argues "the sum of knowledge from both types of agents … makes it possible to acquire a much more accurate and correct picture of the reality that is being transformed (1991:4, see also Freire 1970,). Critics of this tradition will question the necessity of the academic intellectual in this scenario. However, as Mato (2000: 493) reminds us, Freire, a central exponent of the 'committed intellectual tradition,' recognized the implicit danger of sustaining a notion of Truth "by being particularly critical of [the] notion of consientizaçao (critical consciousness) which he found contradictory to his ideas [of dialogue] because it suggested that there is one individual [the modern intellectual] who already has a critical consciousness and another who does not".

[6] As such, Orozco's argument about the inadequacy of this vertical model to explain human rights violations in Colombia has created enormous turmoil within the victims' movement in the country. In his book, he even recounts some of these intense encounters with victims' movements representatives not only in Colombia but in other countries as well. In the following chapter dealing with the history of Apartadó, I will discuss these debates more profoundly in a local setting in order to problematize both views (vertical and horizontal models).

[7]From the Website of the Nunca más website, http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/libros/nm/present.html Last accessed October 18, 2008.

8From the Website of the Office High Commissioner of Human Rights, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/Headquarters.aspx . Last accessed October 9, 2008.

[9] "Proteger derechos de 18.000 niños desplazados ordenó la Corte Constitucional". El Tiempo, October 11, 2008.

[10] A description of these events is out of the scope of this dissertation. Various scholars have analyzed these transformations, arguing about their constitutive nature both as a product of indigenous movements' struggles but also as possible within the reconfigured govermentalization of difference of the new multicultural state (Gros 2000, Laurent 2005, Uribe y Restrepo 1997, Ulloa 2004, Nelson 1999, Povinelli 2002, Hale 2005, Alvarez 2008).

[11] In fact, one could also point out at the legal activism promoted by the indigenous leaders of the Nasa communities of the southwestern region of Colombia. As such, Rappaport illustrates how colonial documents have actually been incorporated within their indigenous cosmologies as important references for their own political struggles. In the next chapters, I will concentrateon the CPSJA and the PCN to describe their uses of law and the culture of rights described before.

[12] "Tirofijo: Casa Verde Fue Destruida", El Tiempo, December 18, 1990, "El Ejército Ataca Casa Verde", El Tiempo, December 10, 1990"

[13] In the next chapter I will explain that precisely the Urabá region was chosen by the government as one of the various regions where the EPL operated. I will also show, the EPL had an important stronghold and lasting legacy in this particular region.

[14] "Duro Pulso Por Salvar Ley De Víctimas En Cámara", EL Tiempo, October 21, 2008, "Clamor Por La Ley De Víctimas", El Tiempo, October 22 2008, "Buscan Acuerdo Para Votar Ley De Víctimas", EL Tiempo, October 15, 2008.

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

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

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

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

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

[20] Interestingly enough, the first document CONPES of 1995 does not identify IDPs in the way the analytical report in 1992 did, but considers the definition proposed by the above discussed Interamerican Institute of Human Rights. 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). This same definition would 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 that in 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).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[28] E/CN.4/2000/83/Add.1: parr. 23
[29] A/50/558: parr 14

[30] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 62-70

[31] E/CN.4/1995.50/Add.1: parr 73

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

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

[34] E/CN.4/1995.50

[35] 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 wrote before, thanks to a report published by the Conferencia Episcopal in 1995 the problem of the IDPs in Colombia became visible and named for the first time . In recent years, progressive bishops and priests working with several NGOs including Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace), CODHES (Consultancy for Human Rights 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 will mention in the following chapters.

“Quítate tú para ponerme yo”

On October 2007, I sat at the final sessions of the Universidad Campesina de la Resistencia (Peasant University of Resistance, more info Chapter 5) with national and international delegates from indigenous communities and human rights organizations, European municipalities and a group of German ex-pats now living in Portugal who had created what they described as an “alternative and self-sustainable community”. They also funded the whole event. Some days before this final session, the national and international guests seated at the kiosk had walked for almost a week along the same paths that the most recent CPSJA’s pilgrimages that took international delegations to Luis Eduardo’s improvised chapel had taken. With blisters on their feet, they told about the paramilitary presence on several occasions during the pilgrimage when several members were stopped by an armed group of men threatening them and the whole CPSJA. Coming from Italy, Greece, Switzerland, United States and Germany, these tired bodies were almost exhausted even two days after the pilgrimage had arrived. In fact, I could argue

that a general bodily exhaustion can describe what the whole scene appeared to be all about. I had been in that condition twelve months ago when I also joined one of these recurrent pilgrimages that takes one for hours walking over high slopes, crossing the densely tropical rainforest mountains and unending inclinations. Indeed the exhaustion seemed to make them (and us) proud about them(our)selves. Albeit somehow foolish as well, when we compared our physical resistance and tidiness to one of those peasants that never seemed to get tired after hours of walking while carrying loads of food. Interestingly enough, the same tropes of “bodily exhaustion” and “sacrifice”, just as they became central in the diaries of missionaries who had carried out their campaigns at the beginning of the twentieth century in this same region (Gálvez Abadía 2006), also became a central site of gratification and even self-purification as it was argued on this occasion. And as some of the CPSJA members explained when we finished the first pilgrimage, the long walk and the bodily exhaustion could actually be used as a metaphor to narrate the history of the CPSJA through these years.

In the middle of the session, some members of the CPSJA, coming back from the larger city of Apartadó, recounted what they had just experienced. They talked in a rather calm way (I thought) about the sudden appearance of several graffiti throughout the city

and also along the signs on the road before arriving in this urban settlement. Rumors later confirmed by the larger national newspapers mentioned that the same graffiti had appeared not only in Apartadó, but simultaneously in other smaller cities like Chigorodó and Turbo in the department of Antioquia and close-by municipalities in the neighboring department of Córdoba[1]. The graffiti signed by a yet-unknown organization with the perplexing name of Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia[2] (Colombian Gaitanistas Self-defense Groups), declared that they were going to take control of the region[3] once again after the unsuccessful negotiations and disillusionment with the Government promises and the supposed abandonment of many of those young ex-paramilitaries who had laid down their arms since 2002. The graffiti were meant to inform the whole region of more than 300,000 inhabitants that they were back to retake what was theirs. No need to bother: locals knew what these threats meant. They had seen these graffiti and runaway from them before.

The mentioned title of the salsa song *Quítate tu p'a ponerme yo* used by the local reporter to describe the logic behind the escalation of violence in the 1990s came to my mind. News from the CPSJA "messengers" in fact confirmed the stunning effects of these threats: empty streets, paralyzed bus terminals, assassinations of bus drivers in Turbo,

shops closed and a general fear in the population. As Das (2007b: 119) suggests on the phenomenology of rumor, what is important here is to register "the perlocutionary force of words, their capacity to do something by saying something, through which words come to be transformed from being a medium of communication to becoming bearers of force." In fact, knowing that the CPSJA and its surrounding region had been commonly represented and aligned with guerrilla and leftist-oriented groups, the local drivers preferred not to take passengers to this region. The representatives had actually arrived so late because no one dared to take them to this region. None of the members or national or international participants had heard about this Gaitanista group before. Me neither. Padre Giraldo, presiding over the meeting, told the audience that the news actually confirmed and described the significance of how the everyday life of those communities is traversed by the constant threat of the armed conflict. While confusion and an evident fear disseminated through the meeting, Padre Giraldo told the audience that the best thing that they could do was not walk or head to Apartadó alone. He then uttered a prayer which, using the classic tropes of martyrdom and sacrifice, spoke about how these threats have not only been constant in the ten years of the CPSJA, where on certain occasions they have been followed by massacres and disappearances, but that the whole situation deeply

signaled the courage and dignity of those who have preferred to resist in their own territories and not flee to the larger cities. And we just prayed with him.

Outside the kiosk, right at the end of the prayer, a nervous and worried woman from the community took her head and ran all around the houses looking for her ten-year-old son. With an anxious voice, she told us that she just couldn't find him after he had left the settlement in the early morning to go walking along the road between San José and Apartadó for a medical appointment. He was supposed to arrive at the house of some relatives. But she had just called them in the evening through the only antenna that the community had, and was informed that her son hadn't arrived yet. She said that she just didn't have the money to send him with the local transportation. He had to walk the ten kilometers alone to get to his appointment. She was afraid that he had been stopped at the infamous armed road blocks along the road. Someone from the CPSJA explained the materiality of these remembrances to me:

> "On February 1997 a joint paramilitary and military roadblock was established on the way out of Apartadó [heading to San José de Apart ado] five minutes away from a large military base located in the Policarpa barrio and in less than five minutes one could find the paramilitary roadblock permanently working (….) in that roadblock numerous civilians from this community disappeared and were assassinated (…) the Goverment knew about it and many claims were made to the minister of the judicial powers, the Ombudsman, in order to forbid the functioning of the roadblock only five minutes from a military base (…) for almost one year

> not a single investigation or action was undertaken to find direct or indirect evidence of what was happening" (Personal Communication, October 2008)

Nothing to do, no cars to go and search for her son, and even more, it could actually be dangerous to take the road during the night. So we just had to wait until the next day where she later found that her son had actually arrived in Apartadó but at another house where some other relatives lived and could not communicate with her. But for a couple of hours, the fear of a newly disappeared young child of no more than twelve years of age spread throughout the whole community. I left some days later for Bogotá. I could actually leave because from one moment to another the general paralysis of the four or five cities stopped. "Someone", the bus driver told me, had authorized the end of the paralysis and let people, buses, markets and the local businesses go about their way again. It just stopped. Everyday life just continued. No idea who this "someone" was, no need to ask and to identify. In fact, Das argues that the appearance of the unattributed and unassigned panic rumor during times of crisis is constitutive of incomplete or interrupted social stories anchored in local histories of violence (Das 2007b: 117). This time, what was certain enough was the powerful and material effect that this anonymous rumor had throughout the region: in fact, it only highlights the peculiarity and strength of any rumor which is precisely conceived to spread (Ibid: 119). "Someone" had given the order that things could get "normal" once again. Once, at the improvised bus stop in front of the

CPSJA settlement, another peasant who had just arrived from his house ten hours away, informed us about the armed helicopters that were flying all over the region. He told us about the shootings heard some days before. In fact, just when I was taking the local transportation to Apartadó where I would take the airplane back to Bogotá, I saw and listened to the armored helicopters heading to the same mountains we had walked through on certain occasions before. A week later, I heard that other intense shootings could actually be heard from the same CPSJA settlement the day I left.

The next day after the "messengers" arrived at the kiosk, we gathered in the collective dining room of the community constructed by the locals and funded by the Chefs without Borders organization. The restaurant gave free breakfast and lunch to all children and elders in the community and it was supposed to become self-sustainable from the community's own work. Five women gathered along the long table to help one another to craft a banner visualizing the memorable 2005 massacre, retold in the introduction that was going to be given as a gift to one of the international organizations leaving the next day. The rumor of the paramilitary threats and graffiti became the central topic of the conversation. Without even asking or questioning in any direction, these women began reminded us about the events of 1996-97 when similar graffiti appeared in

the region. As such, the conversation helped to manifest how the spread of this rumor also worked to actualize certain regions of the past and create a sense of continuity between events (Das 2007b). The traces of an 'everlasting past' were suddenly evoked (Fassin 2007). They remembered how they had to run away every night to go to sleep in the forest because they knew that every night paramilitaries would arrive in San José de Apartadó with a dreadful list searching for sympathizers of leftist organizations in the region. Once, a women told us, they escaped with some mattresses and some blankets to the forest only to realize that they had left their baby sleeping in the hammock in their house. They laughed from a distance but in their eyes one could imagine the uneasiness and panic they might have felt at that moment. But she told me that now they just had to laugh. She had to go all the way back to their house to pick him up, only to hide again under the protection of the forest. Too much horror, they said, many nights without sleep, and many bodies found in the early morning, shot or dismembered in a town that only seemed to "live" during the day.

In this chapter, I want to describe this story of phantoms and specters and the traces of the everlasting past that still inhabit the present physical and symbolic landscape of the CPSJA. Here, I understand the landscape as made out of "sets of relational places

each embodying (literally and metaphorically) emotions, memories and associations derived from personal and interpersonal shared experience" (Tilley 1999: 178). Here I also include the biophysical and ecological aspects and their articulation with spatial practices (Escobar 2008). Thus, this chapter deals with those memories narrated at that table but also on the materialities they depend on to construct a meaningful landscape bound up with the individuals who inhabit them. Even more, just by confirming the chills that these memories awoke in the skin of these women, it is also about how these bodies remember (Fassin 2007). In the case of the CPSJA, this 'archaeology' becomes even more complex and multilayered since many of them, as I will shortly explain, arrived in this region from far-away areas, escaping from political violence or searching for economic prosperity in several waves beginning in the 1950's. So too were the legions of peasants, industrialists, bandits, activists, NGOs and adventurers looking for a still-marginalized open territory ready to fulfill all sorts of desires, interests and utopias. Certainly, the picture of the Urabá region and the CPSJA gets more complicated when one addresses how people move and how the moved engage with landscape (Bender 2001). As such, most of the narratives from today's inhabitants about the region are quite recent and almost all start with the typical trope of arriving in the mid 1970s or 1980s in a dense and empty forest right at the border of the large plains appropriated for large-scale

banana cultivation. Other narrations focus instead on the political mobilization by the mentioned leftist organization Patriotic Union and charismatic leaders to organize local peasant councils and boards in the 1980s. As I also argue in the next chapter, elders also remembered the Dutch environmental engineers who participated in the project on peasant economies in the mid 1980s. But most of them surely narrate the first visually oriented massacres perpetrated in 1997-97, where it was clear enough that they were executed in order for others to 'see' and be horrified with the 'cultural grammar' behind many of the methods and choices made for killing and manipulating the bodies once dead (Uribe 2004).

This chapter and the next recount the vectors and convergences that have constructed this landscape in particular ways that ultimately created the conditions of possibility for the CPSJA to emerge in 1997. In a very particular sense, this analysis is located in a 'history of the present' that tries to understand these convergences and vectors coming from both the colonial imprint on the region but also from recent events occurring in the 1950s when the region was opened up by the *Carretera al Mar* (the Road to the Sea). As such, this narration focuses on how a territory gets to be constructed by the complex articulation of both human and non-human actors ranging from the Spanish

conquerors, Scottish pirates, French Calvinist communities, Antioqueño capitalists, humanitarian and human rights activists and staff, a decimated indigenous population and liberal-affiliated migrants escaping from the Conservative death squads. But also, by the presence of gold, plantain, cacao, the famous *Carretera al mar* (the Road to the sea), the wicked tropical plagues like the Sigatoka which would ruin banana plantations and the immense declared natural reserve of the *Serranía del Abibe* right at the border where the CPSJA settlement is located today (Raffles 2002). While this chapter is devoted to following those vectors that since the sixteenth century have turned the region into an area desired and violently disputed by a plethora of actors largely concerned with the expropriation and accumulation of resources, the next chapter focuses specifically on those other vectors that in the name of development, human rights and humanitarianism, have also coded matter in specific ways. I don't want to claim that these two poles are opposite projects: the one centering on the violent (cultural, political and economic) territorial dispute and the other one focused the protection of that 'suffering stranger'. These two heads of the king, as the classic Kantorowicz (1957) argument follows, share the same ultimate desire for coding and axiomatizing matter and ultimately contributing to the creation of that which it captures (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). To sum up, I want to interrogate how those place-based practices (Escobar 2001) are constituted by

memories of the massacres and several displacements, but also, by the persistence of the cocoa cultivation and the maintenance of several organizational practices brought along by the Dutch project, among many others vectors, have shaped the shared repertoires, activities, meanings and also desires constituting the CPSJA. Needless to say, I argue that only by analyzing the CPSJA as an ensemble where multiple vectors converge along these two poles of power can one understand its complex nature and present conjuncture.

Thus, I want to ponder the following questions: What have been the different vectors that in this case have territorialized matter in the way they have? Why the CPSJA here and not in other regions? Why not before? How did the CPSJA became possible by the convergence of vectors that not only created its conditions of possibility but also became central for the larger construction of the Urabá region? Through these two chapters, I want to describe the history of the CPSJA within its relational nature not only with the present but also with the past, and much more, with vectors coming from other multiple (economic, political, humanitarian, cultural) desires and projects that have constructed the larger region in which is located. In fact, in many conversations I had with participants of the CPSJA, when I asked about their reasons for not abandoning their hamlets and fleeing to the larger cities, they insisted on the fact that their dead were here.

Certainly, the dead are not cut off from their everyday practices but figure prominently in their cultural repertoires and current struggles vis a vis the State authorities. Indeed, as a growing literature of Latin American social movement theory has rightly argued, one has to consider how these entities and their patterns of mobilization (CPSJA) must be analyzed as embedded in relational networks with non-human actors, temporalities and affects (Zibechi 1996, for a review of these approaches, see Escobar n.d.). They are not cut-off from these networks. In my conclusions, I dwell on the larger consequences of what Escobar (n.d.) rightly describes as ontological struggles, for the creation of a mechanized discourse of consensus characteristic of the State's post-conflict narrative.

Interestingly enough, as a human rights report would conclude in 1993, the Urabá region is perhaps one of the more over-diagnosed regions in the country after listing the number of studies that have been made on the regional economic and social situation (Comisión Andina 1993). Uribe (1992: 80) also points at the magnitude of these predominant institutional studies and even at their just and fair diagnosis. She comments, however, that although we know about how these diagnoses are always possible within particular configurations of power and knowledge (Foucault 2000c), most of the solutions for the region were resolved not following these recommendations but by means of open

confrontation and strength. Along these lines, I argue that this particular history of the Urabá region is also the history of the larger country and shares similar patterns with the other classical peripheral areas of Colombia (Serge 2005). For now, I can just mention, following Gonzales, Bolivar and Velásquez (2003) that these same imaginaries and the type of practices organized around them have also become central for the State formation project in Colombia. Some of these are: an imagined vast and empty region recently populated by different groups of people sharing different cosmologies and necessities, a rampant demographic growth searching for boom cycles, legal and illegal economic enclaves and enterprises, presence of different sorts of armed actors, absence of any State (Government) authorities, and more especially, high levels of violence including assassinations, massacres and displacements. But also, as I argue in this chapter, of the fierce resistance of popular movements and other sectors including armed actors that impeded the successful materialization of these hegemonic vectors.

Urabá: between (cultural) crossroads and desires

In her brilliant work on the history of the representations of the peripheral areas in Colombia, Serge (2005) argues that one of the most common visual constructions of the regions made by missionaries, capitalists, and travelers, is to imagine them as empty,

feminine and vast territories. As such, the same images of emptiness and vastness ready to be colonized by scientists were also analyzed by Pratt (1992) in her classic work on the travel writings of the famous German explorer Alexander von Humboldt who in the early eighteenth century actually visited the territory that would become Colombia one decade later. On the other hand, as Williams (1980) has also argued, there seems to be a strong connection between the intensification of the relations between the imagination of an empty land and the human interventions, and the consolidation of the stereotype of an untamed and flourishing Nature ready to be colonized. Following the contribution of the regional studies in Colombia, Serge (2005) argues how these tropes have become central for imagining these areas in particular ways and hence orienting the type of practices mobilized by these representations. From the exaggerated attention given to those vectors of capital enterprises to those focusing on migration booms and others describing the violent nature of those migrants, these regional studies, Serge (2005) suggests, have tended to reproduce the classic Humboldtean image leaving beside the complexities and the internal tensions of the regional histories of Urabá and other peripheral regions as well.

In this chapter, I do not want to present a more authentic and true representation of the history of the region. Rather, my sole interest in this chapter is to take seriously those words of fear heard at the restaurant and follow the multiple histories they bear upon. What I want to do to follow Serge's (2005) call for constructing complex histories is to follow how certain vectors have become dominant and hegemonic but always as non-totalizing projects and in a constant state of becoming. Hence, one could argue, my narration does focus on those vectors articulated to capital interest while leaving others in a marginal place. And although such a claim has its merits, I still pay attention to how other vectors were decisive for creating counter-possibilities vis a vis the hegemonic capital vector for the legions of colonizing peasants escaping from the large scale capitalist desires. However, what is even more striking, as I immediately show, is that many of these hegemonic enterprises failed and couldn't meet their objectives and expectations. In fact, Uribe (1992), writing in the early nineties one of the canonical studies of the Urabá region, has rightly argued that the region as such does not exist but only if one refers to one that still is under construction due to the conflicts, tensions and frictions where no single vector has become completely hegemonic. Therefore, the narration I am bringing forward follows her call for constructing narratives (hopefully) faithful to the sedimented striation but also to the convergences and conjunctures

signaling the complex formation of both territories and collective and individual memories. This notwithstanding, I begin my narration with the (always incomplete) hegemonic vectors, projects and desires that have most materially deterritorialized and territorialized assemblages and which appear in the memories of most of the 'locals' I interviewed[4].

Along these lines, most of the scholarly production of the region has described the early history of the region through the trope of the encounter between the European and the indigenous population articulated to the process of the primitive accumulation of capital (Marx 1976, Tovar 1993). In his four volumes on the *Relaciones y Visitas a los Andes* S. XVI (Relations and Visits to the Andes, XVI century), the recognized Colombian historian Tovar begins his introduction with the affirmation that the history of the Caribbean Colombian Coast [in which Urabá is located at the western extreme right next to Panamá] is inscribed within the process of incorporation of a new space in the world capitalist economy. By focusing on Spanish documents from the sixteenth century, Tovar argues that the Urabá region might have been in fact the most important region of the Caribbean Coast and even in the whole American continent in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Evidence of the large volumes of gold recollected by these early entries

takes him to conclude that “Urabá directed the destinies of the New World and it truly spearheaded the vanguard of the Antilles and became an engine of the subjugation of thousands of indigenous that fed with their gold, bodies and work the treasures of the conquerors and those of Charles V that expanded throughout Europe the American fortunes to consolidate his empire” (Ibid: 50, my translation). Almost three decades before the Spanish would head searching to the interior behind the famous myth of *El Dorado*, he argues that the first Spanish rescates (rescues) meant to “exchange” goods with the local populations converted the gulf of Urabá into a central pole of intervention. Not coincidentally, the first urban Spanish settlement of what came to be known as the *Nuevo Reino de Granada* (and later renamed as Colombia after Spanish independence) was established in Urabá.

Right from the first entries the Spanish troops tried to establish pueblos (villages) on the eastern side of the gulf of Urabá (where the city of Apartadó is situated today). These became temporary colonies which the first inhabitants soon abandoned due to increasing necessities and to fear of the attacks of the indigenous population. From these early years, the challenge that these vectors had were clear for a complete and successful deterritorialization of the established relations. The early documents even mention how

Francisco Pizarro, later heading the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire, lived for certain months in these early settlements, permanently under attack. Only after a third entry in 1507 were the Spanish able to establish on a more stable basis the first city on the western side of the gulf, which they named Santa María la Antigua del Darién. The city was created successfully to "eradicate any opponent who pretends to break the fierce will to dominate and consolidate the colony" (Tovar 1993: 48, my translation)[5].

The "first population of Christians in Tierra Firme [Dry Land]", Santa María la Antigua del Darién, where many of the infamous Spanish armies would learn lessons for later launching their own invasions of other territories in Central and South America, was located right across the area where today not only the city of Apartadó but also the CPSJA are located. For Tovar (1993: 49), the fierce and violent resistance of the indigenous population led many of these early settlements to be abandoned. Together with the later foundations of more populated and stable cities like Portobello, Panamá, Cartagena and Veracruz, he argues, these variables were enough to abandon the region to its own fate. With the establishment of the cities of Cartagena and Santa Marta during the 1520s and 1530s, the pole of Spanish colonization would definitely move to the east of the Caribbean Coast. From there the search for the famous El Dorado would later be

initiated. For Tovar, this abandonment of the region (Santa María la Antigua del Darién was finally evacuated in 1524) also contributed to the strengthening of the long-lasting vision of Urabá, “the land of dead”.

The classic study of the history of the region made by the American geographer James Parsons (1963), not coincidentally, with the title of *Urabá. Salida de Antioquia al Mar* (Urabá, Antioquia’s exit to the sea), described that one of the consequences of the Spanish abandonment was to convert the region into a major entry point for pirate smuggling in the Nuevo Reino de Granada. While the port of Cartagena became the legal and controlled entry of merchandise and goods to the whole territory, from 1550 the gulf of Urabá became the major gateway to import and export goods and merchandise not registered by the Spanish books and authorities. Interestingly enough, the illegal character of this strategic corridor has continued even up to current times where the same gulf has become one of the major gateways for cocaine exportation. Since those years, Parsons (Ibid.) argues, the region became disputed by different empires [and narcotraffikers looking to export their merchandise] looking to take advantages of its strategic geographical location. He reports for example how in 1730 four Dutch ships were anchored in the Gulf during six months trading with the indigenous population. In

fact, Langebaek (2006) actually shows from his analysis of the almost ethnographic report of a Scottish traveler written in 1748, the active participation of the indigenous population in trading goods directly with French, Scottish and Dutch pirates. They sought these relations in order to obtain weapons to be used for their own internal guerrilla warfare with the Spanish but also with other indigenous groups. He even mentions how a particular indigenous chief swore his allegiance to the Scottish and sang the hymn to the Queen of England to defy the Spanish control of the whole region (Langebaek Ibid: 17, 22)[6].

Both Parsons (1963) and Langebaek (2006) also mention the appearance of French Calvinist communities growing cacao crops at least since 1743. Most probably, they were escaping in similar ways to the Huguenots, our first refugees (Chapter 1), from the religious persecution taking place in France at that time. The French presence in the region had been noted since 1700 when even indigenous chiefs had a patente de intercambio (exchange warrant) issued by the king of France. In As with the first Scottish settlements, at the beginning they had “good” relations with the local indigenous communities (Langebaek, Ibid). Apparently, the author mentions, their presence, which grew to more than 200 French colonists in 1750, was more tolerated by the Spanish than

the English since they were still Catholics. By 1758, Langebaek (Ibid: 19) argues, cacao became one of the major economic attractions of the whole region, which the French not only traded with the English pirates, but also competed for with the local indigenous groups, whom they finally violently engaged after some years. At the end,some French families had to leave for the island of Martinique and others moved eastward. According to Langebaek (Ibid.), these expelled communities told the Spanish authorities when they left the region that they had abandoned 73 properties with a total of 100,000 cacao trees. Once the French left, some of these abandoned crops were actually taken and worked by the local indigenous groups.

Parsons (1963: 36) describes how in 1784 due to the growing evidence of smuggling and presence of pirates from the different empires, the Spanish crown ordered the construction of fortifications that would later be abandoned in 1791-1792. He also refers to how the Virrey Caballero y Góngora actually tried to bring American colonizers but failed in the attempt. He mentions some missions that succeeded in establishing settlements but were later expelled by the indigenous resistance who actually killed some of the priests. Other missions (Italian and Spanish Carmelites) arrived again at the end of the nineteenth century with the specific objective of integrating the region into the larger

country only to encounter new disillusions and failures (Gálvez 2006). From this time, subsequent attempts to take control of the region by the different actors did not succeed. The fierce resistance of the indigenous population and the shifting interests of empires and central governments forced many of these vectors to withdraw from the region. An ex-officer of the Dutch development projects, analyzed in the next chapter, whom I interviewed, would better characterize the evanescent demographic growth in the region during these centuries.

> "(…) but then in Urabá there was neither a time of conquest nor a colonial period because the conquest was ephemeral, and the colony was not an historical epoch in Urabá. Urabá is a region that only lately has been incorporated into the national reality, and the first settlements are created and organized around the extractive processes when the Emory of Boston starts to construct the road between Montería and Arboletes for logging purposes. But people start to settle down in the small clearings they opened, and soon, small towns began to grow; it is this context of opening roads [for the extractive economies] and formation of settlements that ceaselessly repeats in the history of Urabá." (Personal Communication, 2008)

The disputed characteristics of this frontier area would become more evident after the independence from Spain (1817) where the larger government entities of Cartagena, Popayán and Antioquia fought for jurisdiction over this strategic area in order not to depend on the larger ports on the Caribbean coast and for the advancement of their own economic interests. While in 1857 the region was given to the authorities of the department of Popayán, it would finally be given to Antioquia in 1905. Notwithstanding

the Antioquia jurisdiction, Parsons (1963) argues that in fact during the beginnings of the twentieth century the most common groups that migrated to these areas didn't arrive from distant Medellín but from the neighboring departments of Córdoba and Bolivar. Commonly known today as chilapos, this "ethnic" group became responsible for physically transforming the Northern region of Urabá by extending the large cattle-raising farms (latifundios) of the department of Córdoba (Uribe 1992). Uribe (1992) also describes the arrival of maroon communities since the sixteenth century, who settled in the rainforests of Chocó and Darién, escaping from the mining industries. Roldán (2003) also suggests that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Turbo, located on the Caribbean Coast, in fact had more cultural and economic relations with the neighboring port of Cartagena than with the mountainous department capital of Medellín. In conclusion, the dream of a frontier land full of natural resources and ready to be colonized had already been established in the mind of many adventurers who arrived in the region. The imprint of an impenetrable region and the depiction of the heroic audacity of those who dared travel to the 'heart of darkness' would definitely take hold from these early days: a moral topography was thereby under construction with far reaching consequences even today (Taussig 1989):

> "Of especial importance to this New World version of the theme of descent, ascent, and salvation is the way by which the tropical hell of the jungle and jungle Indians is so clearly opposed to the terrestrial paradise of the highlands above. The imagery proper to each realm, as well as the cycle of death and rebirth connecting them, reappear persistently through the ages- as we shall see in the curing visions of poor white colonists, Indians and Capuchin missionaries [and development projects, internationals, King Leopold III of Belgium] in the twentieth century in the Putumayo [Urabá region]." (Taussig 1989: 292).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Urabá had several extractive boom cycles of rubber, wood and tagua nut. The already-mentioned Emery Boston wood company exploited the region at the beginning of the twentieth century (Ibid). Famous stories of the legendary "Rey de la Tagua" (King of the Tagua), Eusebio Campilla, evoked the massive power this individual was able to collect which even led him to be described almost as a "feudal lord" controlling between nine to ten thousand collectors spread throughout the jungle during harvest times (Parsons Ibid: 48, see also Steiner 2000). References of other strongmen of Lebanese origin coming from the neighboring departments of Córdoba and Montería also figure as decisive for the deployment of these extractive projects in the region (Steiner 2000). Other famous smugglers would be remembered for their audacity and ability to escape from the persecution of the authorities who even sent special troops for their capture (Steiner 1991a). During those years, the nut exportation rates converted the country into the second-largest world producer, only to later decline with the introduction of rubber buttons after the First

World War (Parsons 1963: 49). At the beginning of the twentieth century, as well, definite events for the region occurred such as the concession from the Central Government of 5000 hectares in 1909 to the German Albingia consortium for banana cultivation. Some years later, the Germans had to leave the country with the onset of the First World War, but with the resentment of the local authorities of Urabá who opposed this decision from Bogotá (Steiner 2000). They would convert the region into an everlasting project with far-reaching consequences that finally materialized in the 1960s. And in 1913, as well, Parsons (Ibid.) describes the construction of a telegraph line between the mountainous town of Dabeiba and the coastal Turbo.

The culture of violence and the violence of culture

Together with the poignant analysis of violence in the region of Steiner (2000) and Uribe (1992), Roldán (2003) has brought attention to the cultural, racial and ethnic discursive articulations (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) which have informed and sustained the subtle and violent boundary-making practices deployed in order to signal a frontier between an “us” and “them” in the relations between the elites of the capital Medellín and different provinces of the Antioquia department. For Bolívar (2003), this type of study of violence aided comprehension of the regional dynamics where alleged political parties should also be understood as subcultures in charge of articulating the region to

other national and international networks and strengthening pre-established social, racial and cultural hierarchies (For Urabá, see also Suárez 2007). Hence, these studies have precisely focused on the political mobilization of identities and more specifically, have studied the specific conjuncture whereby any identity and difference matters (Hall 1996). Needless to say, I don't want to argue that those identities are deposits of any essential and natural characteristics[7]. I just want to raise awareness as to how and when these discursive operations, through which identity is constructed, together with the boundaries that differentiate "us" from those "others", were mobilized during these years to shape the history of this region. and even more, as Bolívar (2003) argues, to ultimately outline the State formation project in these peripheral areas. In fact, by analyzing the most common repertories and discourses of the industrialists and capitalists from Medellín present in the region from the early decades of the twentieth century, Steiner (2000) has rightly argued for the need to understand the whole period through the metaphor of the "colonial encounter".

Not only has she brought forward evidence about the colonial desires (Stoler 1995, 2004) of those patriarchs for civilizing the Urabá region but also, for displacing other racial, ethnic and cultural groups excluded from the characteristic white, catholic,

entrepreneurial and conservative dominant prototype mobilized by these capitalists from Medellín. In fact, Nancy Appelbaum (2007) reviewing the Antioqueño colonization of the southern department of Caldas, also argued for the need to incorporate the racial and ethnic discursive articulations (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) mobilized by these vectors to understand the particular ways in which land was legally concentrated in the hands of these "white entrepreneurs" newcomers while many of the original groups were correspondingly displaced. Even the expression *Paisa*, commonly used to name people from Antioquia, is in fact derived from the term *paisano* (neighbor, local, fellow), evoking precisely the fact of an imagined community of people sharing a similar racial, religious and moral ground. Also, Appelbaum (Ibid.) refers to the common tradition where elite families from Medellín dressed in common peasant clothes during the mid 1950s while travelling through the rural areas to intensify this common ground shared with the local peasant population. In the Northern and Southern extremes of the Antioqueño colonization, Caldas and Urabá, these colonial desires for populating the region with the same ethnic and racially affiliated groups often appear simultaneously with fears of losing economic and moral control of these regions to other regional elites from Cauca and Cartagena (Appelbaum 2007, Steiner 2000). In the end, these two poles needed to be saved by the Antioqueños and in the first case (*Caldas*), it began to be

populated by peasant coffee growers who epitomized the ideal ethos of hard working, catholic, patriarchal and clever entrepreneurs (Appelbaum 2007).

In her cogent analysis of the introduction of a medical pasteurized discourse at the end of the nineteenth century to Medellín, Londoño (2008) explains that these elite families were clear industrialists and not merely parasite landowners that converted Antioquia into the bastion of the whole Colombian industry at the beginning of the twentieth century. These elite families had accumulated enough capital from the exploitation of the gold mines of the region to begin the largest and most successful textile industry pole in the whole country (Farnsworth-Alvear 2000) and to conquer and start colossal enterprises in uncivilized areas like the Urabá region (see below). But as several anthropological studies of the *Paisa* mentality have argued, they were also responsible for the production of a subject and a whole imaginary constructed through the discourses of morality, cleanliness and civilization that opposed vagrancy and cherished the values of "positivism, practical sense, geographical mobility, reserve, commercial sense, love for money, talent for economic activities, high esteem for success, sense of solidarity, religiosity, sense of independence, regionalism, traditionalism, strong family life, method, order, civism, sexual Puritanism, among others" (Blair 2008: 54, in similar

ways, see Steiner 2000, Roldán 2003, Farnsworth-Alvear 2000). Interestingly enough, the rumor of the Jewish origin of many of these first Antioqueños capitalists lies deep in Colombian public wisdom and it does seem to have some empirical evidence as well (Londoño 2008).

For the Urabá region, meanwhile, a colonel reviewing the conflictive region of Urabá in the mid-twentieth century signaled with stunning preoccupation, "the need to take to these regions the moral and civil aspects of the Antioqueño people that are guarantee for the redemption of many men that live a primitive life and a mental and moral relaxation in these remote lands" (Cited in Roldán 2003: 239). A similar argument was also expounded during the 1930s when a functionary visiting the region emphasized the "imperious necessity of antioquenizing this social conglomerate, principally composed of strange elements coming from the administrative influence of the department" (Cited in Parsons 1963: 95, my translation). On the other hand, Uribe (1992) has rightly argued what this *Antioqueño* colonization ultimately meant for those colonial *resguardos* (reserves) granted by the Spanish crown for the indigenous communities in the area. In fact, most of the foundations the towns of Dabebia, Frontino and Uramita in the southern region of Urabá were established in these indigenous reserves. Many of

these were ultimately terminated or incorporated within the new economic networks of the *Antioqueño* capitalist. For Uribe (Ibid: 30) the idea brought along by these vectors was to whiten the indigenous community, which meant both to antioquenize and civilize it. However, she argues, in Urabá this effort ultimately failed: the current effervescent pluriethnicity of the region is the best empirical evidence of how these desires went bankrupt with the years (Ibid: 30).

Moreover, as Parsons (1963) argues, the initial studies of an interoceanic channel for uniting South America with the rest of the hemisphere started to be reviewed in 1858. In fact, the same powerful desire of uniting North, Central and South America through a Pan-American highway or an interoceanic channel have frequently emerged in the history of the region up until today. A much smaller but close relative of this hemispheric dream was later materialized in the strenuous and prolonged effort of almost three decades of the construction of the *Carretera al mar* (road to the sea) to uniting the city of Medellín with the Caribbean sea; this only saw its culmination in the 1950s (see more below). For Steiner (1991a), while the ax would become the symbol of the Antioqueño colonization southward for those migrant peasants opening the famous coffee plantations areas of the country, the Carretera would become the indisputable symbol for the western

colonization. Parsons (1963: 54) recounts how even since 1885 local intellectuals from Medellín would ponder [ironically] over the strange situation in which the land where the Spanish set foot for the first time was also the most delayed in the whole Colombian State. But there are certainly hopes, the author writes: this is why Antioquia had to have in the future a definite means for growth and richness; "because it is precisely through her that a road that would communicate Antioqueños with the sea and the rest of the world will be established". For Steiner (2000), the *Carretera* would certainly materialize the (male) colonial desires of the capitalists from Medellín to secure their commercial but also moral hold over this region. In fact, most of the scholars of this region gave to this colonizing desire a fundamental role not only for explaining the characteristic articulation of the Urabá with the rest of the country, but also for explaining together with other variables that I will mention below, the anarchic demographic growth of the region.

A prominent industrialist from Medellín named White, who came from a lineage of founders of many towns of the Urabá region and later ministers in future administrations, actually proposed (unsuccessfully) to the United Fruit Company the construction of the train between Urabá and the southern town of Frontino. Several commissions and attempts made by the local governments and capitalists during the early

decades to finance the construction of the highway were unsuccessful. For Steiner (2000), the central government interest in securing the frontier rights after the American Panama takeover of Panama at the beginning of the twentieth century was of utmost importance for consolidating this project. But the role of this dream would also be materialized in less important but equally symbolic events that would consistently reproduce the metaphor of a savage area and the courage of those who dared cross it. For example, an article of the local newspaper reviewing the international presence in the region also describes how the famous American pilot Charles Lindbergh flew over the region in July 1932 through the route Medellín-Turbo-Panama as president of the technical committee of Pan-American airways (El Heraldo 1995, No. 190). It also described how Henry Ford funded three Brazilian drivers who were supposed to drive a Ford through the impenetrable jungle. The article narrates how the drivers left Medellín on May 21 and arrived in Turbo on June 7. The cars, reported the newspaper, "crossed rivers, landslides, lagoons and were assisted by 25 persons" (Ibid, my translation).

In her groundbreaking work on violence in the department of Antioquia between 1946-1853, Roldán (2003) explores the realms of land concentration and property value as key measures to explain the outcome of the constant violent confrontations in the

region during this period. She describes the conclusions of an army officer reviewing the conflicts in the region in 1950 that the properties were so large that almost the whole territory was owned by just a few people. Many of these large properties had been appropriated by large entrepreneurs through legal reforms made in the Congress in the 1930s that secured the concentration of land tenure in few hands (Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986). Especially after the expansion of new areas for booming agricultural production in the first decades of the 1920s, these sectors moved quickly to secure their hold over vast empty lands (territories baldíos) that had no recognized owner. They were competing against the claims of small peasants who were also quickly moving to these areas escaping from violence and searching for new economic opportunies. The small colonizing peasants' presence threatened the desires of both the liberal and conservative elites of securing properties in these areas (Le Grand, Ibid, Fals Borda 1986). The promises of the presidential campaign Revolución en Marcha (The ongoing revolution) of López Pumarejo which increased the expectations of these marginalized populations soon faded away under a more reformist pragmatism (Fals Borda 1986, Sánchez and Meertens 1988). Soon, as Le Grand (Ibid.) and Fals Borda (1986) describe in their analysis of peasant struggles set in most of these new frontier areas in the country, these conflicts were resolved through legal land reforms that favored the large capitalists, by

the incorporation of this floating labor force in the extractive industries, or by their forced eviction.

Travelers had to walk through these farms to move between one urban settlement and the next. Only between 1918 and 1931, Roldán (2003: 237) argues, 24 concessions of *tierras baldías* (empty territories) were granted in the Turbo area with an average extension of 1,061ha, while the total average of the forest concession around the town of Chigorodó between 1900 and 1953 was 15,000ha. According to Uribe (1992: 23) this politics of land concentration by dispossession had been widely used from the end of the nineteenth century: together with the foundations of the towns of Turbo (1840), Frontino (1848) and Dabeiba (1872), these "empty territories" were legally obtained by these capitalists even though much of these areas belonged to indigenous reserves. Indeed by now, it is evident how the "enclosure movement" whereby these common lands were legally taken by subsequent series of conquerors, capitalists and cattle-owners, has been and will continue to be a central vector for shaping the history of Urabá region since the sixteenth century (Polanyi 2001, Marx 1976). With these figures, she strongly suggests that behind the dramatic escalation of violence that converted the whole region into one of the most violent areas of the country during the twentieth century, there lies clear-cut

and very successful patterns that seek to concentrate land in few hands. As such, these series of counter-agrarian reforms clearly suggest that behind the chaotic party-racial-ethnic confrontation, there were clear winners and also losers. Most of the latter would be peasant liberals that would be forcibly displaced by the *pájaros* (conservative affiliated paramilitary troops). The former would escape looking for refuge precisely in the "empty" and "abandoned" region of Urabá. As Roldán (Ibid. 277) concludes (see also Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986), the *pájaros* together with the large land-owners whose property-value increased dramatically were the great winners in the whole of Antioquia during those years.

By using the term 'liberal', I am not referring exactly to the characteristic liberal English philosophy better exemplified in the 'utilitarian' movement of the Edinburgh school (Rose 1999). Although there are indeed certain elements that do occupy a central role in these "liberal" vectors in Colombia, including the values of liberty, pragmatism, autonomy and defiance of any authority, it is clear that this version also encompasses more "leftist" and "radical" agendas mobilized in different moments in the history of Colombia by political parties, popular and peasant movements and unions (Fals Borda 2008, Sanchez and Meertens 1988). Within a wide spectrum of possibly opposing

initiatives, these included the 'liberal radicals' of the nineteenth century, López Pumarejo's reformist presidential program of the Revolución en Marcha (The 'ongoing revolution'), and the more radical presidential program of the Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal (Liberal Revolutionary Movement), MRL, of the 1960s and the plethora of popular movements of peasants, unions, students and other constituencies. Although having almost radically different agendas, what they had in common which allowed them to construct weak alliances was their opposition to the Conservative party and its vision of a structured class-, race- and moral- based society (Fals Borda 2008). Even more, and here the divisions would grow, was the movements' opposition to a hegemonic society that was eager and successful enough to concentrate large property estates after the agricultural frontier flourished thanks to the coffee and agricultural economic booms that happened right at the beginning of the twentieth century (Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986, Sanchez and Meertens 1988).

As Sánchez's classic study of the peasant leagues in the 1930s argues, these peasant movements that originated in the central provinces of Cundinamarca and Tolima had conflicting relations with both the liberal and communist party (Sánchez 1976). In these contexts, the political parties were not going to take the radical decision to

distribute land nor to give the peasants enough autonomy and liberty from their political party affiliation. Some of these efforts were ultimately co-opted, fragmented and others just disappeared through violent and subtle means. Through both legal land reforms, state repression, armed persecution or forced evictions that ultimately favored the large land owners and the incorporation of many of the peasant leaders in the existing political parties, the radical and combative nature of these movements soon evaporated after their explosion in the 1930s (Sánchez 1976, Le Grand 1988). However, the "peasant colonies" of Sumapaz in the 1920s and 1930s would also remain in the memories of the future self-sustained and autonomous peasant organizations such as the famous "Independent Republics" of the 1950s. The latter would in turn become the founding myths of the first guerrilla movements of the 1960s (Uribe 2007, Le Grand Ibid: 178). Even more, it is no coincidence that some of the first and most famous guerrilla leaders came from the interior departments of Tolima and Cundinamarca with a strong liberal tradition of peasant leagues and colonies (Sánchez 1977, 1976, Sánchez and Meertens 1988, Uribe 2007, Guzman, Fals Borda and Umaña 2005, 2005a).

Throughout the years, these same vectors were reproduced by many popular movements (peasants, unions, etc) throughout the country that in fact massively

supported the presidential campaign of the popular candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán assassinated in April 9, 1948. He who precisely identified his campaign with those popular sectors excluded from the Conservative agendas. As I already stated, this particular event unleashed the period of La Violencia around the country which initiated the uprising of many liberal sympathizers and their corresponding persecution by the Conservative pájaros, the mid-century version of paramilitaries aligned with the hegemonic sectors. Indeed, many of the current elders of the CPSJA express their liberal affiliation and as I also mentioned, also narrated stories about their families' persecution by the Conservative pájaros. Only in the Peque, the original town of one of the present leaders of the CPSJA who had to escape while he was young together with his family from the dreadful pájaros, a local priest would describe that the town had approximately 11,000 inhabitants in 1951 (Ibid: 276). In 1953, only 3000 lived in Peque while the rest had been murdered or displaced to other regions. Indeed, the leader's family was one of these. Certainly, many of the elders today inhabiting the CPSJA would arrive in the region in these same years from the southern towns like Urama, Cañasgordas, Frontino and Dabeiba escaping from violence only to find more violence in the new region. One of these narrated:

> "I came in 1962 practically as a child when all the areas was practically a jungle, a jungle I mean, there was no one inhabiting the region, and then our grandfathers and fathers brought us here with the desire to work (…) and then we started to work (…) and in the year of 1974 one began to experience the armed conflict through the arrival of the armed groups; but one didn't imagine at that time that the area was going to turn so tense and difficult with the war, especially for the civil population (…) but as the years went by the situation got worse and in the 1990s the guerrilla had control of the whole area and it is when the paramilitaries emerged, they existed in other areas, but it is in the 1990s where they arrived and we started to talk about them (…) in 1997 we had to flee and displace" (Personal Communication July 2007).

These are precisely the "sons of La Violencia" who would in many cases avenge their persecution or assassination of any family member by joining the armed struggles of the opposing side just to avenge their victims or punish their opponents' sympathizers (Guzman, Fals Borda and Umaña 2005, Sánchez and Meertens 1988). Coincidentally, as also Roldán (2000) and Steiner (1991a) argue, these same towns were often mentioned in the literature and press in those years thanks to the presence of famous bandits and liberal guerrilla camps. Together with famous camps such as that of *Camparusia*, renowned liberal bandits are still part of the memories of these families that had to flee to Urabá. In fact, several decades later, this same region continued with this tradition by transforming itself into a stronghold of guerrilla movements and the above-mentioned and later exterminated leftist-oriented party *Unión Patriótica* (Patriotic Union). Sánchez and Meertens (1988: 84-86) would explain the significance of the emergence of these liberal bandits in a lucid way:

> "(…) what the phenomenon of banditry reflects is the success that the dominated classes had in their tactic of disorganizing the dominated classes through a series of struggles, but also of successive defeats: political defeat and final destruction of the popular movement's illusions created around the López Pumarejo Revolución en Marcha; the beheading, together with the assassination of Gaitán, of a growing democractic-bourgeois project, and a sense of impotence against the heroic but frustrated national insurrection of April 9, 1948 and finally, the unexpected liquidation of the guerrilla movement of the 1950s, that although it had enough efficiency in the military sense and was undergoing particular transformations in the interior of its own organization, it finally succumbed in the double play of amnesty and repression (…) the phenomenon of the banditry emerges then, not through the previous absence of any classist peasant organization, but through its disappearance or extermination in the counteroffensive campaign of the dominant classes"

For Uribe (1992), indeed, a strong continuity can be traced between these liberal guerrillas of the 1940s and 1950s and the later emergence of regional branches of the FARC and EPL guerrilla movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Since 1954, the Communist Party had already chosen Urabá as a key region of penetration (García 1996). Even more, famous liberal bandits of the 1950s would head to the coastal town of Turbo in Antioquia to found in 1961 the guerrilla movement Ejército Revolucionario de Colombia (Revolutionary Army of Colombia) that would turn some years later into the Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army) (Sánchez and Meertens 1998: 202). Indeed, the emergence of simultaneous situations related to union conflicts and persecutions and the pressure for land vis a vis the peasant colonization, were key factors for the appearance of these guerrilla movements and further growth in the region. As Le

Grand (1988) argues, it is no coincidence that many of what were colonizing areas opened up after the agricultural boom of the beginning of the twentieth century, including Urabá but also La Macarena, the same place where I went as a volunteer during undergraduate studies, have traditionally been regions with guerrilla presence. For the FARC guerrilla movement, at least, as Uribe (2007) and Suárez (2007) have both argued, the memories of the 1950s peasant colonization and the establishment of the famous self-sustainable community of Marquetalia, have become a common inspiration not only to guide their action during these years, but more specifically, to direct their attention to areas like Urabá where similar processes were in fact occurring. Not only the FARC V Front was actually founded according to different versions in San José de Apartadó or in Belén de Bajirá by the late 1960s, but many of its first leaders were in fact veteran liberal guerrilla soldiers who had fought during the period of La Violencia against these Conservative pájaros (Uribe 1992, Suárez 2007).

An article of the local newspaper, published in 1999, transcribed an interview with an old woman, 72 years old by that time, who remembered how 49 years ago a group of armed men set fire to the thirty houses that constituted the first settlements of the city of Apartadó (El Heraldo, 1999, No. 231). Although the reporter suggests that this

old woman couldn't identify these men, the local history pointed at a group of soldiers from the National Army that burned the houses in order to prevent the *chusma liberal* (liberal masses) from establishing there. "I came from the Big River when some people we encountered on our way, told us that the ranches had been burned. When we came back, the embers were still burning They ate the chickens" (Ibid, my translation). The article continues, "*Pueblo Quemao* [Burned town] arose like the phoenix out of the ruins and ashes and it grew up with pride" (Ibid, my translation). The PNR (Plan for National Rehabilitation) project funded by the United Nations to recuperate the oral histories of the first inhabitants of the city Apartadó officially established in 1964, also interviewed some leaders who narrated that the first settlements were indeed very liberal and inhabited mostly by people originally from Cartagena and the neighboring departments of Córdoba and Bolívar (Universidad Nacional 1990). The Antioqueños, a local suggested, would arrive later with the opening of the *Carretera al Mar*.

Today, next to the waffe constructed by the Germans at the beginning of the twentieth century, there is a statue of one of the most important entrepreneurs and promoters of the Carretera, Gonzalo Mejía. His right arm points at the Caribbean Sea but beyond to the western department and predominantly black Chocó. According to Steiner

(1991a), the local population has its own interpretation of the statue: while he is pointing to Chocó, he is also ordering to the black population of Turbo to return to their own department. In fact, the terror against this black population and/or liberal chusma would lead to the establishment of military majors over many settlements along the region (Roldán 2003). Notwithstanding the description of the old woman, during these years, as Roldán (2003) describes, the ethnic origin (mostly Caribbean, afro descendants) of the soldiers sent to pacify the region was perceived with suspicion by the elite (white and conservative) sectors of Medellín. As Roldán (2003) explains, the latter insisted on deploying a police ethnically affiliated with the Andean region. While the former could forge alliances with the local liberal sectors that would be persecuted in the region, they suggested, the more closely ethnically affiliated conservative police could in fact combat these liberal rebels more successfully. Very evidently, during these years, these influential color- partisan- ethnic-based visions also promoted the emergence of Conservative paramilitary troops (pájaros) who very often burned entire villages and persecuted any sector affiliated with this party (Roldán 2003).

The *Carretera al mar* and the ‘green monster’

Steiner (2000) and Parsons (1963) both describe the difficulties experienced during the pharaonic construction of the Carretera al Mar (Road to the Sea). Most prominently, fears from the workers of the road who were thought to be affiliated with the Liberal party led military engineers to take hold of this monumental construction (Steiner 2000). A strict control over the merchandise transported along the road clearly evoked the everlasting fears of the characteristic smuggling and banditry tradition of this strategic corridor. For Steiner (2000: 117), with the construction of the road by the military, people affiliated with the liberal party started to move northward establishing a partisan geography whereby the middle and northern regions of Urabá as I already mentioned were affiliated with the Liberal party while the southern, closest to the capital Medellín, remained Conservative. In this partisan geography, the region where the CPSJA is today located was considered liberal. By 1956, as the story unfolds, the Carretera al Mar would be officially inaugurated by the only official dictator of the twentieth century, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (Steiner Ibid.). In the same year, as I also recounted, King Leopold III of Belgium arrived in Turbo. Suddenly, “the best corner of America” as a local reporter would also describe it (El Heraldo 1995, No 200), became available for a more extensive transformation and incorporation into various departmental, national and

international economic, cultural and political networks. In conclusion, in just a few days, as Steiner (1991a) argues, the region no longer was the place where the crooked, the idle and the dogs remaining in Medellín were to be expelled, but it became a paradise ready to be exploited.

Behind the highway came a plethora of actors including capitalists looking for new investments, migrant workers, political migrants escaping from violence, international capital, and certainly, new desires for occupying and profiting from this newly open corner. Various projects for converting the region into an exportation platform free from taxes appeared during the following decades[8]. Most of the scholarly production refers to the demographic explosion that brought people from different regions and routes, including the neighbor departments of Córdoba to the east and Chocó to the west. But most prominently, the investors who very quickly became landowners would arrive from Medellín (Bejarano 1990) through this new actor, the Carretera al Mar. In a socio-economic study made by the University of Antioquia, indeed, one of the most common actors researching this particular region until today, the figures of the local population encompassing the urban settlements of Arboletes, Chigorodó, Muriando, Mutatá and Turbo show an alarming growth in a three year period: 31,395 (1962), 82,969

(1964), and 93,200 (1967) (Gonzales et al 1966). Parsons (1963: 128) quote other sources where the figures in 1963 for the annual rate of growth for the whole Urabá region is calculated at 9.4% (national rate 2.2%), and where 3 out of 4 residents are recent immigrants. In fact, during the period of 1951-1964, the proportion of the local population when compared to the population that arrived in the region was significantly reduced; specifically, in the central region where the large banana industry was established (Gobernación de Antioquia 1979). As I already mentioned, Apartadó would be officially established in 1964 after the first settlement mostly populated by liberal peasants was burned (Pueblo Quemao). Writing in 1963, Parsons (Ibid: 129, my trans) describes the following scene of the new town: "while in 1960 it had less than 100 houses, today it is an immense and inflated tugurio, with muddy streets and rustic thatchedroof houses, without running water or latrines. But it has three banks, a bullfighting court, one local radio station (*Voz de Urabá*), one newspaper (*Vanguardia de Urabá*), a modern residential area and dozens of noisy taverns".

Most of this growing population was attracted by the opportunities opened up by the new large scale banana industry (Botero 1990). Only in 1979, Botero (Ibid: 79) estimates, the banana industry had already created 13,000 direct and 2,340 indirect jobs.

Regarding its geographical origin, following Uribe (1992), much of this population came from the western and predominantly black and economically poor department of Chocó. Others would arrive from the eastern cattle-raising regions that did not create enough jobs for a mass of workers to be incorporated. In 1983, in fact, the estimates on the banana workers indicated that 49% came from various towns of Chocó characterized by the mining industry. As I already argued, the German Albingian consortium had obtained the concession for growing 5,000ha but ultimately failed and later abandoned the project leaving behind at least the dock still used today and locally named as *el waffe*. Some decades later (1950s), however, a functionary from the Frutera de Sevilla company, an affiliate of the infamous United Fruit Company[9], approached and expressed to one of the most prominent industrialist in Urabá coming from Medellín the company's interests in consolidating its entrance to the region[10]. It is noteworthy that neither a government agency nor a local authority was approached by the company to express its interests. It was a private industrialist and landowner with strong connections with the local bureaucracies who was the chosen one to spearhead this enormous project that would convert Urabá several decades later into one of the world's leading banana exporters. Very soon, as this capitalist from Medellín expressed in the interview, he wrote letters to local authorities, recruited typographs and other assistants in order to help materialize this

idea. The actions of this industrialist were indeed successful. By 1959, the first banana seed beds (semilleros) were brought to the region. The transformative and civilizing mission of this new enterprise cannot be made clearer than in his own words:

> "When the Frutera de Sevilla arrived, the region was infested with tropical diseases and children died on a daily basis due to the lack of adequate nutrition, while adults had to struggle with intense difficulties for responding to the most important demands of household life. After the works began, people were conscious of what the future of the banana zone of Urabá would be, and roads and channels for the uploading of the fruit, docks, and kilometers of irritation channels were constructed that today traverse farms and were the ultimate basis for the development of a prosperous region that has become a "promised land" (El Heraldo de Urabá, 1989, No. 150, my translation).

Several were the reasons for the United Fruit Company interests in the region. Among the most important was the termination of their operations in the Magdalena department where both the Sigatoka mushroom and the labor conflicts ruined their operations. For many Colombians, the United Fruit Company 1929 massacre of banana workers in the town of Ciénaga Magdalena has become a benchmark in the history of union persecution in the country (Archila 2003). While I write these pages, the largest newspaper of Colombia opens with an article about the 80 year commemoration of this massacre[11]. The event had been made famous by the Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez in the classic scene of One Hundred Years of Solitude where the train wagons filled with the dead bodies killed during the massacres could be heard throughout the whole town. Only until some discussions were held at the National Museum where the

GMH gave its report (Chapter 2) regarding the need to narrate a different history of Colombia, the new exhibition included for the first time photographs, testimonies and newspaper articles of this famous massacre. In that strange realm of violently torn societies where fantasy and truth become blurred and "one doesn't know what really happened" (Feldman 1991, Greenhouse, Mertz and Warren 2002, Das 2007b), some other voices have been heard that actually contradict the scale of this massacre, and have accused García Márquez' version of exaggerating the number of victims. In fact, the same article commemorating the 80 years of this massacre, discusses how the official report mentions 9 dead people, while a document sent by the US embassy to the Department of State describes more than 1000 assassinated[12]. At the end of the 1950s, when the flourishing banana industry decayed because of these factors, and when the government introduced more restrictive policies to multinationals that ultimately elevated the production costs, the company closed its offices only to move along the coast to the west. Once there, in the Urabá region, they would find a promising region free of union conflicts, hurricanes and the Sigatoka fungus (Bucheli 1994). Indeed, both human and non-human actors gathered and were successful in recruiting enough followers for consolidating and establishing a new landscape in the region (Callon 1986).

According to interviews with some ex-owners of banana plantations in Magdalena, here United Fruit controlled the whole production process and was deeply involved in different programs in the region. They hired the workers directly and actually owned plantations and lands (Bucheli 1994). In contrast, the company's model of intervention in Urabá headed in the opposite direction. In Urabá, the United Fruit Company didn't handle the production process, nor did it own property or hire workers (Bucheli 1994, Parsons 1963: 105, Botero 1990). These activities were left to the large Paisa capitalist landowners already settled in the region. What the company introduced in the region was the program of associative producers. In fact, in 1962, these same conditions had the effect of lowering the total salaries paid in the Urabá region compared to those paid in Santa Marta (Bucheli 1994: 34). Hence, these associatives would be "given loans enough to finance the costs of cleaning and preparing soils, construction of drainages, the sowing and maintenance of the crop for five years, fertilizers and the aerial spraying against the Sigatoka fungus" (Ibid, my trans).

The first shipment from Urabá of 7541 banana bunches left Turbo in 1964. For the next five years, excepting those years that suffered hurricanes, the production grew exceptionally well[13]. In 1964 the area of banana cultivation was of 6000ha and 611,000

boxes were exported. By 1970 the cultivated area of the banana industry increased to 15,000ha; by the year 1986, it would grow to 20,456ha (Botero 1990: 87). The 'green monster', the metaphor used by Taussig (1975) writing under the pseudonym of the famous bandit Mateo Mina for describing the drastic transformation of the southwestern department of Valle del Cauca in the mid 1950s into a vast zone of sugar cane production, also had a banana-variation in Urabá. It embodied the introduction of loans, fertilizers and experts for controlling and disciplining both workers and the whole production process. García (1996: 105) refers to the testimony of one of the first workers that arrived to the region in the 1970s in order to understand what the new labor conditions meant for the workers eager to find the promises of this new enclave:

> "I arrived here on July 18 of 1970 directly to the farm Velaba owned by an American, Mr Morris. One was given a cardboard box where one was supposed to sleep in the same packaging facility (empacadora), because when one came from far away, they just gave the sleeping facilities, but in the package, just the cardboard box. We slept like dogs, to speak vulgarly, but that was the reality. In those days the labor session was of 18 hours. We had to work until six in the morning or until 12 at night, just to come the next day at six in the morning to start working again"

Right at the beginning, several conflicts arose between the peasants who had colonized the region without any legal mandate and the large capitalists who arrived in the region after the promises of the new enclave. In fact, Botero (1990) transcribes some newspaper articles that narrate how the former lands were sold for meager prices to the

new capitalists. Some of these peasants were forced to look for empty lands at the edges of the larger plains. In this context, the classic struggle of capitalist and colonizing peasants to "enclose" both new territories and labor force became a major problem in Urabá (Le Grand 1988). Most of the time, the problems were solved by the expanding migration cycles of free-laborers looking for the promises of the region. Meanwhile, other populations that never got used to working in the banana plantations, mostly peasants coming from the Southern region of Urabá, searched for new opportunities for a traditional mountainous agriculture of maize and beans (Botero Ibid, Uribe 1992). In 1964, there are already descriptions by Parsons of peasant colonies in the Serranía del Abibe. Another elder of the CPSJA would narrate the beginnings of the peasant colonization of the Serranía:

> "From the 1970s during the period of colonization, many people came from the different conflicts of the country (…) the first people that came here, our grandfathers, our fathers came here in the 1970s (…) those that came in the 1960s found a dense forest, no roads, and then people started to build their houses and soon many people from other regions settled here because they noticed that the land was abundant, no one had cultivated it before (…) and then they chose their plots which were distributed between those that had just arrived (…) they started to build their houses and cultivate their lands, since there was no road they had to construct trochas [paths] and for groceries they had to come all the way down from Mulatos and the other hamlets to San José de Apartadó. That is how most of the area became populated" (Personal Communication, November 2008).

Most of them would reproduce their traditional coping practices of 'slash and burn' and staple agriculture typical of their original areas in this new environment. In

future years, as I will immediately show, these same traditional agricultural practices were accused by 'new experts' of finishing with the frontera agrícola (agricultural frontier) in the region. To a great extent, they were ultimately responsible for the introduction of the Dutch development projects aimed at diminishing this impact and directing these agricultural practices to less invasive ends. But also, as an ex-Colombian environmental engineer who worked in the region with the Dutch project argued, these migrant families brought their traditional communal peasant strategies of convites or mingas (working assemblies) and manos cambiadas (changed hands) whereby the entire community works together for a common end during several days (Personal Communication, November 2007)[14]. In similar ways, Uribe (1992: 115) describes how these dispersed families in the Serranía gathered and carried out joint actions meant to establish new settlements and occupy lands for the just-arrived and impoverished families. In fact, this was precisely the case of those peasants who began to populate the region where the town of San José de Apartadó was established in 1964 (more discussion below). A Colombian ex-officer of the Dutch project explained some of the main characteristics of these peasant economies they found in the terrain:

> "The peasant economy is strong, it has been able to guarantee a food politics [una política alimentaria] and a universe of solidarity that gets broken once in the city (…) there were some concepts on the terrain that we would empower by perceiving them as REAL strengths; let's say, someone said we are going to fix

> this road to connect these two hamlets, so let's create [the Dutch project] a cable through 12 kilometers so that everyone can take out their harvests. Then we found out that they were taking the wounded as well … If the cable fell, peasants from the different hamlets would come and fix it. With the *mingas* and the manos cambiadas, if someone wanted to cultivate a field, neighbors would help and he would pay by working in their fields in the future. Those were positive values to understand and empower. That is why they are so sedimented [until today]. In fact, the same concept of not having any money in your pocket to start any project does not apply at all to these peasant economies" (Personal Communication, November 2007).

In 1963, these banana capitalists organized under the powerful and private guild association of Augura (Banana Association of Colombia), in charge of protecting their interests and promoting their vision concerning the future of the region. As Gonzáles et al (2003) have suggested, this particular selection of private entrepreneurs to direct these large-scale interventions show precisely the privatized nature of the State formation project in the region. For Bejarano (1989), it would also signal the constitution of an enclave economy where all the profits are channeled to private investors that live outside the region, while very few resources are left to the region. In fact, the future development plans for the region made in the 1970s always began with the vision of these startling contrasts (Corpouraba 1972, 1977, Departamento de Planeación Nacional 1983). Much later the situation would not change: in 1993, for instance, the region had a Gross Domestic Project (GPD) 53% higher than the rest of the country, that was not coherent with the low levels of (health, education, housing, road, sewage, electric) infrastructure at all levels compared with the national figures (Departamento de Planeación Nacional

1993). For instance, only between the years of 1984-1986, the export rates of banana from the Urabá region were close to USD$185 million, while the local investment in social programs reported by Augura was slightly more than USD$1 million (Comisión Andina de Juristas 1994: 36). In the following pages, I will argue how these same conditions were also responsible for creating the conditions of possibility for a strong and radical union activity to be introduced into the region.

A convoluted region of liberals, armed forces, guerrillas and land invasions

One year after Augura had appeared in the region, this association of banana industrialists required the army in 1964 to increase its vigilance over the territory in order to guarantee personal safety in Urabá (Botero 1990: 127). According to Botero (Ibid: 142), this vigilance was not random but was directed to opposition political movements and to the civil population. In fact, he shows some newspaper articles which describe how certain persons were arrested in Apartadó between 1964 and 1965 for hanging communist posters and for carrying with them a great quantity of foreign and subversive literature. As has been argued in the pervious sections, the liberal tradition of the region continued to pose threats to the new order imposed by this new enclave. As I already described, it was also in the mid 1960s, as well, when Marxist guerilla groups entered the

region behind the vectors of peasant colonization (e.g., San José de Apartadó and Belén de Bajirá). The fear of the Communist (Liberal) threat will be confirmed by industrialists some decades later when popular uprisings, land invasions, guerrilla presence and union activity seemed to mushroom throughout the region. In 1989, an industrialist declared that "I don't have to go to Cuba or Nicaragua to see how a communist revolution is because I have lived in Urabá". Another declared that "if you look at the map you will notice that Urabá is the prolongation of Central America and we are living a process of revolution and contrarevolution that is also lived there. This is a confrontation between democracy and communism"[15].

In addition, together with the increasing land concentration and the massive arrival of migrants to the region, dramatic enormous housing problems led to the beginning of the famous land invasions cycles in the region heavily directed by the ANUC (National Association of Peasant Users) (Zamosc 1986, Fals Borda 1986). As two of the classic works on peasant organization in Colombia have argued, these land invasions also flourished simultaneously in the 1970s in the rest of the country but specifically in the neighboring and northern departments of Córdoba and Bolívar where large cattle haciendas had been traditionally concentrating land property. Very frequently,

as Fals Borda (1986) documents, they received funds from the Swiss, Dutch, Swedish and Belgian development agencies confirming also the multiscalar nature of these peasant movements. Interestingly enough, as I argued in my Introduction, the ANUC had been installed by the government at the crux of the Cold War to organize and defend the peasant movement against the Communist influence. But with the years, the same ANUC fragmented into different branches according to their affiliation with the Government policies or with more radical and leftist agendas (Zamosc 1986, Ramirez 1997). It was precisely the ANUC-Sincelejo branch famous for its radical vision and opposition to the government agendas that directed land invasions and organized peasant leaders in Urabá (Zamosc 1986, Uribe 1992). Other popular organizations and political parties, some which emerged after peace negotiations between the guerrilla forces and the government in the 1980s and 1990s, would also lead other land invasions in the region during these decades. In 1986, for example, a great number of peasants led the famous invasion of the Coldesa hacienda, owned at that time by Dutch investors who had bought the lands abandoned by the German Albingian consortium (Parsons 1963). The Dutch had bought these lands to introduce the African palm plantation to the region after their successful experience in Sumatra (Comisión Andina de Juristas 1994). Still today, through the road

that communicated Apartadó with the neighboring Chigorodó, one can still see the abandoned plants hidden throughout the landscape.

The same disorganized and exponential growth of the city Apartadó was in fact the result of many of these land invasions; some of its larger and most popular barrios like the Obrero or Policarpa Salavarrieta were the product of massive land invasions that occurred during these years[16]. In 1994, the local newspaper qualified this particular land invasion of the famous hacienda of La Chinita owned by one of the most important capitalists from Medellín, as the largest one in the whole world with 3500 roof thatch improvised ranches that hosted approximately 24,500 persons with no basic facilities[17]. According to the local newspaper, the invasion was carefully prepared by the *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* (Hope, Peace and Liberty) political party settled in after the laying of arms of the *EPL* (Popular Liberation Army) guerrilla movement in the early 1990s. Simultaneously, other famous invasions such as the one that later became the Policarpa Salavarrieta barrio spearheaded by the Communist Party was constituted by more than one thousand families settling in another large hacienda (Ramírez 1993). As such, the territorial control of both these barrios and unions from the banana areas by these political organizations and their armed branches created a clear geography with invisible

laws concerning who could enter and move freely through them and who couldn't (Suárez 2007). As I was explained while riding on the back of a motorcycle through the streets of Apartadó, there were times when even one "block beyond" could signify entering a territory owned by political contenders. But as violence escalated and when adversaries later turned into enemies (Suárez 2007), this same "block beyond" came to denote an almost sure death or hopeful escape for survival.

During these decades, the Urabá region became famous in the country for the rampant escalation of massive land invasions in the cities (mostly Apartadó) once the banana capitalists decided to close their camps near the plantations[18] (García 1996, Suárez 2007, Botero 1990, Ramírez 1997, Comisión Andina de Juristas 1994, Romero 2004). Garcia (1996) shows that although land invasions had occurred even before the 1980s, the Urabá region registered a total of 36 large land invasions only between December 1984 and April 1986. Not coincidentally, Bartolo Cataño, the leader and first settler of San José de Apartadó, as he told a local reporter some weeks before he was assassinated on August 17, 1996 in Apartadó, did receive political instruction from the ANUC on issues such as land invasions, legal claims and peasant organization skills[19]. He also sat on the board of the local ANUC hub and, as an ex-functionary of the Dutch

project in the region also told me, he became a strong, respectable and sympathetic leader of the peasant movement in the region. As he told me, his charisma among popular sectors allowed him to attend the funerals of those assassinated during the infamous massacre that occurred at the just-mentioned La Chinita invasion in 1993 that left 50 victims[20]. He was able to attend even though his own political party, the Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union), was later accused of being responsible for this event. As the ex-functionary told me, he was the only leader of this political party present at the funerals. And more than a communist, he insisted, he was a liberal peasant.

War Machines, Apparatuses and Borders: *Quítate tú pa' ponerme yo*

Along these vectors arriving to the region, as it has been evident until now, the ultimate industrialist desire of order and cleanliness was far from being reached. Their constant claims about the "State absence" in the region made much more palpable the ultimate "failure" of this project. As Foucault has argued endlessly about the need to carry out a history of problematizations (Rabinow 1984, Foucault 1990), what is interesting for us is the realm of answers that this problem (e.g. the failure) authorizes. Thus, what interest us is at the same time the myriad of problems that emerged in the region including land concentrations, land invasions, a liberal leftist tradition and an overwhelming desire by national and international capital to settle in the region and

transform it into a world-leading banana exporter. But simultaneously, the type of answers, responses and manifestations of power that these same problems legitimized and brought along. Hence, I am following precisely how this analysis should examine the manifold relations, the open strategies and the rational techniques that articulate the exercise of powers (Foucault 1990: 6). As I will presently explain, it is precisely this subtle and powerfully material realm that is responsible for orchestrating among a myriad of actions both the escalation of violence in the region, the calculated massacres, the selected assassinations, and the clear patterns of victims and perpetrators. But also, as I will show in the next chapter, for the arrival of those moving sovereignties (Pandolfi 2003) embedded in the human rights and humanitarian practices of the 1980s and 1990s.

Indeed, a clear and simple logic behind this manifestation of power in Urabá has already been announced throughout this dissertation inspired by the famous salsa song of *Quítate tu'pa ponerme yo*. With this title, I am evoking precisely the clear territorial manifestation of power ("one block beyond") that not only characterizes the region as a liberal or communist stronghold opposed to the larger conservative department of Antioquia. But also, right there, in the same region, it also signaled the Serranía del Abibe and the little town located right at its slopes, San José de Apartadó, as a reservoir of leftist

liberal guerrilla groups opposing the central larger conservative and Antioqueño desires. Even while one descends from the airplane to take a mini-van that would take you there, some drivers do still show some reticence for heading to this area for the fear of guerrilla actions. Observed from the city of Apartadó, the whole Serranía bordering the eastern banana plain almost seems as a spectral threat where all the evil (bombs, assassinations, kidnaps) felt in the city of Apartadó seem to originate. Casual talks with inhabitants of the city of Apartadó would strengthen this stereotype: just for the fact of inhabiting right at the entrance of the Serranía and surviving until today, the CPSJA later established in 1997 was accused of hiding guerrillas and weapons. Interestingly enough, this same vision simultaneously sedimented while the same Serranía was declared as a forest reserve in 1959 by the National Congress (Parsons 1963). Even today, its vast natural resources including the presence of coal, the fact of possessing the most fertile lands in the region and the several water natural reserves, were identified by members of the CPSJA as main causes for the disputed nature of this area. As locals and also scholars would also explain, this same leftist- and guerrilla-sympathizer stain would also help to explain how this little town also became a major target of the larger and deadly paramilitary operations of the mid-1990s meant to cleanse the territory of any communist sympathizers (Suárez 2007).

While a German journalist and I were walking through San José de Apartadó with Gloria Cuartas, ex-mayor of Apartadó during those years and one of the most vocal human rights activists in the country, she vividly explained this territoriality and the subsequent process of extermination. The reporter was actually filming a documentary on her life to be broadcast in Germany. Gloria explained:

> "Bartolomé Cataño epitomizes the history of a liberal man that later participated in the Unión Patriótica. He was very committed with the popular agrarian causes, and also Samuel Arias, don Gustavo Loaiza (…) There is something crucial that can help us to better understand the situation which is the fact that here the Unión Patriótica had such an important stronghold throughout the region (…) the FARC since the 1960s with the presence of its V Front has operated in the upper areas of the Serranía approximately ten hours walking distance from here… those were the main reasons for the political persecution of the 1990s. Before that, businessmen, politicians and soldiers came to talk directly with the FARC in this region, all conflicts in Urabá were resolved in a joint office desk here more or less until the years 1990-94 (…) but then in 1993 when the *Plan Retorno* [Plan to Return] of paramilitaries headed by Carlos Castaño arrived, they saw how the Unión Patriótica had such an enormous strength in the region that they decided not to recognize alternative political thought because they linked the Unión Patriótica with the FARC… and soon, all popular processes, women's movements, peasant work, and the resolution of energy supply problems, costs, everything started to be resolved after 1993 through extermination and violence… all this area was, and although I am not legitimizing the FARC actions, the worst than can happen to a country is not to recognize the existence of a conflict and all the institutions in Urabá knew that San José was an area of guerrilla forces, and how do they resolve it? They resolve it by assassinating, and Bartolo was the last one (…)" (Personal Communication, November 2008)

El desmadre de la violencia ~ The outburst of violence

In the last section of this chapter, I want to focus on one type of response that emerged thanks to these emerging problems: the one focusing on the more material expression of violence epitomized in massacres, assassinations and displacement. The following chapter analyzes the other responses related to this development: human rights, humanitarian and peace initiatives mobilized for taking care of this "irrational, savage and violent" region. As I will show through these two chapters, they were both engaged in far-reaching deterritorialization and reterritorialization processes. It is my contention that the rationalities that authorize both poles of capture are neither recent nor innovative; this chapter has precisely showed the long dureé of many of these vectors and their corresponding rationalities and affections. In this last section, I want to ponder on how the most common response to these problems echoing Gloria´s words was a violent confrontation between different actors including the police, the army, popular movements, guerrilla forces, paramilitary troops and civilians, and usually expressed in open massacres, assassinations and displacement. As has been pointed out by Suárez (2007), this violence was not the expression of a confrontation between different armed groups, but it characteristically targeted the civilian population supposedly aligned with one of the different actors and territories. According to this author (Ibid: 238), the figures for the most usual confrontation model of the region are truly gruesome: 2,950 politically

or presumably politically oriented homicides between 1995 and 1997 (2,150 in the larger banana plain and 845 southwards) and 39,105 persons expelled from these same regions between 1995-2005 (27,080 in the banana larger plain and 12,025 southwards).

In his brilliant analysis of massacres in the region, Suárez (2007) shows by following the alliances and ruptures even within leftist political movements and their corresponding guerrilla armed branches, the basic rationality (e.g. *Quítate tú...*) of controlling both territories and populations has actually informed the strategies of both the government, guerrilla and paramilitary states in the region. As his analysis has showed, during those years clear territorial boundaries were sedimented that separated the areas controlled by the different leftist political movements and their corresponding armed branches. In fact, as several authors have described, the internal divisions between a more pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese influence led to the first recognized split after the X Colombian Communist Party Congress held in 1965. These differences mostly informed the different conceptions of the leftist-oriented armed and political mobilization in the country (Uribe 1992, Suárez 2007, García 1990). Many of these debates dealt with the validity of the electoral process, on who was the protagonist of the revolution, the classic debate on the combination of all forms of struggle, among other issues. The later

emergence of the EPL as the armed branch of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party in 1967 helped to actualize many of these differences with the already-established FARC guerrilla movement. In the Urabá region, for example, famous commanders of the FARC V Front moved to the EPL while criticizing the former's lack of urban mobilization, its low operative capacity and its decision to support the electoral struggle while many of its supporters enlisted with the Unión Patriótica were being killed.

For certain years, as Suárez (2007) argues, these divisions were clearly manifested in the FARC and Unión Patriótica emphasis on supporting the peasant colonization areas such as that one of San José de Apartadó. The basic idea of an independent peasant colony embodied in the famous Repúblicas Independientes of the 1950s (Chapter 3) not only lay deep in the myths of origin of the FARC (Uribe 2007), but also described in general terms the situation right at the border of the Serranía de Abibe when peasants arrived in this region escaping from violence (see sections before). In fact, this emphasis of the *Unión Patriótica* in the region was soon successfully materialized in the electoral processes of the mid 1980s when popular election was introduced for the first time to choose city mayors and local councils throughout Colombia. In the 1980s and 1990s elections, the figures for San José de Apartadó evidence these tendencies: most

invariably, 1300 votes were for the Unión Patriótica, 5 for liberals and only 1 for a civil movement (Ortiz 2007: 68). In fact, during the 1980s, the Urabá region and more specifically San José de Apartadó became a stronghold of the Unión Patriótica in the whole country when it administratively controlled some of the larger municipalities of the region. The weight of the party in the region was soon exemplified by the fact that the 1989 presidential candidate from the Unión Patriótica, Bernardo Jaramillo, very soon assassinated, came from Urabá. The ex-functionary of the Dutch project in the area also recounted the growing interests and direct influence that both this party and its armed branch had on the project's destinies. Other leftist parties such as the ANAPO, the Popular Front and the *Unión Nacional de Oposición* (National Union of Opposition), UNO, had also won elections for the local councils of Apartadó from the 1970s onwards (Ibid.). In fact, many of the adults from the CPSJA still remembered nostalgically the political orientation sessions that the Unión Patriótica and the UNO these gave around those years. Meanwhile, the *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* (Hope, Peace and Liberty) political party emerging after the laying down of arms of the EPL (Popular Army of Liberation), would concentrate on controlling and orienting the most important unions in the region. While the first had its stronghold in the rural areas of these municipalities, the latter would focus on the urban mobilization of unions and popular sectors.

This growing support of leftist parties and its armed branches also became crucial for organizing and strengthening one of the most vibrant union organizations in the whole country during those years (Archila 2003, Romero 2004). In fact, they were successful enough to negotiate labor contracts, working day hours, medical and educational expenses and other services and programs after famous sit-ins and protests that paralyzed banana production several times during the 1980s and 1990s. From the beginning, it was clear that both the EPL and FARC guerrilla movements each had a direct influence on two of the most important unions in the region, Sintagro and Sintrabanano respectively. Only in 1985, as Romero (2004: 261) explains, 127 collective demands were agreed that covered 60% of the total banana area. Union affiliation also grew simultaneously and it covered almost 60% of all workers in the region that were divided between the two largest unions: Sintagro (43%) and Sintrabanano (14%). Also, between 1987 and 1990, as Suárez (2007: 216) describes, 84 union activities were registered, doubling the number between 1987 and 1989. This coincided with the termination of old collective agreements and the beginning of negotiations for new collective agreements. In 1989, for example, a twelve-day protest registered 1,8 million boxes not being exported that represented a total of 5489 million Colombian pesos[21]. During these same days, 430 million Colombian

pesos in salaries were not paid to the unionized workers. As an article of the local newspaper reported, the meetings between owners and workers were in fact very tense with accusations from the former over the fact that they just couldn't negotiate with interlocutors that on one hand had a legal claim and on the other carried arms[22]. Descriptions about the well organized and programmed sit-ins and food distribution of these union activities were reported by the local newspaper[23]. Needless to say, as Suárez (2007: 217) concludes for the year of 1989, the banana workers in Urabá were the best remunerated agro-industrial workers in the whole country even beyond the conditions that sugar-cane workers enjoyed in the Valle del Cauca. For him, they continue to be so today.

For Suárez (2007), this clear balance between the different unions was broken when the above-mentioned territorialities began to overlap as each of these unions, more prominently Sintragro, began to take control of banana farms and its workers located in the traditional areas of the adversaries. In 1986, it already controlled 65,5% of the banana farms while Sintrabanano controlled 10%. While the Unión Patriótica party had emerged in the early 1980s after the peace negotiations between the Belisario Betancourt government and the FARC guerrilla movement, the *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* party

emerged in the early 1990s peace negotiations between Gaviria's administration and the EPL guerrilla movement. As I already mentioned, there were clear differences between each movement concerning the conception of the revolution, the debate over the combination of all forms of struggle and the possibility of supporting an electoral process while many of the Unión Patriótica militants were being assassinated. For the Unión Patriótica-FARC continuum, the political opportunities opened up by the Central government to the EPL in the early nineties to lay down its arms and transform itself into a legal political party meant the strategic alignment of an "old comrade in arms" with the State policies (Suárez 2007). In fact, a dissident of the EPL that did not agree with this negotiation backed the FARC position and turned against this new political party. And with the Chinita invasion oriented by the EPL supporters that settled in a Unión Patriótica stronghold, this clear balance was broken and the previous confrontation between adversaries became one of the more open and shocking physical confrontations between political enemies. Indeed, this transformation only actualizes Mouffe's (2005: 16) dictum that since all forms of "political distinctions entail a we-they distinction, this means that the possibility of emergence of antagonisms can never be eliminated".

Even more, this shift was strengthened with the appearance of the undercover death squad of the *Comandos Populares* (Popular Commands) meant to persecute and eliminate the once-demobilized *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* political party (Hope, Peace and Liberty). In fact, the FARC guerrilla movement, the Comandos Populares and armed dissidents of the EPL were responsible for unleashing the unprecedented level of violence during these years, best exemplified in the series of massacres perpetrated in the region. Some of the places where the most famous massacres of both workers and peasants in the banana farms or regions controlled by these organizations occurred during these years are well sedimented in the memories of the inhabitants of the region: the famous "Aracatazo" (August 12, 1995, 18 victims), the hacienda Kuna (August 29, 1995, 16 victims) and Alto Mulatos (May 5, 1996, 15 victims), among many others. As I have tried to show, this was not an irrational confrontation and struggle but it carefully followed this logic of mutual annihilation better exemplified with the song *Quítate tú para ponerme yo*. According to Suárez (2007), there is a logical, temporal and spatial sequence between each massacre and the next. The massacres were perpetrated right at the center of the enemies' stronghold. Only for 1992, while the national figures of political or presumable political oriented deaths stayed at 7.67 for every 100,000 inhabitants, it reached 16.11 for the whole Antioquia department, 17.05 for the capital Medellín, 46.33 for the Urabá region

and 41.42 for Apartadó (Comisión Andina de Juristas 1994). The region seemed to get out of hand from the sedimented dream of converting Urabá into a promised land by subsequent civilizing missions. But as new problems emerged, new solutions came behind.

At this moment, I want to emphasize how these particular projects organized for responding to the above-mentioned problems blurred the sacred and fictional boundaries between the State and the civilian population heralded by western liberal thinkers and democracies (Abrams 1988). One ultimately has two choices here. Either one forgets Weber's definition on the State's monopoly of violence, or more likely, after introducing an ethnographic approach that precisely follows the different types of State practices, one argues for the existence of simultaneous Para-States each one with the monopoly of violence in open and violent confrontation or alignment across the political spectrum with each other (Das and Poole 2004). In this sense, it is not mere coincidence, as Ramírez (1997: 126) argues, that right after José Manuel Arias Carrizosa had been the Minister of Justice during the Barco presidency (1986-1990) when he favored the countersubversive position heralded by some General in the famous parliamentary debates in 1987 on self-defense groups, several months later he was chosen as president of AUGURA.

Interestingly enough, as a major magazine reported in 1989, booklets on the international geopolitical situation were distributed in every meeting of banana, cattle-owner and agriculture capitalists to emphasize the threats that the ongoing conflicts in Central America posed the region[24]. As a local cattle owner told the reporter, there is a possibility that the Cuban and Nicaraguan army could actually ally itself with these leftist-aligned sectors to consolidate the regional version of the famous Marquetalia liberal settlement of the 1950s (See Chapter 3), the Independent Republic of Urabá. According to the reporter, the need to regain control of the territory was voiced by these industrialists [and not government officers] as a matter of establishing sovereignty. In the industrialists' own words: "what is happening in Urabá is nothing more or nothing less than a counterrevolution. And the general sentiment [among capitalists] is that it is enough. And if this has to be settled by bullets, then by bullets it will be so".

More crucial for the blurring of these fictional boundaries was the legal approval in 1994 of the creation of the notorious *Servicios Especiales de Vigilancia y Seguridad Privada* (Special Services of Vigilance and Private Security), Convivir, which gave civilians the right to carry arms and organize security services as a major campaign against the escalation of guerrilla warfare in the entire country[25]. In Urabá, as a major

national magazine reports, in just a few months after a renowned banana industrialist approached the Secretary General of the former Governor of Antioquia and today President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, to inform him about the interests of some industrialists in constituting one of these Convivir in the area, the region already had twelve Convivir with 150 men and 800 radios, cars and arms[26]. Interestingly enough, as the reporter narrates, the Secretary answered him suggesting that they should actually constitute not one but a dozen of these[27] (Ibid.). In fact, as several articles of the local newspaper describe, the Convivir supporters in the region were a combination of both capitalists and several members of the army, including the infamous and above mentioned General Rito Alejo del Río, locally known as the "Urabá pacifier"[28]. In fact, when the General was leaving his position as the head of the XVII Brigade, one Convivir organized a fare-well party to thank the general for his services. The article reports:

> "The general Rito Alejo did not hide its happiness and said that the revenue for Urabá is that "people can work as organized and civilized people" and he finished by arguing that we are moving forwards and this has no reverse. He remembered that a few months ago he found some banana owners that couldn't return to the region in 14 or 15 years and that today they can go back. "The most gallant gentleman complied with the expectations of Urabá" said Alberto Osorio, chief of public relations of the Convivir to the general Rito Alejo and highlighted him as the most loyal and resolute of all men. With a great repertoire of songs such as "Farewell guys", banana industrialists, members of the *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* political party, the Sintrainagro union, councils, majors, commerce owners and representatives from the banana associatives and the whole community said goodbye to the general of the XVII Brigade and expressed to him the feeling that characterizes the taste and refinement [el raigambre y la estirpe] of the

> Antioqueño race to this Tolimense [original from the department of Tolima] that arrived two years ago in Urabá."

Urabá needs "to be scientifically treated", argued the new general of the seventeenth military brigade when he took his position in 1998[29]. For years, the region outlived several military majors as a central strategy to combat insurgency. The 17th military brigade famous in the 2000 human rights reports of national and international NGO was established on December 14, 1993. Much later, on 2005, these same reports were enough to decertify this Brigade from receiving US funds[30]. In 1993, the Brigade was formed in those years by three thousand soldiers counteracting the violence unleashed by the EPL dissidents, the FARC's three fronts and the Bolivarian militia[31]. During the same decade, it would be responsible for major countersubversive operations directed at the stronghold of the guerrilla forces, the Serranía del Abibe. On 2007, I visited a house abandoned during these years and located right in the Serranía, a "wounded house", as an old woman of the CPSJA made clear. The house had holes from the rockets it received and the skeleton of the burned roof was about to fall. The walls of the ruined house were covered with graffiti carved both by anti-guerrilla soldiers but also by guerillas when each one settled in the house for launching or defending attacks, with images of women being penetrated by (male) machine guns, penises and sexually-oriented phrases insulting their adversaries.

“They don’t even respect the house”, said one of the leaders of the CPSJA to me while we were about to sleep in each of hammocks hanged across the visually disturbing walls. “They don’t even respect the house”, I thought, the most intimate space for peasant families dividing a safe area from the aggressive and bewildered outside´. In similar terms to Feldman’s (1991) analysis of the assassinations right at the entrance of the houses of families in Northern Ireland, these practices would violently disturb the most precious intimate and private spaces where peasants or combatants would normally find protection (Franco 1999). She also told me how common it was to listen to bombardments during those years. They got so used to the sound of these airplanes. When they heard them, peasants immediately ran to the open field to show the white shirts and blankets. They have heard, as she told me, that it could save them from the attack:

> “the *pomo* [the name given to the airplane by the peasants], if I was alone with some cloth from the workers and when the airplane passed, it came from here and thundered through there, it passed three times, and it made me angry. And immediately I took some white cloth and stretched it outside on the patio, because they say that it is a sign, that one should stretch a white sheet, that is more or less a sign saying that here there are families and good people (…) over there another man did the same, he asked me if I had heard the same airplane (…) and I told him that yes, that I just had to pick up all the color cloth off and cover it with a white sheet. And the woman of that house did the same and I told her, look, when you see that airplane coming, take a white sheet and stretch it like this and then the plane takes off … a red sheet will not work… (…) that is why I don´t like to have color cloth outside the house in daylight, I prefer to hang it inside. I like to

> hang the white cloth outside in case a helicopter or an airplane passes and sees it. No colored cloth." (Personal communication, July 2007)

"They don't even respect the house", she repeated, almost falling asleep, while I looked from my hammock in the dark at the various figures of this hallucinatory museum of war. As I also described at the beginning of the chapter, it was precisely to this region that was described by generals interviewed by a reporter as both "a natural beauty and a headache" that I saw the armed helicopters head the day I left the Peace Community while the previously mentioned graffiti appeared on the walls of Apartadó in October 2008[32]. Famous military campaigns occurred in the traditional guerrilla stronghold in 2001. They left more than 100 deaths among the guerrilla. The operations were perceived by generals as a matter of regaining sovereignty. Interestingly enough, the local newspaper would describe how the general who led the counter-subversive campaign in 1998 in the region, was honored with the Gustavo White Uribe medal named after this famous industrialist and founder of many of the towns of the Urabá region (see sections before). Another peasant would narrate the materiality of these aerial military operations at the Serranía:

> "(…) a black airplane started to make circles and in that moment it started fumigating all over. I had left my house 15 minutes before and people were playing in the soccer field we had there. That airplane started to fumigate the school and the casino where six houses were. A little girl named Valderrama got

> killed and my niece received a metal fragment in her foot. Another kid named Ramiro that was still inside the house they damaged his hand and almost killed him, that is how we have been living here since 1990-1991." (Personal Communication, February 2007)

These early nineties saw the birth of paramilitaries in the region. Even more, as many politicians, reporters and academics have argued, Urabá became the basic laboratory in the country where paramilitaries were organized, trained and forged multiple alliances with industrialists, politicians and army officials. Many of their first leaders were recognized landowners whose families had been assassinated or kidnapped by the FARC guerrilla forces and who brought Israeli ex-militaries to train the new forces (Dudley 2008). In his interviews with some of these leaders, Dudley (Ibid.) describes the visceral hate that these leaders had towards the FARC guerrilla who had ruined the economic promises of the region. As Suárez (2007) describes, many of its first members were recruited among members of the Esperanza, Paz y Libertad party who by that time were also victims of the FARC persecution. The "enemy of my enemy [FARC] is also my friend" became the basic articulating principle behind these strategic alliances. As Carlos Castaño, one of the most prominent figures of the paramilitaries in Urabá and the larger country told a reporter, "the FARC committed the worst mistake and its first step towards its defeat in the banana region of Urabá by ordering the extermination of the EPL integrants in order to exclude them from political, union and military power" (Cited in

Suárez: 2007: 165). As he also narrated, the paramilitaries recruited some members of this party and also from its dissidents in their direct confrontation with the FARC guerrilla and Unión Patriótica movement. Indeed, Laclau's (2008a) famous empty signifier was filled with the FARC-Unión Patriótica signifiers. And as soon as these alliances consolidated, as paramilitaries scolded sympathizers of these movements while they burned their houses and forced them to displace in 1995-1996, then the mochacabezas (the "beheaders"), those phantasmagoric figures usually depicted as black and bloodthirsty specters appearing in other regions as well, arrived to Urabá.

These are precisely the specters that emerged while I was talking with some women in the kitchen of the Chefs without Borders organization at the CPSJA: the graffiti on the streets, the specters of the paramilitaries knocking at the houses with lists of suspects and sympathizers of the Unión Patriótica, the beginning of the visually oriented massacres where peasant leaders heading self-managed cooperatives (see Chapter 5) were hung from the plantain hooks used to transport this product. During these years, as well, the famous military campaign Genesis Operation denounced by national and international human rights NGOs (Intro), began its *rastrillo* (rake) operation meant to cleanse the whole Antioqueño and Chocoan Urabá from any leftist movements

and sympathizers. In fact, this campaign would be frequently mentioned in the future years by activists and NGO officers in Washington and Geneva for denouncing the human rights and humanitarian violations in the region. As a local reporter told me, the basic principle behind this operation was to scrub what had been one of the strongholds of leftist parties and movements in the region from any "communist" influence. And San José de Apartadó, as I have argued, with an evident stain of the Unión Patriótica and the FARC guerrilla movement behind its back, became one of the clear targets of this countersubversive offensive. It was also in 1996, when the Colombian ex-officer of the Dutch project told me, when the famous leader of the peasant colonization of San José de Apartadó was shot in a street in Apartadó. A local newspaper described his assassination as follows: "He is the voice of the peasants, an institution silenced on Augusto 17th at 11:30 AM by three bullet impacts. Some witnessed told that after receiving the first two shots, he picked up the documents he was carrying and also his cane; a third shot in his face would not allow him to rise again. The peasant founder of San José de Apartadó, Bartolomé Cataño Vallejo of 75 years old, fell under the shadow of an eclipsed sun for the life of the Urabá region"[33]. While walking through the cemetery of San José de Apartadó with Gloria Cuartas, a key member of the CPSJA in recent years who also became the mayor of Apartadó during those years, told me that the exact tomb where he

was buried was kept unknown. According to hear, the fear of his family of a possible post-mortem manipulation of his corpse obliged them to keep this secret with them.

In 1995, a strange but lucid prophecy of the 2002 negotiations between the paramilitary leaders and the government that also explained the birth and possible disappearance of paramilitaries in the region was sent to the regional newspaper in Medellín:

> "When kidnaps, extortions and personal attacks no longer take place in Urabá; when no more bribes are charged to cattle-owners and banana industrialists, when no more lootings of farms occur, when the civil authorities are no longer threatened and no violent incursions into populations take place, when the road infrastructure is no longer exploded, when no more foot-breaker land mines [*quiebrapatas*] are set, when banana companies are not forced to include in their payrolls recognized guerrillas and when municipal governments don't have to do the same: that day… the self-defense groups, as surreptitiously as they emerged, they will also disappear since there will be no other reason to be present" El Colombiano, September 15, 1996.

During these years, as well, the famous "genocide" of the Unión Patriótica on a national level took place. In the local elections, the traditional balance of power that gave this party majority in the local councils and control over several municipalities of the region during the 1980s and early 1990s, soon evaporated. From then on, the clear winner of future elections came to be the Esperanza, Paz y Libertad political party (Suárez 2007). Meanwhile, right-wing death squads emerged like in other towns of the country and

wandered through the town of Apartadó cleansing the city from drug-addicts, prostitutes, homosexuals and leftist sympathizers (Madariaga 2006)[34]. The famous paramilitary road block between the city of Apartadó and San Jose de Apartadó, the same one that perhaps was in the mind of that mother that desperately looked for her son that took the same road some days before I left the CPSJA on October 2008, was firmly established and almost institutionalized during these years. And as one of the most famous paramilitaries told reporters in 2006 after the peace talks with the government, "the whole region was torn apart with a fair or unfair war against an enemy that was the subversion, while those who had money behind us went buying land at very low prices for peasants and families who had lost any member"[35]. Parallel to this armed confrontation that ultimately meant the guerrilla defeat in the region, massive displacements of entire populations occurred along the region escaping from the armed confrontation. Very soon, temporary IDP camps for these populations were raised in different towns along the region. Some of them, like the coliseum at Turbo where Afro-Colombian populations escaping from military combat along the Atrato river arrived, were occupied for several years thereafter. Others like the old Dutch cooperative storage house of San José de Apartadó would be packed by peasants arriving from the Serranía de Abibe and even from other faraway areas. As some of the latter told me, they came to San José for its renowned self-organizational practices

and organized leadership. Right here, and very soon, as I will narrate in Chapter 5, the CPSJA emerged as a complex assemblage composed of different layers and compositions right in the middle of one of the most targeted areas in the region by countersubversive campaigns. But simultaneously, as I will also show in the next chapter, as a region targeted by some of the most notorious human rights and humanitarian UN agencies, NGOs, staff and activists responsible for filling the territory with those white-flags, jeeps, veggie-tamales and satellite radios mentioned in my Introduction.

Some final remarks

I began this chapter by narrating the sudden appearance of graffiti announcing the arrival of paramilitaries to the region in October 2008. More specifically, it began with the informal conversation had with several women who on occasion of the graffiti remembered the fears and the *tiempo de la guerra* (time of war) during 1996-1997 when the massive exodus of peasants began throughout the entire region. Through the rest of the chapter, I have tried to understand and describe the conditions of possibility for this (economic, political and social) context to manifest in the way it did in the mid 1990s. I have gone all the way back to the sixteenth century to understand the main vectors and the convergence of multiple human and non-human actors that have shaped the region in the way they have. This has been a conscious although always incomplete effort to

narrate complex histories where no single vector dominates entirely a “social totality” or the whole story of the region. Although I have certainly followed the main and more powerful vectors including those associated with the different series of capitalist ventures, I have also followed those other vectors that have suspended and interrupted the civilizing desires of those adventurers like King Leopold III, hunting for butterflies in the region, or the Antioqueño capitalists, profiting from the “best corner of America”. As such, the military head of the king has been the scope of the chapter, even though that position was occupied by different actors and agendas across the long-dureé. Whether they are the French Calvinists, the Scottish pirates, the central government, political parties, unions or guerrilla groups, they were all relays of the different state-making projects in the region.

Particularly, I have been interested in delineating the construction of a marginalized area ready to be colonized by a series of missions. Indeed, this chapter has described the different encounters, frictions, blockades and temporal successes that these projects had in the region. It has also shown how often these problems were resolved by the use of a physical violence better exemplified by the interminable massacres, displacements, rapes and dispossessions that have occurred since the sixteenth century.

Arguing against a possibility to talk and write against violence (Taussig 1989), I have tried to made violence intelligible and offer empirical evidence of a truth-telling process "not as the exemplary Enlightment project with the emphasis on Truth with a capital T, but simply as a way for local communities [those women I encountered] caught between the violence of the [different] state[s] and the guerrilla [and paramilitaries] to carve out a public space for themselves" (Fassin 2007, Das 2007a). The chapter was in fact dedicated to and possible only because of that conversation I had in the restaurant with those women. It is devoted (hopefully successfully) to carving those words and letting those specters emerge from the narration. With it, I hope to have delineated a landscape of shared wounds and memories of massacres and selective assassinations even by peasants that came to the region only until the 1950s. But simultaneously, as I will also highlight in Chapter 6, of a fierce vector of resistance and mere survival amidst the worst nightmares and ultimate ability to construct a space of self-reliance and autonomy.

Although I consciously did not include it in this chapter, I now want to argue how next to the military head of the king whose power effects are manifested in those fears felt after the graffiti appeared, there was also a developmental-human rights and humanitarian head. Indeed, another very powerful apparatus of capture. As Uribe (1992)

mentions, Urabá is perhaps one of the more over-diagnosed regions in the country precisely by the series of development and human rights projects that arrived there with the purpose of alleviating the "suffering stranger". This story will be told in the next Chapter. With these two chapters, in the end, I want to signal that the CPSJA emerged right at the confluence of both of these heads: on the one hand, the violent dispute over the territory by a plethora of actors following clear patterns of enemies and adversaries, and on the other, the arrival of those prescriptions meant to protect, alleviate and empower that 'suffering stranger', the victim, the IDP. As I already announced, it is clear that both of these heads shared the same ultimate desire for coding and axiomatizing matter and ultimately contributing to the creation of that which it captures (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). This chapter was devoted to understanding the first head. Now let's turn to the second one.

Endnotes

[1] "Panfletos De Nuevos 'Paras' Paralizan A Urabá", EL Tiempo October 16, 2008, "Amenazas Paran A 2 Pueblos En Córdoba", El Tiempo, October 17, 2008. "Defensoría Advierte Riesgo Por Panfletos En Urabá", EL Tiempo, October 19, 2008.

[2]I mention perplexing because the last name of Gaitán evokes the populist and charismatic left-wing presidential candidate murdered on April 9, 1948, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. His assassination initiated a whole massive reaction from the general public that broke windows, looted buildings, destroyed property and set fire to downtown Bogotá. Similar incidents also broke out in other cities in the country where angry liberals confronted local governments and were also attacked by Conservative-aligned sectors. Commonly known as El Bogotazo, the date has been also highlighted by academics and other voices to denote the beginnings

of La Violencia in Colombia. What is perplexing is precisely how the last name of one of the most visible figures of the popular left has been chosen to appear in the name of a stillunknown paramilitary group.

[3] Most of the scholarly production of Urabá has divided the region into five different macro-regions with corresponding urban settlements according to economic, social, cultural and political configurations: North (Arboletes, San Juan de Urabá, San Pedro de Urabá, Necoclí, and north of Turbo), Center (banana plains including Apartadó, Carepa and south of Turbo), South (Chigorodó and Mutatá), Atrato (Riosucio, Vigía del Fuerte and Murindó) and Chocoan Darien (Unguía and Acandí) (Suárez 2007).

[4] In a conversation once had with a local reporter in Apartadó, and very relevant for our discussion of a landscape constructed through the desires of mainly visitors, he discussed the fact that the region in itself has been constructed through the desires of a rich and vast region with an exuberant nature and with deep treasures (butterflies, ruins) to be found and extracted for the benefit of others i.e., not locals). In the next chapter, I want to also analyze how these central tropes can and still be useful to understand not only the arrival of large scale development projects and to explain the current armed conflict in the region, but also, to analyze the arrival of those internationals (me included) looking for an "alternative world" and an "ideal community" in this exuberant region.

[5] Some archaeological findings of the first "city" of Colombia are exhibited today in the National Museum (the same museum where the Group of Historic Memory gave its report, Chapter 2). Several centuries later, an article in a local newspaper which strongly vociferated against the international presence in the region (interestingly enough, excepting the international press and the ICRC) describes the visit in January 1956 of King Leopold III of Belgium. The king had just finished his position in Conrad´s Heart of Darkness, the savage and bewildered Congo (Steiner 1990). He came to Urabá to hunt butterflies. The article explained that while he was chasing butterflies he also extracted the walls of the Santa Maria's ruins with a helicopter for his own personal museum (El Heraldo 1995, No. 190). Steiner (1990), another central scholar of the region, also describes the general excitement of the population of Urabá by the visit of the king but would actually argue, with the help of other archaeologists, against the monumentality of the extracted discoveries of the "first city" of Colombia. The same local newspaper would also report how one of the most important actors for the creation of the CPSJA (see Chapter 5), the bishop Duarte Cancino, initiated projects for the reconstruction of the church of Santa María during the celebration of the 500 years of evangelization (El Heraldo 1990, No. 153).

[6]Indeed, the narration of these complex alliances and internal tensions where indigenous groups strategically aligned with other empires than the Spanish, becomes central for responding to Serge´s (2005) call for constructing more complex narrations that do not end with just describing the arrival of hegemonic projects to these peripheral regions. Other studies that have recollected the complex history of these alliances between different indigenous groups, black communities and European traders in neighboring regions along the Northern Pacific region, have also constructed narrations that go beyond the tropes of domination-passivity or domination-resistance, by showing the complex reorganization of local powers, the strategic adaptation of these communities to a new environment, innovative processes of hybridization or a hostile and guerrilla warfare against the Spanish troops (Werner 2000, Vargas 1992). See also Taussig (1993), in his reports on the mimetic ongoing processes between the Kuna indigenous and the European traders in the neighboring island of San Blas off the Panamanian coast.

[7] For a review of different theories of identity, see Escobar 2005, Hall 1996.

[8] "Uraba debe ser zona de frontera", El Heraldo de Urabá, November, 1983.

[9] For a detailed study of the company's operations in South America and its relation with governments, private enterprises, popular persecution and paramilitarism, see Striffler (2002) for Ecuador, and Bucheli (2005) for Colombia.

[10] "El año más crítico para los bananeros". El Heraldo de Urabá, November 1989 No. 150.

[11] "Conmemoran 80 años de las masacres de las bananeras". El Tiempo, December 5. 2008.

[12] Ibid.

[13] "La contrarevolución de Urabá. Masacres" Revista Semana, June 12, 1989.

[14] For a review of these economic practices, see the classic Gudeman and Rivera (1990).

[15] "La contrarevolución de Urabá. Masacres" Revista Semana, June 12, 1989, my translation.

[16] "Apartadó: una ciudad moldeada por las invasiones" El Heraldo de Urabá, unpublished manuscript.

[17] "Morir en plenilunio" El Heraldo de Urabá, Marzo de 1994. No. 178

[18] "Reinan las invasiones" Heraldo de Uraba. November 1989, No. 150.

[19] "El fundador de San José de Apartadó. Bartolomé Cataño Vallejo. Una institución silenciada". El Heraldo de Urabá, Unpublished Manuscript.

[20] "Morir en plenilunio" El Heraldo de Urabá, March 1994. No. 178.

[21] "Pliego Laboral vs. Política" Heraldo de Uraba, November 1989, No. 146.

[22] Ibíd.

[23] Ibíd.

[24] "La contrarevolución de Urabá. Masacres" Revista Semana, June 12, 1989

[25] "Convivir y paras: amor a primera vista". Revista Semana, April 14, 2007.

[26] "Las confesiones de Hasbún" Revista Semana. October 4, 2008.

[27] Ibíd.

[28] "Las convivir rinden homenaje al General Rito Alejo del Río" La Gente ya puede trabajar en forma organizada." El Heraldo, December, 1997, No. 203.

[29] "Urabá debe ser tratada científicamente – Opina el general Víctor Álvarez Vargas". Heraldo de Urabá October-November 1995, No. 189

[30] "Veto de Estados Unidos a la Brigada XVII" El Tiempo, December 2, 2005.

[31] "Combatiré a todos los que se encuentran fuera de la ley. Es mi misión". Heraldo de Urabá. December 15, 1993.

[32] "Así nos tomamos la Llorona", El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript.

[33] "El fundador de San José de Apartadó. Bartolomé Cataño Vallejo. Una institución silenciada". El Heraldo de Urabá, Unpublished Manuscript. My translation.

[34] For other descriptions of this same phenomenon of the spectral paramilitary arrival to other town in Colombia, see Taussig (2003) and Orrantia (2009).

[35] "El estigma y la satanización de las AUC" El Heraldo de Urabá, March 2006

The best ‘corner of America’: ethnographies on the protection of “life”

In the summer of 2005, I took a municipal bus between Medellín and Apartadó along one of the central characters of this story, the “Road to the Sea”. It was my first time to go to this hot spot famous for the ongoing confrontations between the army, guerrilla, paramilitary and narcotraffickers seeking to profit from the “best corner of America”. I was not alone; next to me sat one of the most committed and respected associates of the CPSJA who had been “there” during the worst moments and events. After several years visiting the community, I have realized that in fact he had become another member of this complex assemblage. In fact, as I will show in Chapter 5, the same nature of this complex assemblage poses a first challenge to decide ‘who’ is inside and outside, ‘who’ are its ‘members’ and ‘who’ are just *acompañantes*, etc. Although this same debate has been taken to disqualify the CPSJA for the supposed external influence by many local and national actors, I will be arguing that perhaps these ‘partial

connections' proper to any open-ended system have become a major characteristic of this complex assemblage where a 'traditional' peasant community is traversed by vectors coming from different directions (Escobar 2007, Strathern 1991). He came to the region in 1997 along with the now reorganized and later renamed *Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* (Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace). *Justicia y Paz* had arrived to the whole Chocoan and Antioquia's Urabá after the just described counter-subversive campaigns of 1996-1997 displaced entire communities and assassinated traditional peasant and union leaders. He was well respected and admired by many of my interviewees. As they told me, he had gained this respect after several dire situations where he even put his life in danger while working with the CPSJA. He also resigned his position at Justicia y Paz after disagreeing with their interventionist approach towards some of these communities. After more than nine hours driving along the famous road, we arrived late at night to Apartadó. Actually, he preferred to arrive in the city late when no road blocks or police checks would be working. He was and still is one of the more threatened individuals working with the CPSJA.

When we arrived to the typical hotel of these frontier cities with no more than 25 bedrooms refreshed with fans, satellite TV, small soaps and a particular touch of perfume

sprayed out through the corridors, I was indeed surprised with who our hosts were. When we crossed the door of our room, four or five “internationals”, men and women, were waiting for us. Some of them were blond and had blue eyes; men had the typical ex-pat beard I had often used during fieldwork. Women had the white t-shirt with the PBI or FOR logo and whose sleeves and neck had been removed. Later, they explained to me that it was meant to ease the long walks through the rain-forest escorting the CPSJA leaders. And as I have witnessed after staying in many backpacker hotels in many of these towns in Colombia along the traditional favorite ex-pat and backpacker routes, I noticed the opened backpacks filled with outdoor cloth, apparel and different gadgets, dirty hiking boots and teva or chaco sandals. We went out for a couple of beers not only with these internationals that we met at the hotel, but with others that came to the bar and who were just passing by. I was informed that the Doctors without Borders staff were having a birthday party in a night club close by. This was all new to me. I never expected to have such a touch of ‘cosmopolitanism’ right in one of the most stereotyped ‘marginal’ areas in the country. But to find myself in the middle of tall and bearded ‘gringos’ (that is how average Colombians refer to them, regardless of their country of origin) speaking in English, German or Dutch while drinking beer, was indeed a remarkable event. This sense of cosmopolitanism in the middle of the ongoing armed conflict reminded me of

those scenes of the famous Brookfield Hotel depicted in the film Hotel Rwanda (Hoffman 2005). It helped me to start to figure out the complex assemblage I was going to encounter for the first time. Or perhaps, that I had encountered already back in the hotel room.

As I have confirmed time after time through these years, the whole of Apartadó seems to be an hub of 'internationals' awakening a range of feelings of open curiosity and suspicion among many of my local interviewees in Apartadó. Not only have the jeeps and flags from the local offices of the UNHCR, ICRC, OEA (Organization of American States), Doctors without Borders and OXFAM become common images in a city with a population of roughly 200,000 inhabitants, but also the presence of those 'monos' ("blonds") walking through the streets of Apartadó with the white shirts and logos of their respective organizations. There are areas of the city like the famous Barrio Ortiz in which entire blocks are formed by the different offices of these organizations. From a distance, the white flags, satellites antennas and the white jeeps are the best visual reference to find your way to any of these organizations. Coming from countries like the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Italy, Greece and Portugal, almost all of these 'internationals' first appeared in the city around 1996 and 1997 precisely in the context of

the abovementioned violent countersubversive campaigns that displaced entire communities through the region. Although many of the first volunteers now live in other countries although still working with human rights and humanitarian organizations like the mentioned WOLA (Chapter 1), they are still remembered and evoked in many of their informal chats. But also, remembered by some members of the CPSJA who, even though they have seen so many 'internationals' come and go throughout the last ten years, still evoked and praised particular individuals for their commitment and strength through the long walks. Others would also be remembered for their long-foot size, their vegetarian and vegan diets, their long hair, and very often, as I was also teased many times by the peasants of the CPSJA, for their clumsiness and untidiness while walking through the jungle.

We woke up early morning while it was still dark. We had to take the 10 km road before the road blocks opened where many times peasants and members of the CPSJA had been stopped, interrogated and threatened by police, soldiers and paramilitaries in recent years. We hired a local jeep (chivero) for our whole committee made up of one of the most recognized leaders of the CPSJA that some years later would turn into one of my common interlocutors, my companion in the bus, these four internationals and me. At

almost 4:30 am we were leaving Apartadó at night heading not only for San Josesito (see Chapter 5) but as later I realized, for the mythic Serrania del Abibe, the supposed sanctuary of the FARC V front but also of the famous liberal bandits since the 1950s (see discussion Chapter 3). Right when we were leaving one of the most traditional and marginal areas of Apartadó, el barrio Obrero, populated by the famous land invasions of the 1980s and 1990s mentioned in Chapter 3, the car stopped and one of these 'internationals' got out. With a piece of rope, he tried to hang the white flag of this international organization next to the window of the jeep. He couldn't tie it. He preferred instead to sit next to the driver and hold the flag outside the window while the first lights of the early morning began to appear. We switched places with the other 'internationals' so they could also sit next to the windows. When we continued, he was holding the flag outside the jeep and the other 'internationals' surrounded us, the three Colombians in the car. Very easily, I could also be considered as one of the 'internationals': my height and physical appearance plus my backpack and flashlight were enough signs for anyone to "read" me as another 'international' not only in this area, but as I have witnessed throughout my life, in many other regions as well in Colombia. And slowly and silently, our jeep continued heading to San José de Apartadó, *La Palestina Paisa* (the Paisa Palestine), as a local newspaper referred to this region.

This chapter wants to retell the history of how this scene came to be possible, how those ‘internationals’ arrive there; how those flags, jeeps, buildings and institutions have become so obvious in the urban landscape of the city of Apartadó. Although Chapter 3 described the ‘international’ presence of foreigners in the region since the XVI century ranging from the French and Scottish pirates smuggling merchandise all the way down to King Leopold III hunting for butterflies in the 1950s, and even today the ‘gringo’ presence has become normal for many ‘locals’, I still find these scenes enormously fascinating for the many questions they raise and that are worthy to explore ethnographically such as: Why have all those (different) internationals been ‘there’ throughout all these years? What are they ‘doing’ in a much wider perspective? What is the history of their presence in the region? What are the ‘life histories’ of these volunteers and their material realm? How do these development, humanitarian and human rights operations also involve particular questions, answers, prescriptions and moral conducts regarding the question of what it is to be human at this particular site? How can an ethnography of the development, human rights and humanitarianism also complicate simple and superficial readings of their practices? How do they orient us towards a more complex understanding of the concept of ‘sovereignty’ in contemporary times? And if

this is so, what about their relation to the sanctified tri-partite liberal assemblage of territory, authority and rights (Sassen 2006)?

Chapter 3 also described those vectors that arrived in the region seeking to violently or subtlety appropriate resources and land, control strategic routes and symbolically create a whole geography of terror clearly separating enemies, adversaries and strategic allies. This has been the story of empires, about the state formation project, about regional and national elites, political parties, guerrilla groups and the recent arrival of paramilitary groups. It has also been the story of the arrival of capital and the articulation of the region to large networks of capital accumulation. Simultaneously, of the presence of cacao, tagua nut, and plantain crops in the region. In this chapter, I want to explore the other face of these same vectors that in the name of development, peace, human rights and humanitarianism, also populated the "best corner of America' with development projects, experts, white shirts, jeeps, satellite phones, backpacks and a load of sincere and honest 'good intentions'. My aim is not to generalize nor homogenize the effects of their presence in the region. Some local reporters have already done this and as I said, choose precisely the ICRC and the international press as the most respectful. Other dissertations judging the colonizing spirit of these humanitarian practices are currently

being written. Following the argument of this dissertation, I don't want to move too fast nor to arrive to these totalizing conclusions; I just want to follow how the arrival of these vectors and their local confrontation and negotiation with previous ones including those mentioned in Chapter 3 have become decisive for creating the conditions of possibility and ultimate repertoires of the CPSJA today.

The *myth* of a chaotic and prosperous region

In his classic study of the arrival of the development apparatus to Egypt, Mitchell (2002: 209) argues that one can open almost any study of Egypt produced by an American or international development agency and one "is likely to find it starting with the same and simple image". In his vision, this image consistently and repeatedly points at the problem of geography versus demography highlighting the high fertility rates of the Nile valley "surrounded by desert, crowded with rapidly multiplying millions of inhabitants". Indeed, by reviewing a wide range of diagnostics made by development projects in Urabá since the 1960s, one gets almost to the same vision of the Nile valley but with its own local colors (Corpourabá 1972, 1977, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1985, Corpourabá and Universidad de Antioquia 1990, Gobernación de Antioquia 1979, 1983, Departamento Nacional de Planeación 1993, Gonzales Sierra y Usuga 1966, Organization of American States 1977, PNUD-Naciones Unidas 1990). The dates of these diagnosis

((1960's, 1970s, 1980s) are not coincidental: they correspond not only with the stabilization of the development apparatus in Colombia originating with the first famous World Bank expeditions to Colombia led by Lauchlin Currie in 1949 (Escobar 1995: 56)[1]. But also, as Escobar (Ibid.) shows, with the emergence of a particular problem area of the development agenda which specifically focused on the "peasant" and the "integral rural development" type of diagnosis, prescriptions and solutions. Interestingly enough, as this scholar (1995: 131) reminds us, Colombia started in "the mid-1970s to implement the first nationwide integrated rural development in the Third World". This came to be the National Food and Nutrition Plan (Ibid.). And Urabá, as I will immediately show, became targeted by this particular approach which not only diagnosed problems but also came up with particular solutions which attempted to transform those unequal and unjust conditions in which the "peasant" ultimately lived[2].

Not coincidental either are the actors in charge of initiating these diagnoses: the *Departamento Nacional de Planeación* (National Department of Planification), the *Corporación Regional Autónoma de Urabá*, Corpourabá (Autonomous Regional Corporation of Urabá), the *Organización de Estados Americanos* (Organization of American States) and the University of Antioquia. As such, as I will argue in this chapter,

these are the most important actors that not only came up with the first systematic diagnoses of the region; they also came up with the “solutions” to solve them through specific material interventions whose legacy or perhaps “side-effects” (Fergusson 1992), the white t-shirts and the “gringos” in the streets of Apartadó, also became fundamental vectors for the emergence of the CPSJA in the mid-1990s. As such, although Escobar (1995) has done an ethnographic analysis of some of the rural development projects at a national level, I purport to carry this analysis in a local setting in order to recover the immense frictions, negotiations, variations and adaptations that these same scripts had. Here, as several recent ethnographies of development have alleged, I want to include in the analysis of development the analysis of who were the implementers of these projects, what were their agendas, how were these projects designed and how were they ultimately implemented, and how were they negotiated with other key actors within the local settings (Mosse, 2005, Sinha 2006, Medeiros 2005, Bornstein 2005, Nordstrom 2004). Even more, given the fact that I am performing this analysis some decades after these projects were implemented, I want to signal the long-lasting and unpredictable effects that they had including some of the fundamental and organizing principles that became vital for the emergence of the CPSJA in 1997.

An image both similar to and contrasting with that of Egypt repeatedly appears in these diagnosis, and consistently points at a promising area both for its geo-strategic location with the interior Medellín but also with the rest of the world, its lack of hurricane presence, a formidable drainage due to its abundant water provisions, different climates, a large forest reserve in the Serranía del Abibe and an abundant floating working force arriving from different regions. But it points also at the anarchic demographic growth, the lack of roads, water and sewage infrastructure, schools, and hospitals, the concentration of land ownership, the corresponding displacement of previous inhabitants, an emerging conflict between unions and owners of the growing banana industry, and a general notion of the "State absence" whereby the rule of the strongest seem to dominate the destiny of this region. One could easily conclude that most of the interventions reviewed in the following sections, which combine both the developmental agendas and those of the human rights and humanitarian sort, were launched and were made possible precisely by these same contrasts. Although certainly the problems that seek to alleviate those development agendas of the mid 1970s are not necessarily the same ones that brought those white shirts and NGOs in the mid 1990s, I will argue that there is a continuity (but also discontinuity) between the three agendas (the development, the Human Rights and Humanitarian). These can be traced in the moral values, scripts, rationalities and type of

prescriptions that they each brought with them. Needless to say, there are also enormous differences between their concerns, approaches, prescriptions and even temporal scope. Particularly, as I argued in chapter 2, the second approach was indeed overdetermined by the arrival of other vectors stemming from different directions that converged in the 1990s and which included the arrival of the IDPs problem area and the corresponding international agencies in charge of regulating and promoting adequate answers to this population. Also by the peace agendas heralded by popular movements and also by national state policies. And finally, by the emergence of the "victim" within the international human rights and humanitarian languages and prescriptions.

In Chapter 3, I outlined the main contours of the recent and long-dureé process of incorporation of the region to regional, national and international networks. Precisely, I have done this in order to problematize that initial vision presented in the series of development diagnoses to understand not only how this vision came to be possible, but also to understand the relevance of a wide range of actors across time in the production of this landscape. They include a long process of almost four centuries where the region was left to "its own luck" right after the first Spanish settlements in the first years of the sixteenth century were abandoned. For several centuries, this same condition profited

from by indigenous populations, Scottish and French pirates and famous entrepreneurs converted the whole region into a hot-spot for smugglers and local disputes and alliances between the different interested parties. I have argued how it was right when the region was annexed to the department of Antioquia and with the incident of the war in Panamá at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the central government and regional elites began "to care about" this region through both economic arguments and the defense of the country's sovereignty. The "road to the sea" became the main channel of these desires, and with it, the region was finally accessible by land from the interior of the country and its colonizing missions and from the rest of the world through the gulf. Soon, the banana industry transformed the region into an "enclave economy" (Bejarano 1998) that attracted different migration cycles principally coming from the departments of Antioquia, Chocó, and Córdoba stimulated by political persecution, economic opportunities and the promises of new ventures. But as I already explained, this same population became framed and located within the political allegiances, geographies and grammars orchestrated by the different armed actors that settled in the region. Displacements, massacres and selected assassinations became the material expressions of these logics during the mid-1980s and especially in the 1990s with the arrival of paramilitary groups who targeted not only armed actors but also the civilian population.

The ‘peasant economy’ and the development apparatus

Simultaneously with this story which includes the main characteristics of the classic (liberal) developmental tendencies for including marginal areas in the State-network (infrastructure, capital ventures, new employment offers), other types of efforts were also put into place for protecting the region from the forecast of environmental depletion, population growth and its impact on the population. But also, as Escobar (1995) clearly shows, for responding to new international challenges related to the scripts of food scarcity, nutrition and the alarming realities left by the prevalent development model. For this author, this model ended by producing both immense concentrations of capital and a soaring stratum of poor and marginalized populations. In the case of Apartadó, as I have argued, this contrast took form in the transformation of a region into a primal exportation pole of banana with staggering inequalities among the population. Needless to say, the history of these interventions emerged simultaneously with the growth and distinct trajectories that the development apparatus had in Colombia during those years. Particularly, as Escobar (1995) argues, it is noticeable that the type of development interventions and power effects that these had in Colombia in the 1970s and 1980s were possible within a new regime of knowledge and power which saw the

“peasant” together with its “overlaying different problematics” become the main target of a wide range of different maneuvers by experts, institutions and prescriptions. Briefly, in the sedimentation of a whole regime of truth and falsehood which was not only about epistemology, but simultaneously, about disciplines, disciplinization processes, subjects, subjectivities and bodies. With it, the ‘peasant world’ became organized by a set of institutional processes (Ibid: 109). In particular, as I will immediately show, I want to emphasize the fact that the rationalities behind these interventions were brought about by the emerging larger debate in the 1970s about food, nutrition policy and planning as a major response to the failures of the ‘green revolution’ development model (Ibid: 135). In Escobar’s (1995) view, this changing paradigm in the development tendencies opened the doors for the ‘rural development’ golden era. Succinctly, this meant the arrival of development prescriptions that distanced themselves from the single-sided formulas heralded by the ‘green revolution’ and its reliance on fertilizers, and focused instead on integral solutions for the “problems” of peasant life. The problem was not only on new seeds, but as I will immediately show by highlighting the contours of these projects in Urabá, on adequate housing, health facilities, infrastructure, organization skills, participation and the basic empowerment of those “peasants”.

Regarding the first milestone of this (other) history of development arrival to Urabá, different from the one of narrow economic interests, as I already described, was when the National Congress declared in 1959 that the mentioned Serranía del Abibe, the refuge of liberal guerrillas in the 1950s (Roldán 2003), should be turned into a forest reserve (Parsons 1963). A more sustained, comprehensive and larger effort for "caring" for this region would not appear until almost ten years later with the passing of Law 65 of 1968[3] which created and gave to the *Corporación de Desarrollo de Urabá* (Development Corporation of Urabá), Corpourabá, the responsibility for diagnosing, directing and orienting the development plans for the region. This law defined Corpourabá as a decentralized institution that has as is main objective the "elaboration and execution of the Integral Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Urabá Region" (Corpouraba 1977, my translation). In a 1972 benchmark study for the subsequent development plans of the 1980s and 1990s, it argues that the Corporation was indeed created because of the "the subhuman conditions in which the majority of the population lives" (Corpourabá 1972: 7, my translation). It argued that 50% of the population has no education and that there is an alarming problem of housing facilities in the region while for only Apartadó the figures for population growth were 5%. Hence, it continued, the development plan to be constructed with this diagnosis should be conceived "as an

instrument of social justice" oriented to "increase the quality of life", to "better distribute the income" and "to order the available resources at the services of men in his personal, familiar, and social dimension over real basis and concrete objectives" (Ibid: 11, all quotes my translation). The main purpose of the plan should then be oriented towards making "men the effective destination of the development outcomes" (Ibid, my translation). The purpose was of having a society of "free men in solidarity" (Corpourabá 1972: 30, my translation)[4].

It should be highlighted that at least from the theoretical frameworks that orient this particular diagnosis where the justification for a development plan for Urabá is conceived as an instrument of "social justice", that one is in the presence of a development theory paradigm informed by Marxism and its Latin-American version of dependency theory (Escobar 2005a: 21). This is not irrelevant for any purposes because it precisely problematizes singular visions of the development apparatus (Fergusson 1990), and allows us to understand the frictions, complexities and varieties of how these same theories travel and are traversed by other vectors. Here, there is a clear conscience of the side-effects of the impacts of the previous development model which would not necessarily correspond to the liberal model in Escobar's (Ibid.) scheme characterized by

the dreams of progress, liberty, the individual and the market. For sure, the prevailing model corresponded more to a classic colonial formation of an “enclave economy” (Bejarano 1988, Bucheli 1994) with a strict control of the working force population, a rampant capital concentration and the dispossession of lands and other resources by a free-labor population. This was precisely the model thoroughly attacked by this Marxist paradigm which by the 1960s and 1970s had an influential role in many parties and governments in Central and Latin American countries. Precisely, as I already argued in Chapter 2, Marxism and its counterpart liberation theology both became paramount vectors for the emergence of the “victim” (“the poor”) as a side-effect of the prevailing development models implemented across the continent. Needless to say, as I also argued, figures such as Orlando Fals Borda and his methodology of participatory action research together with his role in the constitution and emergence of the local boards across the country while he was Minister of Agriculture, became possible within these convergences.

Hence, what this new development paradigm intended to argue and to transform was precisely the whole social structure that in the case of Urabá had created an alarming contrast between a most successful economic model of the banana industry in terms of

the rates of exportation and capital concentration and a residual population ("the lumpenproletarian") left without adequate housing, educational and health infrastructure. Therefore, development plans should offer as a solution to increase the living standards of this marginal and deprived population. What is interesting to highlight for now is how this development plan still operated within a clear modernist view that gave (committed) "experts" the need to work for these populations; they brought new prescriptions, technicians and regimes of truth to the region with the best "good intentions" for alleviating the victim of the prevailing model. As such, as I often heard in these interviews discussing the development projects that I will immediately review, these "experts" attempted to empower and disentangle the "colonizing peasant" from the multiple chains in which it ultimately rested which included commercial intermediaries, technicians, local politicians and also the armed actors. In Urabá, the "suffering stranger" of a particular development scheme had been discovered and hence it was about to be targeted by a series of development interventions that entered the region at least since the 1970s.

In fact, while interviewing staff who worked during those decades in Corpourabá, they even remembered those days with a clear nostalgic tone describing the dreams of

spearheading the transformation of an unjust social structure. As soon as I informed him about my research interests and the purposes of visiting him in Medellín, an old comrade working in those development projects told me that I was in fact touching sensitive fibers of his heart. Through almost an entire morning, he remembered nostalgically those years and talked about the promises, the dreams, the small successes, the obstacles, the frictions, and finally, the years of the war (mid-1990s), where they just had to go away and finally abandoned the project. The residues of those projects can be read in the local names of the farm bought by the Dutch project, “La Holandita”, in the building that once hosted the cacao cooperative, among other materialities. The next chapter will analyze the side-effects that these projects had for the emergence of the CPSJA in 1997. He told me that they were non-partisans, and in fact, that they were respected by the different armed actors and could work and move throughout their controlled territory. In a similar vein, a current officer of Corpourabá that worked during those years evoked the young idealist and crazy spirit of those years where they deeply believed that their interventions could change these conditions. A Dutch officer once wrote me confessing me that they deeply believed in the fact that by using their scientific knowledge in a creative way they could make the difference for people condemned for life to poverty (Electronic Communication, July 1, 2008). The Colombian ex-officer recalled how even their friends

and families told them that they were insane to work in the region but their sense of commitment was stronger. A sense of pride seemed to accompany the officer's words in Medellín while he stared through the window smoking his cigar. He even told me how once he was visited by the head of the PNR project mentioned before in the mid 1980s. When the latter saw what they were doing in Urabá, according to my interviewee, he told him that this project should actually become the model to follow for the PNR in the whole country. He suggested him to write the chronicles of the project because people should know about it. But he never did and still regrets it.

Throughout my interviews, I have been able to register that important figures of the left came to the region to orient, discuss and implement these development projects. And this is not irrelevant. As I had already argued, it allows us to understand the frictions, complexities and varieties of how these same development theories travels and are traversed by other vectors (e.g., leftist agendas). As I will immediately show below, these came not only from the history of the left in Colombia but also from the European left and more specifically from the Dutch unions. Not only the previously mentioned Orlando Fals Borda (see Chapter 2) was pointed out as an important influence for these projects who actually visited the region several times organizing workshops and lectures, but

other important figures in the history of the left in the country such as Gerardo Molina were also mentioned in these narrations. In a particular conversation had with Padre Giraldo, he even told me about how the current president of the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* (Alternative Democratic Pole), the most current visible leftist part in the country, told him that he had been taken to San José de Apartadó in the mid-1980s by the nationally recognized public health academic and activist, Héctor Abad Gómez, assassinated in the University of Antioquia by sicarios paid by paramilitaries in 1987[5]. Apparently, he had been taken by Abad, recognized in those years by the Antioqueños as "the apostle of human rights", to observe the health programs he was developing in the region by that time. But at the end, as I could witness in almost all of my interviews with staff of these development projects, both national and international, there was a sense of frustration as most of these dreams, in their own words, were interrupted in the mid 1990s when violence escalated in the region.

One of the first and most important efforts to construct what for an officer of those projects became "the basic knowledge of the region" (Personal Communication, 2008) was the project funded by the Organization of American States, the *Proyecto Darién* (Darién Project), PD, in 1976-1978. For another study from the *Universidad*

Nacional (National University) which purported to evaluate the impacts of the development project in the 1980s, this project came to be the first planning and ordering attempt of the region and set clear parameters for government actions in order to propitiate the regional development of Urabá (Corpourabá. Universidad de Antioquia 1990: 161). Basically, for this particular study, the prime mover of the further development projects that would arrive in the following years following the prescriptions of the PD was framed within the larger debate of incorporating a marginalized region into the national development (Ibid. 167). The PD's basic diagnosis of the region was that the case of Urabá represented the typical scenario of how an economy of subsistence was violently impacted by the arrival of large commercial activity on an international scale (OEA 1977: 8). It even predicted by analyzing the figures for its rapid demographic growth that if the urban settlements continued to expand at the same pace they had, the whole region would turn itself into a major labyrinth (Ibid: 83). However, the PD insisted, that even considering all these factors, Urabá can turn into one of the richest countries in Colombia if it follows a beneficial and balanced social development (Ibid. 8). And this was what it precisely recommended: a mixture of prescriptions defining the need for a balanced development with high rates of social investment and construction of basic infrastructure while promoting the diversification of the predominant economy

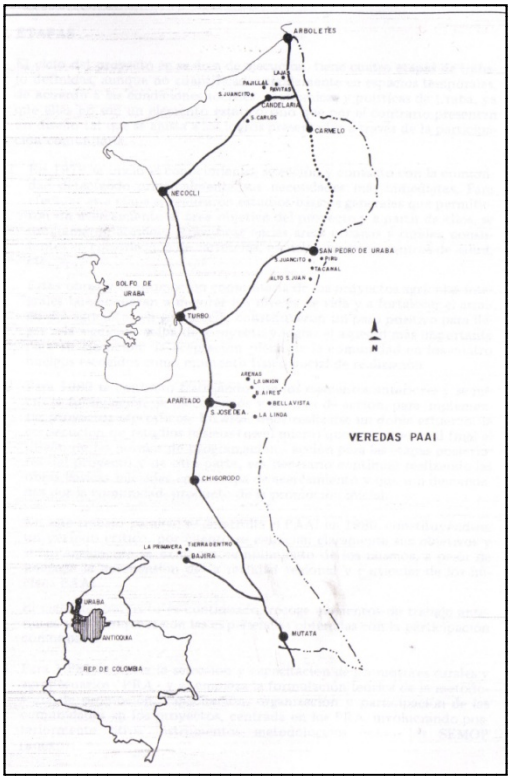
(Ibid: 13). As such, the PD had been inspired by the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* (National Development Plan) of Alfonso López Michelsen, *Para cerrar la brecha-1974* (To close the gap-1974), which precisely focused on the incorporation of those marginalized regions into the economic and social development of the country (Corpourabá 1989). For another ex-officer, however, the PD clearly must be seen as a clear product of the 'Cold War' that hoped to stop the Central American communist agenda from advancing southwards.

This ex-officer insisted that the PD had the particular importance of not following the administrative divisions of the Chocoan and Antioqueño Urabá but focused instead on the vision of the region as a "whole biome, this is, as a large biological structure with unique particularities" (Personal Communication, 2008). Thus, the project diagnosed a whole area that belonged administratively to three different departments (Chocó, Antioquia and Córdoba). As he recalled, this project brought along the prevailing concept of "extension" within the development paradigm which, he insisted, was typically gringo at that time (his own words) (Personal Communication, 2008). Above all, the general objectives of the project were to carry out a socio-economic survey of the region, to provide the whole region with a road infrastructure in order to exploit the natural

resources, to conserve and protect the environment, to bring dynamism to the integration processes between the region and the rest of the country and to diagnose future perspectives for the integration with Central America through Panamá (Corpouraba 1977). The central strategies of the PD focused on the economic growth of the region through the opening of the region to the international banana market, and the diversification and industrialization of this activity, stimulating the traditional agricultural economy and establishing an adequate infrastructure, among others (Corpourabá 1989: 3). The first phase of the project to carry out this diagnosis was finalized in October 1976 (Ibid.). The second consisted in the drafting of specific projects on regional development, the Pan-American Highway, a larger port on the Urabá gulf and the finalization of the road between Medellín and Turbo which had some delayed works by that time (Ibid.).

For the purposes of this dissertation, the significance of the PD and the diagnosis relies in the fact that one of its findings was the "discovery" of a marginalized peasant sector that had recently arrived to the region through the various colonization cycles reviewed in Chapter 3. This sector kept some sort of "traditional" agricultural practices, had some organizational practices and remained in the new areas of colonization. The project also worried about the precarious living conditions of this population and the

advancement of the frontera agrícola (agricultural border) due to the opening of new plots by these colonos. They identified thanks to a process of characterization four microregions with these tendencies. San José de Apartadó was precisely chosen as one of these microregions; the other three were Bajirá, San Pedro de Urabá and Necoclí (Corpourabá 1984, 1985, see Map 3). Very soon, as I will immediately show, right after the Proyecto Darién made this diagnosis about this marginalized sector, these same microregions became targeted by the interests somehow contradictory and full of frictions from both national and international actors. And soon, some of those blond "experts" with whom I have been able to exchange emails, together with national officers that I have been able to interview, arrived in the region in order to create the conditions for solving the main "problems" identified by these diagnoses.



Map 3, The four micro-regions, San José de Apartadó, Bajirá, San Pedro de Urabá and Necoclí (Corpourabá1984)

As a Dutch ex-officer of this project explained to me, in 1980 two officers from the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs arrived in Bogotá with their “pockets full of money” at the offices of the Departamento de Planeación Nacional, DNP, (Department of Nation Planning). They wanted to know where they should invest their money which should be used for “helping the poor” (Electronic communication, January 27, 2009). When I asked him about the reasons why the Netherlands would initiate this effort in the name of that “suffering stranger” from far away, he answered me with a long historical explanation, somehow similar to the one I had already received from the Norwegian officer at the

UNHCR in Geneva (Chapter 1, fn #13). He argued that in fact this country has a long tradition of charity organizations which came as the result of the violent confrontations within different religious groups after the religious reforms. Those confrontations left a profound sense of solidarity for people of the same (religious) group (Ibid.). Interestingly enough, we know that the mystic philosopher Spinoza left Spain persecuted by his religion and found refuge precisely in Holland at that time. For the officer, this experience was translated into a sense of solidarity with the "poor" of the Third World "stronger than any other country in the world" (Ibid.).

During the twentieth century, as he explained, with government coalitions made out of different political parties who had some religious segments, governments were expected and obliged by their constituencies to dedicate a fixed percentage of the Gross Domestic Product to international solidarity. Today, he argued, the percentage of this investment is 2% which goes straight to NGOs such as Caritas, Christian Aid, Oxfam, among others. Currently, he insisted, large groups from the Dutch community monitor these funds because they are touching "their soul and heart" (Ibid.). Needless to say, as I had always argued with French ex-pats and travelers in Colombia and their pride for coming from a country that fought for the "universal declaration of human rights" while

it was carrying out devastating colonizing missions in the Caribbean and North Africa, I wonder where the terrifying experiences of the infamous Dutch India company would fit in with this mind-set. But anyhow, let's continue with the story.

On the other hand, as this same officer explained to me, during those years the head of the Ministry for Development Cooperation, turned out to be an important figure of the left, Jan Pronk, who had particular views on development and international aid (Bakker 2009). After reviewing the conventional models of development, he described, Pronk came with what he referred to as a ´pragmatic approach´ to development. Crucial to this vision was the fact of relating discussions on development with politics thus highlighting the fact that it cannot remain a ´neutral´ activity. The answers to 'which development' and 'how development' had enormous political stakes that development planners usually erase from their blue-prints. Thus, the 'pragmatist approach' understood development not by following pre-established models, but by accommodating their actions to what they would find in the local scenarios. The 'peasant economy' project approach and ultimate methodologies resonated with Pronk´s vision. No blueprints, no predictable outcomes but first and foremost, promote and empower what was already there. In the meantime, Pronk would later become the UN Special Representative of the

Secretary-General and Head of Mission of Sudan where he was later obliged to leave.

This ex-officer would explain this approach:

> "From the troubling sixties the Dutch religious segmentation was faced with tough discussions at different levels and segments of society. Concerning the technical cooperation, many criticized that the exportation of technology and capital not only didn´t arrive to the poor but that in many cases it still contributed to create more inequality within the poor countries and between the por and the rich countries. Within the whole process of decolonization the abuses against the people from the tropics during the colonial era in Holland [the Dutch East Company] were publicly known and discussed. This had an enormous influence in the public opinion when messages of bad use or negative effects from the technical cooperation would arrive, like in the case of the Green Revolution that only favored relatively rich agriculturalists but caused a greater impoverishment of large groups of poor and marginalized peasants. The conclusion was that the cooperation must have much more emphasis on activities exclusively aimed at the poorest using small scale technology" (Bakker 2009)

In the context of the failure of the "green revolution" which was also thought to be a counterproposal for the "red revolution", the Dutch ex-officer argued, they came up with a different approach to this particular sector. Their idea arose as a reaction to the prevailing model based on the increase in food production and the technological transfer as the basic panacea for hunger in the world. Although he insisted that in fact this idea had been successful in regions like the Punjab in India, in other countries it just contributed to the increasing polarization of poverty and wealth which had to do with other structural problems such as access to complementary conditions, access to capital and the everlasting problem of land ownership (Ibid)[6]. Thus, those problems in which a particular sector of recent colonizing peasants was involved, together with other

structural ones, became the main targets of these projects. As I already explained in Chapter 3, and as was confirmed by the Colombian ex-officer and by my own conversations with current members of the CPSJA, these colonizing peasants in San José de Apartadó had arrived in the region seeking new opportunities and escaping from the political persecution of the 1950s and 1960s in Antioquia.

As my interviewees argued, they were 'liberals', peasant colonizers, Antioqueños, Catholics, patriarchal, were used to the coffee and mountain agriculture, had a good rational management of their scarce resources, paid their debts, helped their paisanos and just wanted to work in the field and be left alone from any more persecutions or obligations. In their narrations, they were pointing at the classic figure of the colonos campesinos (peasant colonizers) and its spirit of self-reliance, dignity, autonomy and liberty; certainly, a central figure in the history of twentieth-century Colombia for many different reasons that have already been explained here (Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986). Indeed, as I have described in several sections of this dissertation, a long tradition of similar vectors ranging from the Ligas Campesinas (Peasant Leagues) of the 1920s and '30s to the Repúblicas Independientes (Independent Republics) of the 1950s, have also endorsed these same scripts while struggling and confronting a country of large

landowners affiliated with the Conservative party and with strong influences in the Central Government (Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986, Sánchez 1976, 1977, Sánchez y Meertens 1998, Molano 1987, Uribe 1992, Uribe 2007, Steiner 2002, Roldán 2003, Suárez 2007, Ramírez 1997).

"Empowerment", "Participation" and the Gramineae: cutting the (different) dependencies

The tone of "pride" continued in the narrations of those ex-officers when they compared their own local project with the national and centralized project, the above-mentioned DRI. They described the DRI as a very "gringo moment" very well funded and that still depended on agrochemicals (Personal Communication, 2008). Instead, their project was indeed smaller, they didn't have the same resources but what they had was an immense creativity and very important, almost "natural" leaders among the peasant communities that they were working with. One of these which became one of the promoters of the whole project had already been mentioned in this dissertation: Bartolo Catanio, the founder of San José de Apartadó (Chapter 3). The observation about the local leadership is not inconsequential: it highlighted the central tenet of the project based on the local participation of the populations of each of the four identified microregions. As I already argued, important vectors from the participation schemes of the popular

education sort were influential at least in the crafting of these prescriptions. Although certainly the lack of (real) participation was indeed emphasized in subsequent evaluations of the more than ten years of existence of the Dutch project in these four microregions (Corpourabá-Universidad de Antioquia 1990, Universidad Nacional 1991, Corpourabá 1987), what is important to highlight is certainly how this "participation" script was played out, what it ultimately "did" and what were its "side effects". Thus, I am less interested in whether this "participation" was real or not, although certainly I am concerned with the observations made by these evaluations on the organizational nature of the "cooperatives" the project had created and promoted in each of the four microregions, but especially in San José de Apartadó. More than anything, I want to understand how this "participation" was played out, what their justifications were and what their long lasting effects in the region are.

Thus, in 1980, right after those Dutch functionaries arrived at the DNP offices, the *Proyecto de Ayuda Agrícola Integral*, (Integral Project of Agricultural Aid), PAAI, was first launched and implemented by Corpourabá. The Dutch also initiated the famous DIAR project along the Atrato river in the department of Chocó which had similar interests and rationalities as the ones carried out in these four regions: empowerment of

the local communities, strengthening the cooperative model, and the integral vision on development schemes characteristic of the 'rural development' paradigm (Restrepo 2008a, Wijbenga 2008). Interestingly enough, some of the side-effects brought by the DIAR including the strengthening of grassroots initiatives and the empowerment of self-managed schemes that created the conditions for the emergence of an Afro-Colombian identity in the communities described by Restrepo (Ibid.), can also be found in some of these micro-regions where the PAAI project worked although with striking differences as well. While the DIAR "catered" to afrocolombian communities, the PAAI project worked with colonizing peasants that had arrived in the area in the last twenty or thirty years. As the Dutch ex-officer explained to me, the Colombian government welcomed these initiatives because it made sense with the priorities of every government which precisely are concerned with the alleviation and elimination of poverty levels (Electronic communication, January 27, 2009). During the next ten years approximately, the PAAI (1980-1982) mutated into other projects such as the *Proyecto de Economia Campesinas* (Project of Peasant Economies), PEC, and later, the *Programa para el Desarrollo Rural de Urabá*, (Program for the Rural Development of Urabá) (DRU).

But according to all voices, the basic philosophy of participation and local empowerment continued through these projects, although with various interpretations, new problems to be solved, different scales and emphasis. For example, during the PAAI-PEC transition a small project aimed at the peasant woman was included and some years later a 'communication area' was organized which looked to solve many of the shortcomings of what was perceived to be a 'communication deficiency' between the technicians and peasants (Corpourabá 1983, 1985a). Also, the DRU tried to focus on a regional scale instead of the prevailing model of the PEC-PAAI which solely targeted the four micro-regions (Corpourabá, n.d). The projects were executed with the DNP funds and with other resources coming from the Dutch government (Corpourabá 1984). In other interviews with various ex-officers, they also referred *to Corporación de Fomento de Apoyo de Empresas Asociadas* (Corporation for the Promotion of Support of Associative Companies), CORFAS, as a key actor managing the Dutch funds and ultimately responsible for giving credits to the project "clients".

For our purposes, it is important to highlight the main objectives and rationalities that each project had and then follow the concrete actions they set in motion in order to respond to them. Before I continue, all ex-officers and evaluations depicted the region as

a flourishing water reserve with different altitudes that allowed peasants to grow different products according to their corresponding climate. However, they insisted, it didn't have good drainage conditions after the forest was cleared. From the beginning, the main actions deployed by the PAAI project were the transmission of agricultural technology, strengthening the associative forms of the socioeconomic organizations and the construction of infrastructure (Corpourabá 1984). The justifications for the PAAI were the incorporation of this agricultural marginalized area to the economy, protection from the enlargement of the cattle areas and its impact on the agricultural sector and the forest reserve, the need to produce more food and a general unemployment rate. The PEC initiated in June 1986 went somehow further in its designs and purported to strengthen the peasant family economy in Urabá, expanding the available agricultural, forestry and fishery products in the region and (very important for our analysis), strengthening the communitarian participation in the management of its own resources and the decisions affecting their own life conditions (Corpourabá 1987: 48). Indeed, the components of participation and decision–making processes were right there from the beginning. This is no surprise given the fact that, as I have argued in the previous pages, these projects were largely influenced both by "participatory action" schemes and a clear "leftist" orientation. Even the project focusing on the "woman as an agent of development" argued that the

basic rationale behind the whole project was to widen ‘the democratic strip’ understood as the capacity of the “peasant to participate in the State benefits at all levels achieving a social cohesion where they are organized enough to respond to the different aspects of their own life” (Corpourabá 1984: 5).

When explaining the basic approach that the project took in San José de Apartadó, one ex-officer explained that what they did was to strengthen the already established and informal organizational practices of a colonizing peasant population. This meant that those peasants were already informally organized through the typical practices of ‘mutual aid’ and sense of ‘solidarity’ characteristic of the peasant colonization areas in Colombia described and analyzed by many scholars not only the Urabá region but in others as well (Le Grand 1988, Fals Borda 1986, Sánchez 1976, 1977, Sánchez y Meertens 1998, Molano 1987, Uribe 1992, Uribe 2007, Steiner 2002, Roldán 2003, Suárez 2007, Ramírez 1997). For instance, ‘mutual aid’ practices still present in the CPSJA such as the one referred to as manos cambiadas (change of hands) or convites (communal invitations) meant that peasants help each other clearing crop areas and communal paths, in the cultivation of seeds and the collective construction of bridges and trails, among other works of public interest. He explained to me that their was a sense of solidarity between

them not only in that they shared the fact of arriving to a marginal area densely covered by the rainforest, but through the shared stories of political persecution, economic marginalization and the sense that they were 'there' and could not return to their original homeland. As one of my interviewees would narrate, everyone in Urabá shares the spirit of the adventurer who knows that he [in masculine] cannot return and ultimately does not fear death: "we are talking about a sense of life, […] a disentanglement from life" (Personal Communication, February 2008). And clearly, in San José, there were important and charismatic leaders such as the mentioned Bartolo Cataño, who founded, organized and chaired the local communal board. As I already described, he had not only arrived in the Serranía del Abibe in search of new opportunities, but he soon received what can be described as "political orientations" by the above-mentioned national peasant organization, the ANUC. Very soon, Cataño would not only be chosen as the representative of the peasant in different boards including in Corpourabá, but would also become elected as a consejal (counselor) coming from the Unión Patriótica in the administrative government of Apartadó.

Although certainly this vision of a 'community economy' (Gibson-Graham 2006) could also be problematized by the existence of sedimented power relations that lay at the

basis of a patriarchal, catholic and gender-based cultural matrix of many social movements and political organizations in rural and urban Latin America, what is clear for us is that when the Dutch project arrived in San José de Apartadó, using Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notions, the space was already striated by these vectors of 'mutual aid' and 'solidarity' that were not stable but were also full of fractures, frictions and tensions. "The problem is that we are very machistas, we are Antioqueños, we are peasants, we are not used to be otherwise", said a leader of the CPSJA when he came to my house in Chapel Hill during this international rally in November 2006, and just laughed, surreptitiously knowing that he could be condemned in this liberal community of progressive academics. But he also remembered the time when his own wife who became a member of the "internal council" of the CPSJA some years ago, was in charge of punishing him when he drank some alcohol and she had to scold him about that fact that this normal practice in rural Colombia was banned inside the community (see next chapter). He just had to obey his wife, she had the support of the "internal council" and there was no discussion about it. Once, as the ex-officer told me, they encountered Bartolo along the road from San José to Apartadó working alone and clearing very heavy rocks from the road. Indeed, a physically demanding activity. "Bartolo, Bartolo, you need to move those rocks with the help of other people and not alone, you have to work

collectively", were the words that the officer remembered he said at that time. "Yes, I know, but it just makes me angry to see those rocks in the middle of the road without anyone moving them", were the words that Bartolo used and the officer remembered (Personal Communication, 2008).

The fact is that these established and sedimented imperfect organizational practices were the ones that these projects wanted to strengthen and promote. Indeed, this vision could also be contrasted with the conclusions made by some evaluations of the outcomes of the project made some years later. Thus, in 1991, for example, the evaluation made by the *Universidad Nacional* concluded that the peasants were the ones who were forced to accommodate themselves to the project designs and not otherwise (Universidad Nacional 1991: 14). Again, what is interesting for us is not so much the fact of finding the most "true" version of the story, but to observe how this vision was played out and what were the power effects it displayed and which can be ethnographically evaluated. In this sense, several actions were proposed by the Dutch project to impact and strengthen these practices. Most were justified and intended to cut the (different) dependencies that this peasant sector had with commercial intermediaries, with bugs and other parasites and with the regimes imposed by the same armed actors in some of the four micro-regions

and with their own patriarchal culture. Thus, the Dutch and Colombian officers purported to finance schemes and projects in these four micro-regions. The basic objective was elevating the capacity of those peasants of continuing to manage their own life projects through a series of precise operations in which those "clients" were included in the research, planning, execution and evaluation phases of the whole process (Universidad Nacional 1991). In San José de Apartadó, at least, all evaluations would later agree that it was in this particular micro-region where this outcome of promoting communal organizational practices was more successful (Corpourabá 1987, Universidad de Antioquia 1990, Universidad Nacional 1991). Not only do these evaluations report that they had better organizational practices, a better use of resources and a more sophisticated political formation when compared to the other micro-regions; but also, as these ex-officers told me, they were settled in areas where the guerrilla commanders had some sense of 'political orientation' and did not oppose the project as they straightforwardly did in some of the other three micro-regions (Personal Communication, 2008). But in others they (armed soldiers, guerrilla commanders, etc.) didn´t allow it:

> "In this town, here in the Bajira river, there is a little hill, we used to like that hill and we ordered it to be re-cultivated (…) but one day the army came and they said that it was useless, they cut all the trees, set their campsite and in this particular day, I don´t know if it was a sergeant, a captain, he came down with his camouflage sleeves here, a large hunting knife there, a gun here while staring at passersby like saying that here I am (…) the day before they had taken some

> peasants hand-cuffed with barb-wire because they say they were pacifying the region, there was no right to do such performances of strength, and there we made a mistake in the political terrain" (Personal Communication, July 2008)

The first types of operations in San José were geared to improve the soils for agriculture and to enhance and diversify the productivity of their crops. As the ex-officers explained and as some evaluations also reported, in the mid-1980s there were some coffee crops that were ultimately unproductive for the quality of the soils and for their low levels of return to the peasants (Corpouraba 1987). As I already explained, these colonizing peasants were coming from coffee regions south of Urabá, and when they arrived in the region, they immediately reproduced their own traditional agricultural practice of growing coffee. As the ex-officer described:

> "The population of San José comes from those processes of violence in Colombia and when they arrived they find a space familiar to them, this is, the mountain system, they came from the northwest regions and they had to search and reproduce models that they knew and managed [coffee production], they were not used to entering and managing these zones of imperfect drainage. "(Personal Communication, July 2008)

When the technicians arrived, he insisted, he ordered the cutting down of all coffee crops; these were suited neither for the soils nor for the climate. By analyzing the need that the banana industry had for starch to produce their own cardboard boxes, they [the technicians] decided to install a rallandería de yuca (manioc industry) in which peasants could bring their own crop, process it and sell the final product directly to the

much needed banana industry. Interestingly enough, Bartolomé Cataño is listed as one of the associates of this small starch industry (Corpourabá 1985b). By that time, as he also remembered, most of the maize and banana crops were attacked by the *vendeaguja* gramineae (Imperata contracta) which cut across the roots and damage the whole plant. Thus, these technicians brought an organic solution which consisted in growing in the same fields the *vitabosa* legume (Mucuna deeringianum) that not only eliminated the gramineae but also improved the quality of the soil. Thus, a 'biological war' was in place when the latter legume introduced by the project suffocated the mischievous gramineae while it organically fertilized the poor soils. Even today local peasants still use this gramineae and were in fact surprised that I, a city-slicker with no knowledge about rural life, actually knew about its uses and quality. The idea of the project was to select a focus group of peasants who would be experimenting with this type of new and simple measures, no chemicals, as the ex-officers highlighted. This experimentation was carried out on specific crops under the guidance of the promotores rurales agropecuarios (rural farms promoters). These were previously chosen by the project. For our purposes, it is interesting to notice what the conditions were that these promoters should meet: farms no larger than 20ha, a positive attitude towards change and ready to make reforms in his or her own crops, well accepted by the community, having a positive attitude towards the

associative work, minimum schooling levels, living permanently in the region, returning their knowledge to the community and finally, having a clear leadership skill (Corpourabá 1984). He or she was unpaid (Ibid: 55).

With these kinds of measures, which necessarily also include subjectification processes in charge of producing the same subjects with whom the project could work, for instance, the total production of maize per year was raised from 800 to 2000 kg/ha while the levels of rice production increased from 1500 to 4000 kg/ha (Corpourabá 1987: 52). But as the ex-officer told me, raising crop productivity was not enough; the peasants still depended on a whole series of intermediaries who kept large portions of their profit. So they came up with an idea of strengthening a self-managed comercializadora (commercial house) with the purpose of controlling most of the different phases of the cultivation ranging from the cultivation processes, the exchange of seed and the whole postcosecha (post-crop) phase which included the central recollection of the product, price setting, seed exchange, new credits and direct negotiations with possible buyers. Since 1967, a commercial house owned by the peasants in San José de Apartadó coordinated by government and guild organizations, the Caja Agraria (Agrarian Credit House) and Fedecacao (Cacao Federation) had existed (Universidad Nacional, 1991,

Corpourabá 1987). Its main functions at that time were to commercialize the product through its centralization in a single storage house, giving credits to peasants who were willing to experiment with new techniques on his/her terrain and the transformation of cacao and maize products through the arrival of new machinery (Ibid.). In a few years, the cooperative broke and we can only glimpse from the project evaluations and some articles in the local newspaper the reasons for its downfall: bad administration, falling prices, growing debts and the fact that they were selling consumption goods through credit lines (Corpourabá 1987: 112)[7]. Precisely these residues were the ones that the Dutch project re-organized in 1985 by creating the self-managed commercial house, Balsamar, a central actor in this story, who would soon specialize in cacao production and commercialization. After years when the cacao prices had fallen, ruining the cacao industry in San José de Apartadó, the product now offered stable prices and at least two harvests during the year. The personería juridica (legal status) that defined its legal commercial vocation, was also taken from an old and abandoned cacao cooperative in the department of Santander. Balsamar's growth and success would be evident in just a few years: from 25 initial associates, the cooperative grew to 110 in 1987 (Ibid. 160).

Balsamar, the "new" cooperative model and the beginnings of the dirty war

All the evaluations made in the years after the PAAI and PEC had already started conclude that the most successful cooperative when compared to the other ones that these projects strengthened and organized was precisely Balsamar. In 1987, one evaluation argues, Balsamar controls the buying and selling of cacao in the San José area, has a favorable contract with the larger company Luker in Medellín, has no debts with the previously mentioned CORFAS, the associative organization is "much better" than in the other cases and the accounting administration reports made for the previous two years report some profits (Corpouraba 1987: 27, my quotes). We can hint at what exactly this "much better" organization meant by describing what another evaluation from 1991 found in San José (Universidad Nacional 1991). For our purposes, this information is indeed crucial for understanding how these vectors were definite not only for the later emergence of the CPSJA in 1997, but for its own ultimate organizational practices. Thus, it argued that the maximum authority in the cooperative was the general assembly constituted by all associates. It also described the existence of an administrative council made up of 10 associates elected by the assembly according to their success. This council would meet every fifteen days and could have extraordinary meetings according to the

situation. Also, it reported the existence of a *Junta de Vigilancia* (Board of Vigilance) constituted by a manager, secretary, treasurer and accountant. Working committees were also described as being in charge of promoting agricultural education and access to credits. Interesting for our purposes, it also described how the production and cultivation of the farms was planned in convites (communal meetings) where peasants met, planned and distributed the time and the labor force needed to work in each farm of the associates. An ex-officer described the successful commercialization scheme:

> "One detail that impressed me enormously was to confirm that people started to take their own initiative, and the knowledge they had acquired was reproduced with their neighbors… the Project had a multiplying effect. Let's say that if we had through the commercialization Project a theoretical universe of direct users, thanks to the effect of the commercialization the universe amplified because many people came from other hamlets, me and these agriculturalists had relations of solidarity with their people, with those who are here and there (…) and they started to create small associatives of producers around here and an important vision started to be created, it was very important…. So we said if that we are generating basic goods, we should start to think about how we should organize and move ahead and take control of the whole productive process, so with the close technical assistance of the same peasants, we advanced a project for increasing the land fertility of the lowlands" (Personal Communication, November 2008)

Balsamar's capital consisted of a 34ha farm dedicated to crop experimentation and demonstration of cacao, fruits, small fishery and cattle-raising for double purposes. These lands bought by the Dutch project were precisely the ones that would receive the name of "La Holandita" and where the CPSJA is established today (see discussion

below). Succinctly, “La Holandita”, the node where all vectors converge. Today, next to the collective storage house of the CPSJA, the small fishery water tanks are still sporadically used. It also reported the existence of four storage houses. Inside the largest storage house constructed right in the middle of San José de Apartadó, the evaluation reports the existence of large machinery for processing the cacao production. Even more, another evaluation concludes that in fact the cooperative has been able to (slowly) increase its capital. With no reported debts, the report continues, it has been able to start new projects such as access to basic goods and most importantly, strengthen its cooperative cacao industry. Precisely this was the vision that another ex-officer working in those moments with the Project Counseling Services (PCS) in Urabá shared with me (Personal Communication, February 2008). The PCS, an international consortium of European and Canadian co-operation agencies created in 1979 in charge of implementing activities and programs in Latin American countries in situations of armed conflict and post conflict[8], was working in this region when the dirty-war started in the mid 1990s in Urabá (see discussion below). According to this ex-officer, PCS was at that time interested in coordinating a project for the recuperation of the cacao production through horizontal organizational models right when the massive displacement of peasants started (Ibid). In our interview, she remembered the peasants of San Jose de Apartadó as “rich”

and skillful with clear leaderships and capacity to negotiate with their commercial partners. However, not very good at speaking in public, she insisted. But a couple of years later these shy peasants would certainly adjust and perfect them, she affirmed (Chapter 5). Now working in the Swiss Interchurch aid (HEKS), founded in 1946 to support war victims in Europe and to help rebuild church structures and strengthen their diaconical work[9], she continues to be a key associate of the CPSJA.

I visited almost twenty years later this same building where the cacao cooperative once worked. The machines were still there but were now victims of oxidation processes and dust accumulation. The cooperative was empty and had been abandoned in recent years (see discussion below); only the dust, vicious roots that would break the floor, old letters and financial reports, large spiderwebs, time and the abandoned machinery seemed to give testimony of those "successful" years. I imagined the title of museum: "Museum of Oblivion". But twenty years ago, as all of these evaluations agree, right here, in the middle of all the dust, a most successful cooperative owned and managed by the same peasants flourished with good directives, a skillful staff, diversified activities and a "reasonable" level of self-management and local appropriation (Corpourabá 1987, Universidad de Antioquia 1990, Universidad Nacional 1991). But in just a few years after

these diagnoses were made around 1991, Balsamar and the storage houses would transform not only into the refuge for hundreds of displaced persons that arrived to San José de Apartadó escaping from the armed conflict, but it would also be targeted by the armed actors with specific and crude intentions. As I already described, one of Balsamar's managers was hanged from the banana hooks right in the middle of the central plaza. His body was displayed for several days so that all locals could see it. The message was clear: 'terror' had arrived and every organization that existed within the guerrilla ratio was suspicious and needed to be exterminated by paramilitaries. But the residues of those years remained as a Colombian ex-functionary of the Dutch project described:

> "There was a strong and committed leadership with the peasants that had even much more political instruction [formación poltica] than us. We were concentrating on that, on making the peasants become leaders and entrepreneurs of their own businesses, and still, many people were left with a strong experience and capacity (…) from that process many things survived, we had peasant councils, mayors, deputies, here in San José de Apartadó, and that contributed enormously to the fact that people saw that it was possible to express themselves, that they had a space for expressing their ideas, a space for taking decisions that even though their resources were scarce, everything was decided upon, including the production and commercialization, that process moved many people" (Personal Communication, July 2009).

In March 2005, when the CPSJA moved again to "San Josesito" 500 meters from San José de Apartadó (see next chapter), they pasted on the front door of the cooperative photocopies of Principle 21 from the Guiding Principles of Internally Displaced Persons.

It claimed that the “Property and possessions left behind by internally displaced persons should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use”. Indeed, these residues left abandoned in the middle of the central plaza of San José de Apartadó filled most of the conversations with the Colombian and Dutch officers and current members of the CPSJA with a clearly nostalgic tone. That ‘museum of oblivion’ precisely symbolized for several of the former group a “lost opportunity” even for the whole country in terms of offering the most adequate responses to the underlying problems of poverty, unemployment and the lack of opportunities for these peasants. Certainly, some project evaluations would problematize this same vision by explaining that the project tended to homogenize the peasant population, that it circumscribed the peasant economy within its traditional and localist notions and that the project was ultimately hierarchical in that it still depended on credits given by the agencies for its success (Corpourabá 1987, Universidad de Antioquia 1990, Universidad Nacional 1991). “But what can you do if they have nothing?” said one ex-officer about the first claim; “yes, perhaps they are right when they accuse me of being obsessed with the peasantization of rural life” argued another to the second claim (Personal Communication, 2008). Almost every time we were finishing our conversations, they lamented on how the vertical notions of power imposed by the different armed actors

even within the leftist agenda threatened by the PEC-PAAI project ultimately could not stand the idea that the peasant takes control of “his” or “her” own destiny. They just couldn’t tolerate it and that is why they were so thoroughly persecuted and dismantled. In the mid-1990s, the Dutch abandoned the project and left those skeletons of the old cooperative in San José.

Peace, Human rights and the Humanitarian agenda: the arrival of new and different responses

From the early nineties, international and national offices meant for dealing with human rights and humanitarian violations were set up in Urabá. As Chapter 2 has explained, this “appearance” is no coincidence but is coherent with the arrival of the human rights and humanitarian agenda to Colombia. The new constitution and a government that was seeking to hide its internal scandals through the promotion and incorporation of human rights and humanitarian treaties, protocols, principles and practices were crucial events for this deployment of discourses and practices. In this context, it is no coincidence that these offices were inaugurated in one of the most violent regions in the country according to the different figures referring to political assassinations, massacres and massive displacements. Soon, international agencies such as the UNHCR, ICRC, Doctors without Borders, OXFAM, PCS and Peace Brigades

International would start operations in the area. Most of the central headquarters would be located in Apartadó or Turbo and would operate both in the Antioquean and Chocoan Urabá. But before moving in this direction, it is necessary to consider previous and definitive events that were happening in the same city of Apartadó around the mid 1990s to counter what seemed to be perceived as the desmadre de la violencia (the outburst of violence) on the whole region. As I argued in chapter 3, these were precisely the years when both the physical annihilation and territorial dispute between the UP and the EPL and their military partners erupted in infamous and calculated massacres; and some years later, when the most offensive and aggressive countersubversive operations took place meant to erase and "rake" all leftist organizations, leaders and associations. And this included leaders of the Patriotic Union persecuted both by paramilitaries and their old comrades, undercover EPL armed branches, but especially, those populations that lived in territories controlled by the corresponding armed branch, the FARC. San José de Apartadó would be aligned in the latter condition. After these campaigns, in just a couple of years, the UP lost popular elections in all districts and the FARC guerrillas were forced to escape to the highlands of the Serranía del Abibe.

Since 1981, as I already explained in Chapter 3, Peace Agreements and Armistices between the government authorities and the guerrilla groups took place in Urabá[10]. Also, some of the development projects designed to solve many of the problems in Urabá that ultimately were perceived as creating the conditions for the escalation of violence in the region were welcomed as Peace initiatives in themselves[11]. In this context, we already talked about the PNR which was designed to counter the possibility of the expansion of the armed actors in the region and to incorporate the floating demobilized guerrilla forces left after those armistices. When the confrontation between the two largest unions and their corresponding political parties and guerrilla forces had already materialized in the first massacres in 1985, the local newspaper reported how the different sectors including the owners of the banana industry, unionized workers and industrialists celebrated meetings in which they collectively rejected the use of violence to solve problems that seemed to lie at the core of many of these conflicts including lack of proper housing, social security, staggering inequalities, etc[12]. It is precisely in this context where banana industrialists created the Fundaciones (Foundations), in charge of developing housing facilities and promoting different recreational, educational and health programs that intended to fulfill many of the workers demands[13].

These were the years that experienced the first cycle of the territorial confrontation between the two largest unions and also an open confrontation between the unions and the industrialists expressed in massive land invasions, leader assassinations and calculated massacres. But also, remembering Romero's (2006) argument on the coincidence between the "geographies of violence" and the "geographies of peace", of a series of peace initiatives coming from different rationalities ranging from those heralded by industrialists, functionaries and unions, to those endorsed by the church and other initiatives promoted by grass-roots organizations. As I already explained reviewing the installation of Juntas Militares (Military Boards) and military mayors in the urban settlements in the region in 1988, these were some of the common responses initiated by the government and also desired by certain sectors in the area in order to reclaim "sovereignty" and bring peace to the region[14]. In 1993, the XVII military brigade was installed together with a police unit for Urabá. The same article reporting the ceremony where the Military Boards finished their operations in the region, narrates how the different sectors and political parties expressed that its existence during those years actually helped to pacify the region (Ibid.).

By the early nineties, allegations of human rights violations in Apartadó escalated and soon the government installed a Commission for the Defense of Human Rights15. Interestingly enough, as I have showed in Chapter 2, one of the most progressive magistrates in recent years that during those years occupied the first position in the public ministry dealing with human rights, signed the document that installed the Commission in Apartadó (Ibid.). The office would receive denunciations of different human rights violations such as forced disappearance, illegal detentions, mistreatment of those civilians arrested by authorities, genocide committed directly or indirectly by security organisms and all conducts that require penal or administrative investigations in which State functionaries and employees are held responsible (Ibid.). Even more interesting, was the different organizations and sectors that participated in this Commission. As such, it clearly manifests Alvarez's argument on how the "civil society agenda" heralded by the Washington Consensus incorporated civilians as responsible actors for discussing, dealing with and governing these prominent issues. And here, national human rights NGOs with connections with international networks with agencies and strong NGOs were the most common partners. Some of the organizations that were invited to participate in the Commission have already been listed in this dissertation. The Commission was constituted by the public ministry delegated functionary, one lawyer

and representatives from the *Comisión Permanente para los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Commission* for Human Rights), the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (Association of Familiars of Disappeared Detainees), the *Comité de Solidaridad de Presos Políticos* (Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners), the *Comité de Madres y Familiares de Presos Políticos* (Committee of Mothers and Familiars of Political Prisoners), the *Comisión por la Vida* (Commission for Life), *Justicia y Paz* (the Intercongregational Committee of Justice and Peace), the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia* (the Central Union of Workers of Colombia, the ANUC (National Association of Peasants), the *Comisión Andina de Juristas* (Andean Commission of Jurists) and the *Colectivos por la Vida 5 de Junio* y *Jose Alvear Restrepo* (June 5 and Jose Alvear Restrepo Collectives for life) (Ibid.). Meanwhile, the article reports, they mention the advocacy campaign made by one of the most important central actors in this story, Monsignor Isaías Duarte Cancino, bishop of the Apartadó dioceses.

Here, as I already mentioned in Chapter 2, it is important to highlight the role that the Catholic Church and progressive bishops had in the human rights and humanitarian agenda in Latin America (Hopgood 2006, Arias 2003). As I recounted in Chapter 2, it was precisely a publication made by the Episcopal Conference in 1995 that for the first time

in the country registered and named the problem of internally displaced persons. The Vatican II Concilium celebrated in 1962 had set the general orientation of a progressive church dealing with staggering social problems and the defense of the “poor” and the “victim” as a primal priority (Arias 2003, Dussel 1979, 1988, 2000). During the 1960s, the Latin-American Episcopal Counsel (CELAM) in which progressive Chilean and Brazilian bishops had an enormous influence also become sensitive to the discussion and evaluations of the structural inequalities in Latin America. In 1968, the famous CELAM meeting in the city of Medellín reinforced this orientation and started characterizing the unjust distribution of wealth and the general unrest of the population as a response to multiple deficiencies of the sociopolitical hegemonic system, etc. In this context of the meeting in Medellín, the “liberation theology” program consolidated by promoting a role for the church that responded to the local necessities and characteristic of each region (Arias 2003: 212). The assassinated priest Camilo Torres precisely emerged from this trajectory. Indeed, in one of my conversations with Padre Giraldo while walking through the mountains of Apartadó, he remembered how the famous Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Based Ecclesiastical Communities) organized in Brazil during the 1970s by progressive bishops enlisted with the liberation theology programs, became a clear

reference for Monsignor Cancino's vision of the role that the church should have for defending "the poor" and "the victims" in the middle of the armed conflict in Urabá.

Even more, in his tri-annual plan for Apartadó's dioceses for 1991-1993, Monsignor expressed the "general objective of strengthening through a missionary dynamism a type of evangelization that can illuminate and transform Urabá, and consequently, where ecclesiastic communities could emerge in the dioceses and become central actors for reconciliation, justice and peace"[16]. Clearly, in the decades to come, as Arias (2002) shows analyzing the history of the church in Colombia, these vectors coming from a progressive church movement would have a marginal trajectory in Colombia where some of its representatives, including Padre Giraldo, would be persecuted and marginalized by the conservative hegemonic sectors of the church. Other progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, like the case of the already mentioned Jesuit CINEP, turned into key research organizations devoted to making human rights violations visible in the country (Arias 2003). The "company of Jesus" would also widen its range of actions by promoting the mentioned Peace and Development programs in the Barrancabermeja region. Even Monsignor Cancino's positions would become more conservative some years after, explained Padre Giraldo. This notwithstanding,

Monsignor's Cancino role during these years cannot be overlooked. Even more, as most of my interviewees would confirm, it certainly became a central vector for the later emergence of the CPSJA during the mid-1990s. From his altar, the local newspaper reports, he continued to ask for God's presence in Apartadó as a source of peace and hope for a convoluted region; his sermons frequently talked about the much-needed catholic confession of those human rights violators so that they could learn from God respect for the rest[17].

His chosen people were precisely the poor, "because the poor do not produce anything, although they have more dignity and deserve respect, because at the end, the poor peasants are the ones constructing peace"[18]. During those years, as the local newspapers confirm, he also became very active in the whole demobilization process of the EPL guerrilla in which he helped 400 ex-combatants to adapt to civilian life. The local newspaper reports how Monsignor convinced paramilitary leaders to respect the demobilization process and not persecute ex-guerrillas[19]. He would also lead famous massive pilgrimages in Apartadó condemning the massacres and the staggering rates of violence. The local newspaper also reports that the bishop's main programs with the poor and the victims were, among others, the construction of four parishes in Apartadó, the

promotion of small businesses owned by women and the consolidation of groups of women as major steps "for the consolidation and peace and dignifying of human life"[20]. In an unpublished article written by the local reporter after Cancino's assassination on March 16, 2002, the reporter describes Monsignor's words on how the "Diocese should respond to the major problems of men in Urabá. In moments of genocides, insane violence, human rights violations, the Diocese understood that its principal preoccupation was to find solutions to these problems and help find roads to peace"[21]. He also became responsible, together with other sectors including banana industrialists, political party and union leaders, for the signing of the famous Consenso de Urabá (Urabá Consensus), an agreement established among these sectors to stop the increasing rates of violence and constructing a stable peace for the region.

It was precisely during these years that the famous massacre of *La Chinita* (Chapter 3) took place and where leftist and union leaders in mutually antagonistic positions were being killed. An unpublished interview with one of those political leaders who had survived the years of war transcribed by a local reporter, narrates the moment where all political parties, together with union leaders and even industrialists attempted to reach a regional consensus for stopping the escalation of violence during the first half of

the 1990s[22]. Monsignor took a definite role in this process and actually the discussions and negotiations took place in the Diocese. “The situation was tense”, remembered the leader, and the possibility of reaching a consensus between antagonistic parties seemed almost impossible (Ibid). But the patience of Monsignor, argued the leader, prevailed until the end of the sessions where they could finally reach a consensus. Indeed, one of the crucial agreements was to choose someone outside the political parties as the mayor of Apartadó that would consolidate the consensus. And here, according to the interview, Monsignor came with the name of the already mentioned Gloria Cuartas Montoya, an unknown social worker for all participants who had worked with the UN in housing programs. As soon they required her, she took a plane from Medellín to Apartadó and accepted the surprising offer. Indeed, in subsequent years, she would become a central actor not only in Urabá but also in the recent story of human rights and humanitarianism in Colombia. Controversial, poignant and very energetic, as I have certainly seen during all these years through our long and passionate conversations, she would also become a key associate for the CPSJA in the following years until today. Needless to say, she would also become a major vocal antagonist and critical figure of recent governments.

The Consensus, in which she would occupy a prominent role soon showed its fragility and lack of possibility to counter the outburst of violence in the region. “It was precisely in my term”, she deeply regrets, “where the UP was finally exterminated in Urabá, where I could see soldiers and policemen operating together with the paramilitaries and where finally, massive displacements [in San José de Apartadó] spread throughout the region (…) in the end they [the participants of the Consensus] left me alone”. Once, she remembered, she was visiting a primary school recently inaugurated when a group of paramilitaries arrived in the classrooms setting terror along their way. She was frightened and terrorized, especially, when she saw how these men were beheading some students with their machetes. In the middle of the chaos, an 8-year-old girl took her hand and told her that she would help her find her way out the school. Silently and gently, remembered Gloria, the girl took her hand and led her through the school until they found the exit. She just closed her eyes and let the girl lead her tin what seemed to be a silent and almost magical flight. She knew that she could have been killed there. “That little girl saved my life, and I haven’t seen her since”, she insisted. “I can only remember her tenderness and almost auratic presence in the middle of so much blood, she was almost an angel”, she repeated.

In the first two years of the Consensus, the local newspaper reports that 1600 murders were committed[23]. Soon, Gloria's famous accusations in international forums against the banana industrialists of "sowing the fields with the blood of the workers" created ruptures within the consensus. "She was left alone at the end", confirmed the local reporter in our conversation. The mentioned political leader insisted that she used both a messianic language that only portrayed the violence in the region while holding responsible all political parties, banana industrialists, unions and the military and police forces for the outburst of violence (Ibid). In the meantime, she shaped and constructed her own political figure and status, insisted the political leader. In the subsequent years, she would become a major international figure in the human rights agenda with strong connections in all sorts of solidarity, human rights and humanitarian networks. Every time after finishing our long conversations, I often thought about how she has been able to survive in the country after having so many enemies. I have always been perplexed. Indeed, one very convincing reason was given by paramilitary leader confessions that testified how her death was almost ordered during those years: she just had too much international weight and they just couldn't let all those international "eyes" to be set on the region.

During this outburst of violence, as I already described, human rights and humanitarian international and national agencies initiated operations for protecting the massive internally displaced populations that were escaping military confrontations and the larger countersubversive campaigns. A 'mobile sovereignty' (Pandolfi 2003) in which organizations and agencies such as Doctors without Borders, OXFAM, UNHCR, ICRC, among others, could deploy their operations in the name of the "suffering stranger", the internally displaced population, was being put in place. With massive displacements of thousand of peasants escaping combats, both stadiums in Turbo and the Balsamar cooperative building in San José de Apartadó flooded with scared and terrorized peasants coming from the Atrato River in the former case and the Serranía de Abibe in the latter. Justicia y Paz (the Intercongregational Committee of Justice and Peace) and the Jesuit CINEP together with other human rights NGOs were working in the former communities and in other areas of the country. They were promoting the key idea of the defense and protection of the civilian population in the middle of the military confrontations between different actors.

Indeed they were bringing to these areas of massive armed conflict the classic and sanctified distinction between combatants and non-combatants that according to the

Geneva Convention and its subsequent protocols demands that the civilian protection be protected even in armed conflicts that do not have an international scale (*Comisión Colombiana de Juristas y Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* 2007). As I was told during the PBI party in Turbo celebrating the 10 year anniversary of their presence in Urabá, Padre Giraldo petitioned during those years the presence of Peace Brigades International (PBI) to protect and escort Justicia y Paz's lawyers and staff throughout the rivers. As I was told by Justicia y Paz staff working in those years, some of the first PBI volunteers came from the war-experience in Guatemala, and especially, from grassroots schemes devoted to protecting the civilian population in the middle of the armed conflict. The Dutch project finished its operations; the Dutch embassy thought that the conditions were not safe any more and they just had to close their offices. But before that, as Gloria told me, one of the most progressive and committed Dutch officers gave her the property rights of everything that they had in San José de Apartadó: the cooperative, the farm, machines, etc. He told her that these property rights should be given to any type of organization in the future that would organize and follow the PAAI and PEC basic philosophy of empowering local communities by cutting their different dependencies. Soon, the story of the CPSJA was about to begin. Another officer told me,

> "[The last Dutch officer] already died, but he was excited very much with the whole process, he was a left-wing leader from his country, and in his personal life he reflected that, very peasant-like, he liked peasants (…) and when they were terminating the Project, he made sure that all the properties including machinery, farms and goods were handed to the local organizations". (Personal Communication, November 2008)

Some final remarks

In the previous chapters, I have described the history of the different vectors that arrived in Colombia and in the region of Apartadó in order to convert it into a disputed territory by a wide range of actors with material and devastating consequences for the different armed actors and the "civilian population". Chapter 3 was devoted to describing the history of these disputes which confronted pirates, indigenous populations, different empires, capital entrepreneurs and the peasant colonizing population that arrived in the region in search of the promises of the still unexplored "best corner of America". Since the 1980s different cycles of violence have confronted unions, political parties and the different armed groups through specific logics of terror and territorial dispute. Certainly, the "civilian population" living under the shadows of these conflicts had the worst hold. But as this chapter has described, the same decades also saw the emergence of a wide range of initiatives that purported to bring peace during the "times of war". From development projects meant to incorporate the region into the national development plans to others more focused on the empowerment of the colonizing peasant and his/her local

economy through horizontal kinds of practices, to others heralded by the Catholic church authorities in the region, it is clear, even obvious, as (Romero 2003) argues, that this particular region as well as others which experienced increasing levels of violence, during the 1990s were also the ones which saw the emergence of a wide range of peace initiatives to counter what seemed to be the "outburst of violence'. In the mid 1990s, almost in every region that had this same characteristic, these areas became targets of major human rights and humanitarian operations by national and international agencies, NGOs and very importantly, grassroots initiatives.

This chapter has been devoted to following those vectors that purported explicitly to target the colonizing peasant population settled in San José de Apartadó. As I have described, one of the dominant features of these vectors which became definite for the ultimate way in which these areas were territorialized was the influence of 'leftist ideologies' embedded in national functionaries who had close ties with the popular education programs of Fals Borda, by Dutch functionaries coming from the experience of union struggles in Europe, by a liberal tradition of peasants fighting for their freedom and autonomy during the famous colonizing cycles in Colombia, by the influence of the ANUC and other parties intellectually aligned with the "suffering stranger" and victim of

the structural national development agenda, and what seemed to be at that moment more comprehensive and intellectually sophisticated guerilla commanders who allowed all these vectors to emerge. But very soon, these last would show the classical leftist authoritarianism by murdering the first leaders of the CPSJA when they declared their autonomy from all armed actors. I have neither romanticized these projects and visions nor portrayed them without frictions and ultimate dangers; I have concentrated on following how they were ultimately played out and what their 'side effects' were. Indeed, the complex nature of these vectors that made these populations and their leadership take the decisions it took, and become organized in the way it did, were also shared with other ex-functionaries who had the same impression in the other areas where the PAAI-PEC operated, like in the case of Belén de Bajirá. Indeed, a political, economic and cultural orientation and practice that cannot be directly equated with the experience of the left in other urban centers even in Colombia or in other countries. Perhaps the concept introduced by Fals Borda (2007) of a *socialismo raizal* (autochthonous socialism) can better explain this very complex emergence where vectors coming from very different directions converged in the mid-1990s. And now, let's move to the description of this hybrid and complex form.

Chapter 4

[1] Interestingly enough, when interviewing national staff who worked with the Dutch Development project of the 1980s in the region, one of them pointed to the participation of Currie's son, Ronald, in this development project. He refers to him while suggesting that many important people also participated in this project including, Ronal Currie, the previously mentioned Orlando Fals Borda and Gerardo Molina, a visible figure of the Left in Colombia.

[2] Here, it is important to highlight that one of the central components of this National Food and Nutrition Plan, the Programa de Desarrollo Rural Integrado, (Integrated Rural Development Program), DRI, was not implemented in Urabá. When asked by locals about the reasons why Urabá was not chosen by the DRI as a target area, the president of Colombia at that time, Alfonso López Michelsen, answered that the region did not meet the standards of the project which focused instead on the area of small properties. However, he insisted, something similar to the DRI was about to be implemented in Urabá with the help of the Dutch government. He argued that even if the project nominally wasn't the DRI, the same benefits promised by this project for the regions where it did operated could also be expected from the Dutch cooperation in Urabá.

[3] Interestingly enough, the same Law that created Urabá also regulated the rehabilitation and development of the famous banana region in the Magdalena area through credits, better working conditions and the regulation of the fruit prices. As I also described the banana region in Magdalena which had its ration around the town of Ciénaga had also been renowned for the 1928 worker's massacres narrated by García Márquez in his One Hundred Years of Solitude.

[4] It is important to highlight the theoretical framework of this study which corresponds more to a Marxist development approach. It argues that the research methodology had been adopted by the historical-structural approaches of Schumpeter and it also quotes the classic 1970 study of the Latinamerican dependency theory corpus by Osvaldo Sunkel and Pedro Paz, El subdesarrollo Latinoamericano y la teoría del desarrollo.

[5] A best-seller novel narrating the life, different activities and the context of the assassination of this public intellectual has been written by his son, the famous writer and columnist Héctor Abad Fabiolince (2006).

[6] For reviewing the impacts of the 'green revolution' in Colombia and its prevailing effects, see, among others, Taussig 1975.

[7] Some relevant articles in the local newspaper also talk about the rising cacao industry in San José de Apartadó together with its cycles of frequent downfalls, "Intensifican cultivo de cacao en Serranía de Abibe". El Heraldo, Marzo 15-bpril 15, 1982, No 116, "Cacaoteros pierden millones en San José de Apartadó. Heraldo de Urabá, Abril 1983

[8] Taken from the PCS website, http://www.pcslatin.org/english/pcs.htm . Last accessed, February 2, 2009.

[9]Taken from the Relief Web website: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/OCHA-64CUZD?OpenDocument Last accessed, February 2, 2009. Interestingly enough, HEKS first operations were also in Biafra, Nigeria, the same place where MSF had started their own operation (Chapter 2).

[10] "La Amnistía y la Paz", El Heraldo November 15-December 15 de 1981.

[11] "El Plan Urabá, Un Principio de Solución". El Heraldo. March 15-April 15 1993 No. 170.

[12] "Acuerdo de Paz para el Urabá", Heraldo de Urabá December, 1985

[13] "La tarea de Fundiunaban. Bienestar para el recurso más valioso: el trabajador.". Heraldo de Urabá. July 1991. No. 162.

[14] "Jefatura Militar: Misión cumplida en Urabá". "Heraldo de Urabá" Augusto 1990, No. 153.

[15] "Comisión para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos se instaló en Apartadó". Heraldo de Urabá. September 1990, No. 154.

[16] "Para el trienio 1991-1993. Nuevo plan pastoral en la Diócesis de Apartadó". Heraldo de Urabá. August 15-September 1, 1991. No. 163, my translation.

[17] "Necesitamos la presencia De Dios en Urabá". Heraldo de Urabá, March 15 -April 15, 1991, No. 159.

[18] "Obispo Isaías Duarte Cansino: La paz no tiene partido. Huellas de su historia". El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript. My translation.

[19] "El Consenso: En la memoria del olvido. El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript.

[20] "Diócesis de Apartado. Tres años sembrando la semilla de la paz". Heraldo de Urabá. August 15 September 15, 1991. No. 163, my translation

[21] "Obispo Isaías Duarte Cansino: La paz no tiene partido. Huellas de su historia". El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript.

[22] "El Consenso: En la memoria del olvido. El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript.

[23] "El Consenso: En la memoria del olvido. El Heraldo de Urabá. Unpublished Manuscript.

Assembling the CPSJA

After walking for more than two hours from the city of Apartadó in northwestern Colombia, an enclave of industrial banana exportation, together with more than two hundred national and international staff of humanitarian and human rights organizations, members of victims' movements in Colombia, members of indigenous and afro descendant organizations and the CPSJA, and casual backpackers that joined the event at the last minute, the leaders of this pilgrimage decided that the long march needed to take a break under the shadow of a mango tree. The long walk, a "pilgrimage" as it was announced by the CPSJA website for more than six months, was meant to celebrate the ten years of existence of this innovative assemblage that laid at the crux the "sacred" distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and emerged in response to the escalation of violence in the mid 1990s in this region of the country (Chapter 4). Throughout the long 10 km walk between Apartadó and San José(sito), padre Giraldo and about two hundred *acompañantes* stopped at specific sites where massacres, detainments

and assassinations had occurred during the last ten years. In each of these sites, he stamped a cross in a tree, fence, or any other object that could serve to hold the cross straight while some peasants hammered it or tied it firmly with some string. Each time, he read a passage from the Bible and remembered the name of those that had been killed in that exact place. Interestingly enough, as I had already described, the Book of Isaiah was one of the most read throughout the pilgrimage. Most of the peasants prayed silently and followed the scriptures; others looked at the sky or just silently chatted between them.

At the same time, my reading of the book of Isaiah (Chapter 25, v17-25-9) in the CPSJA pilgrimage was not coincidental. I cited it extensively for its precise reference to 'the coming community' arriving after the suffering and persecution of the Jewish people (Agamben 1996, Grossberg 2004):

> "For behold I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former things shall not be in remembrance, and they shall not come upon the heart. But you shall be glad and rejoice for ever in these things, which I create: for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, end the people thereof joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem [after several days after my reading at the pilgrimage, I noticed that this reference was changed to "I will rejoice in the CPSJA"], and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall no more be an infant of days there, nor an old man that shall not fill up his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit

> them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruits of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of my people, and the works of their hands shall be of long continuance. My elect shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth in trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their posterity with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will hear; as they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion and the ox shall eat straw; and dust shall be the serpent's food: they shall not hurt nor kill in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

We stopped ten or fifteen times through the road indicating with crosses the "route of death". We also stopped at the famous paramilitary roadblocks where some members of the CPSJA narrated what normally happened there: detainments, name screening and very often, disappearances. Indeed, this scene was precisely the one that the woman mentioned before feared when she found out that her son didn't arrive to her relative's house in Apartadó (Chapter 3). After we sat in the gentle and refreshing shadow, some women from the organization in charge of all the food preparation brought three heavy bowls for lunch. Inside them, as they explained, were vegetarian and non-vegetarian tamales. By this moment, I was utterly shocked with the whole scene: vegetarian and non-vegetarian tamales, Christian crosses hung through the trees and almost two hundred *acompañantes* ranging from local indigenous communities and others coming from other regions in the country, NGO staff, PBI and FOR "bodyguards", local peasants, among others, in the middle of what just some decades ago was imagined as a 'marginal' and 'frontier' area full of savages and ready to be colonized by capital enterprises ranging

from the banana industry, to the African palm and cacao industry. In general terms, by that time, I hadn't been exposed to the whole aura of 'vegetarian food'; in fact, I only had my full immersion recently while doing my graduate studies in Chapel Hill. Although raised Catholic, I neither was nor am an effervescent or dedicated religious person. But veggie-tamales and Catholic crosses here under a mango tree securing us from the high temperatures? Most of the 'locals' watched curiously how the 'internationals' devour the new curiosity. Some of them sang silently the songs that hymn of the CPSJA composed by one of its founders that had been assassinated. The peasants preferred the full-blown tamales stuffed with meat wrapped up in plantain leaves and following the normal recipe of the typical peasant gastronomy. But the image of the veggie-tamales and the Catholic crosses hung along the road caught my attention; since that moment, I have been asking what exactly these were doing here, how they came to be possible, and what sorts of connections do these launch with other distant desires, practices and moral conducts.

Throughout the previous chapters, I have been devoted to following some of the vectors that overdetermined the emergence of the CPSJA in 1997. From those vectors coming from the colonizing peasant experience escaping from the Conservative paramilitaries, to the presence of leftist organizations and parties and the arrival of the

“human rights” and “humanitarian” operations and practices in the mid 1990s, among others, I want to argue that all of these converged in San José de Apartadó right in the moment where military combats displaced thousands of peasants across the region. And they converged exactly around the principle of the “civilian and non-combatant population”, indeed, a classic principle of humanitarian law heralded by the Geneva Conventions and subsequent Protocols. During the escalation of violence in the mid 1990s, as one of the accompanies told me, Gloria, by that time mayor of Apartadó as a result of the famous and disastrous Consensus mentioned before, sent trucks and buses to pick up the displaced population that arrived to San José escaping from violence in order to take them to safer areas. She was afraid that they could be again displaced or massacred in San José. But the peasant leaders and some *accompañantes* disagreed and actually scolded her: they wanted to stay in San José even knowing that they could be in danger. They wanted and preferred to stay in San José. Indeed, this decision of putting members of the CPSJA voluntarily at risk has been one of the most common criticisms made by external commentators sitting in national and international agencies, NGOs, grassroots movements and government offices. “That is stupid”, or, “that decision could later run into an announced massacre”, or “they are utterly irresponsible with respect to what could happen” were some of the common observations made. My intention here is

not to support nor criticize this decision nor the observations made. Neither way; I just want to understand the conditions of possibility of this simple decision, the one of remaining in San José, and explore it in a rigorous way. This radical act of remaining in San José while the threats continued, does become an exception when compared to the other millions of IDPs that escaped just to fill the marginalized areas of the larger cities or fill coliseums while waiting for the government aid consigned in Law 387 of 1997. Needless to say, the consequences for interrupting and refusing the larger framework of State responsibility discussed in previous chapters and abandoning the same circuits and red tape of humanitarian and human rights bureaucratic practices should be seriously considered.

Inspired by the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and their subsequent reiterations of what today can be considered a recognizable intellectual tradition (Butler, Laclau and Zizek 2000, Laclau 1996, 2006, Mouffe 1993) I understand here 'the political' as "a primary structuring role because social relations are ultimately contingent, and any prevailing articulation results from an antagonistic confrontation whose outcome is not decided beforehand" (Laclau 2006: 664). Hence, what one considers a 'unity' between agents is not the expression of a common underlying essence but the result of

political construction and struggle operating at different levels (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 65). In this sense, the “collectives” are not just there, they are the result of particular and contingent articulations that are never complete or completely stable, but are always co-dependent on the chain of equivalences they can assemble and sustain across different subject positions in a particular concrete situation. For the purposes of the CPSJA assemblage, the “enemy” is well understood: those in power who want to define how they should live in these dire circumstances of living within the armed conflict. The CPSJA decisions are interrupting or perhaps insurrecting the power to code and axiomatize those centralized apparatuses of capture. And even more, as I show in this chapter, following Zibechi (2006: 34): this insurrection becomes a moment of rupture where subjects deploy their capacities and their powers as the capacity to act; and by deploying them, they show [or intensify] what in normal circumstances or situations of less collective action would not surface. Thus, next to this ‘politics of refusal’ comes a plethora of economic, social and political practices through which the CPSJA is projecting not only the desire of being left alone, but also, constructing an alternative vision and project different from the one of Law 387 of 1997 aimed at protecting the “suffering stranger” from various threats.

In this chapter, I dwell on the complex and multiscalar nature of this assemblage which took that decision of remaining in San José and continue to take similar decisions today ten years after. This self-reliance and autonomous space can better be exemplified by the several self-managed returns to their abandoned hamlets organized during the last years. Many of these were done while the objective conditions of violence were still there. Clearly, I want to move forward a rebuttal against those arguments that interpreted those decisions as a simple case of coercion or manipulation from mischevious leaders as I have often heard from some desks of some national and international agencies. Indeed, it will be easy to dismiss the argument; on the contrary, I want to show how these same autonomous practices emerging from these margins have far-reaching political, ontological and epistemological consequences that I will ponder through the chapter. Very much, they go straightforwardly to those debates on social movement theory, the sacredness of life and the principal problem-area of this dissertation: the debate over 'what it is to be a human'.

"The defense of the civilian population: 'there was nowhere to go'"

According to different voices both in San Jose(sito) and also in head offices of different NGOs in Bogotá, a major challenge faced by the situation in San José during those years was how a civilian population that wants to remain in the territory be

respected by all armed actors in the middle of a perilous and growing armed conflict. Hundred and thousands of displaced persons throughout the country took the simplest and obvious decision during those years: they fled towards the larger urban settlements just to occupy those street corners with posters asking for help from the cars passing by. Indeed, that was the first vision of these emerging problems in Colombia that I can remember. But during those years, from the city of Apartadó, Monsignor Cancino came up with the idea of establishing a “neutral community”. His idea was that peasants should follow certain rules such as not giving any information or aid to any of the armed actors established in the region. They thought that by following this and other principles they could convince guerrillas, paramilitary, policemen and militaries that they should not be included in “the war of others’. Coincidentally, during the same days Justicia y Paz was staying in Apartadó while they were heading their operations along the Atrato river with other displaced and afro-Colombian communities. Over there, they were promoting similar schemes to defend the civilian population from the armed conflict.

Some commentators of the process that I have interviewed actually argued that the discussions that would become the basis for the emergence of the CPSJA were held in Bogotá. Needless to say, as I have tried to argue through this dissertation, a true and

authentic origin of the CPSJA represents in itself an interrogation and a desire which goes against the complex nature of these assemblages. Perhaps, the best choice that I can have to understand what happened "there" is Guattari's term of the agenciamiento colectivo (collective agenceing) where no single or dominant origin can be predicated from the outcome result: what we have are fragmentary and precarious initiatives that attempt to create existential virtualities [i.e., the defense of the civilian population in Urabá] (Guattari 1992). And very importantly, "through historical processes involving interacting parts and emerging wholes" (Escobar and Osterweil, 2009)[1]. Here, I want to ponder the fact that these interactions or what several commentators have named "networks" emerged precisely from the collective agenceing of different vectors and actors.

I am not only referring to the gathering of full-blown human beings but also of those same conditions of possibility for their emergence, of the reactivation of long-lasting legacies such as that of the 'civilian population' and the 'care of the other', the more recent rationalities behind leftist initiatives of popular education and participatory action, and also, the far-cry of colonizing peasants struggling for land and autonomy in a growing country of land-owners. Thus, these networks or complex assemblies include also the particular "cultural matrixes" of the liberal peasant, catholic, male and patriarchal

world and its rearticulation through a ‘rights language’ in the 1990s that allows the emergence of a new subject: the non-combatant peasant population. As several commentators have argued, these networks encompass both ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ models of organization and self-organization (Escobar 2005b, Escobar and Osterweil 2009, Zibechi 2006). In their encompassing practices, they include the traditional hierarchies of power typical of larger political organizations such as cooptation and vertical decision-making processes. But simultaneously, as the classic study of Clastres (1994) on power in primitive societies argues, they also include ‘horizontal schemes’ that prevent the latter model from prospering. Through different methods, for example, the whole assembly controls their leaders and subjects them to intense ‘work loads’ and ‘constant vigilance’ if they want to maintain their leadership position. On other occasions during the last 12 years, for example, as I will immediately show, the same “general assembly” has decided to cut dependencies with some *acompañantes* that were precisely transforming, in Clastres (Ibid: 90) words, the power vested in them by the whole community into a word of command, a discourse of power.

What all commentators agreed was that on one hand these initiatives were presented by a plethora of actors to those displaced peasants who had found refuge in San

José. But something quite different was to accept and ratify these principles and live according to them. Thus, in other communities these schemes meant to protect the civilian population were geared towards the safe return of the displaced back to their communities as in the case of the Peace Community of San Francisco de Asís. In this case, hundreds of families found refuge for several years in a coliseum in the city of Turbo where there are memorials of their experience living in these improvised IDP camps. They would organize their return by following the same principles of the Peace Community. But in San José there was no return and no place to go. Most of the families had arrived from hamlets located just a few hours from San José. They knew that when they returned the conflict would still be there. Here, what they were proclaiming was a striking mixture of principles heralded by humanitarian law ("neutrality" and the defense of a "civilian population" in the middle of an armed conflict) and the same values heralded by the "peasant leagues" of the 1930s also entrenched by peasant colonizing legions across the country in the decades thereafter: the "dignity" and "autonomy" of a civilian population struggling with different armed actors and all other "forces" that want to dictate their own life course.

Indeed, with a traditional presence of the FARC in San José de Apartadó where some of its soldiers were cousins, sons, daughters and relatives of those peasant families, where the same area had been a stronghold of leftist parties, the challenge was not trouble-free. Certainly, just some months after the declaration of a Peace Community in March 23, 1997, the first massacre perpetrated against the CPSJA came from the FARC guerrillas. The message was clear: they [the FARC] were in control and were not going to tolerate "autonomous" peasants living in their territories. And even more clearly, the violence, assassinations and threats would not stop in the years to follow. The mentioned CINEP Jesuit organization that hosted the database of victims in Colombia organized after the Nunca más initiative, documented the numbers of aggressions against the CPSJA between 1996 and 2005 (CINEP 2005). This figures show the price the CPSJA has taken for defending those principles. It is noteworthy that the categories of aggressions presented in their report are the same ones used by humanitarian law and they include extrajudicial execution (123), intentional homicide for a protected individual (20), political persecution assassination (5), death by illicit means and methods (2), forced disappearance (14), arbitrary detention (91), wounded (18), tortured (55), threats (92), collective forced displacement (17), other aggression (48) and indiscriminate bombardment/attack on civilian properties (20). In total, 505 aggressions; indeed, a

terrifying figure that captures the scope and the scale of the non-guaranteed effectiveness of these schemes. As padre Giraldo reminded internationals the same night when the threats of a new paramilitary group disseminated through the Urabá region as referred to in Chapter 3, this is what it means to be living under the pressures of an armed conflict and the ultimate "courage" of advancing with these principles.

Nonetheless, for other external observers these figures would only show the "stubbornness", "instrumentalization" and "uselessness" of the whole CPSJA. Several days after the pilgrimage described at the beginning of this chapter occurred, all participants gathered in the same place where ten years before the declaration of the Peace Community was signed by almost 500 families. Right in the open yard of the school in San José de Apartadó, some of the new generation of leaders explained to national and international escorts, that they were in the end defending their right to decide over their own future. Paraphrasing Le Grand's (1988: 95) description of the leitmotiv of the colonizing peasant struggles in the 1920s, they just wanted to be left alone to work their land independently. In this sense, there was and still is coherence between the peasant life projects and the ones heralded by the principle of a non-combatant community. "To be left alone", in the end, they repeated in the courtyard in the school ten

years after, that is the simple principle that has been and still is their main objective in the CPSJA. And if they were exposed to "real threats", remembering the audience, they preferred to die than go to the cities to suffer hunger and misery after the promises of those mattresses and kitchen kits given by the government agencies to registered IDPs (Law 387 of 1997). One leader describes the CPSJA emergence:

> "The first idea of a "neutral community" was brought by the bishop of Apartadó later shot in Cali. When he saw how peasants were living in a violent corridor where all of the armed actors had their stronghold pressuring the civilian population, he thought that it would be good idea to constitute a neutral community in order to defend and assert the rights of a civil population living in the middle of the armed conflict. The idea was quickly accepted by peasants of the area and from there the idea of a peace community emerged. At the beginning the term used was of a neutral community after lawyers recommended that the idea was inspired by the international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions. There are several mentions of neutral zones that can be understood as a space with no armed confrontations, because the population is not armed and none of the armed groups can move through the area because there are some wounded and vulnerable women and children. Based on these definitions a small statute was made that later turned into the first declaration of a peace community on March 23, 1997." (Personal Communication, June 2007).

Thanks to these series of confluences and proposals of a "neutral community" to defend the right of the civilian population to withdraw from the "war of the others", the *acompañamiento* of institutions and NGOs such as the ICRC, Peace Brigades International and some religious groups, that 400 families finally gathered in the school in San José de Apartadó. They signed a declaration which set specific rules of conduct and behavior for all those who voluntarily wanted to be part of this innovative

assemblage. The declaration emerged precisely from these discussions that took place between the peasants and these other actors. Interestingly enough, as I describe below, they prescribed not only the classic separation of combatants and non-combatants, but also the type of economic, political and social organization under which they would be living while being part of the CPSJA. Importantly, some of its features included some of the same proposals brought forward before by the Dutch project to "cut" the different dependencies of these peasants including: the continuation of the cacao cooperative, the strengthening of cacao commercialization and other products, a general assembly composed of all members who would become the driving actor for taking any decision, a close directive board whose members would be elected throughout the years, and general schemes to work collectively for the profit of the whole community, etc.

I don't want to argue that these same vectors were not there before as if they had just appeared when the Dutch arrived; as several commentators working with these 'peasant economies' worldwide have noticed, some of these indeed are central and characteristic of their coping strategies (Gudeman and Rivera 1990, Scott 1985, Edelman 2005). And according to all interviewees already discussed, the peasants in San José de Apartadó even before the creation of the CPSJA were already mobilizing some of these

practices of a typical ‘community economy’ (Gibson-Graham 2006) including the already mentioned *convites* (working assemblies) and *manos cambiadas* (shared labor). To paraphrase Scott’s classic (1985) work, these were precisely their ‘weapons of the weak’ to deal with a new territory back in the 1970s and 1980s, and they would continue to become fundamental during the years of war and once they became a “Peace Community” in 1997.

A non-combatant peasant community

After describing many of the reasons why they had proposed the declaration, which included the presence of armed actors that indiscriminately target the civilian population, the inadequacy and failure of those military actions to control the territory on a permanent basis without incorporating the peasants in these confrontations, principle 2 stated that they declared themselves to be a “peasant civilian population, non-combatant, and that regardless of the development of hostilities, they will protect themselves without any distinction from the rigors of the armed conflict” (Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó 2008). Principle 3 claims that no member of the CPSJA could be objected to human rights violations or to infringements of international humanitarian rights (Ibid.). Interestingly enough, Principle 4 deals with the fact of what exactly defines the CPSJA: the inhabitants of the urban settlement of San José de Apartadó and its surrounding

hamlets who voluntarily accept to live under these prescriptions: those civilians who are not part of the armed conflict and who abide to live under these principles and persons whose stay in the area can be transitory, but nevertheless, agree to follow the declaration while they stay there. Interestingly enough, and according to these rules and prescriptions, almost anyone can be a member of the CPSJA, whether he was born there or just stayed there temporarily. Black, white, indigenous, national or international, it doesn't matter.

The fact or even more, in Laclau's and Mouffe's (1985) coinage, the 'floating signifier' that would connect different constituencies, was precisely the "sacred" nature of that humanitarian principle fought for by Henri Duránt in Solferino (Chapter 1) in the nineteenth century and defended by subsequent institutions, conventions and even agreements between governments: the separation between combatants and non-combatants during periods of international war or internal strife. What was and still becomes crucial was the fact that the persons staying in the CPSJA, whether temporarily or permanently should live according to these and other principles that I will immediately describe. In that precise sense, my company in the bus from Medellín and Apartadó that came to work with the CPSJA during those years with national NGOs and who stayed

with them during the worst moments, was also a ‘member’ regardless of the fact that he hadn’t been born or raised there. Considering that most of the members of the CPSJA had arrived in San José de Apartadó escaping from the different cycles of violence, it was precisely this particular principle, the distinction between the combatant and non-combatant population, the basic connector and organizing principle that condensed the multiple desires, expectations and life projects both of “locals” but also of acompañantes that would arrive later to the process and also temporary guests. But also, the connector of those white jeeps and t-shirts, the water tanks donated by Doctors without Borders and Oxfam, the same ‘declaration’, the old Dutch cooperative building and the crops that these peasants had and were eager to protect during the armed confrontation.

Principle 4 establishes that participants of the CPSJA should carry neither arms nor explosives nor give logistical help of any sort to any armed group. They also commit to resolve their own internal personal and familiar problems without looking for the external mediation by the armed actors. Very crucially, it also declares that they are pledged to restrain from all forms of injustice or impunity. The message is clear: the CPSJA would not tolerate either injustice or impunity, as has been clear throughout all these years with their frequent requirements to the Colombian justice but also with their

pilgrimages. There would not be an “easy way out” for them to let the past disappear. Not coincidentally, this has been also the raison d'être of many of the vectors that I have traced until now which are connected with the emergence of the CPSJA including most importantly: Marxism, liberation theology and popular education schemes. Indeed, I have argued how precisely these vectors have also talked “stubbornly” and “endlessly” about the “victim” of capitalism, inequality and larger development schemes (Derrida 1994). In Derrida’s (1994) argument, the specters will not just fade away but will continue living in our [their] everyday lives: for him, Marxism and for us liberation theology and the reading of the book of Isaiah on our pilgrimage would interrupt the oblivion of all the massacres together with the erasure of the “victim”. But the radical departure from those schemes was the absence of and the need for the ‘committed intellectuals’ that since Bartolomé de Las Casas have endlessly talked and denounced the atrocities of violence. And although within the CPSJA assemblage lawyers and other international and national *acompañantes* do occupy a central role, the ‘general assembly’ still controls the decision-making processes and the ‘internal council’ is in charge of organizing and defining their ‘representation’.

“It is time to put the dead to sleep, it is time to turn the page and move forwards”, said the head of Acción Social of Urabá in our interview, the central government agency that coordinates the official responses for internally displaced persons in the area, when recriminating the CPSJA for continuing with their pilgrimages in our interview (Personal Communication, 2008). “Yes, it is terrifying to see those children carrying the cardboard coffins; but it is time to move forwards”, he insisted. In this precise sense, Das (2008: 450) rightly argues about the fact that the ‘theories of suffering’ which both encompass Principle 3 of the declaration and the words of this functionary have been displaced from the terrains of religion to the realms of the State institutions. And more profoundly, she insists, we should recognize that behind these shifts lay simultaneously important changes in our ‘theories of time’ (Ibid). Thus, one should affirm that behind the insistence of ‘justice’ against ‘impunity’ and the constant and repeated pilgrimages of the CPSJA, lays also a “theory of time” which precisely opposes the linear time better materialized in those cacao development projects nowadays promoted by the same Acción Social. As most of the peasants of the CPSJA confirm, it is clear that these schemes are not directly linked with the recognition of the ‘victim’ in a structural perspective and the search for responsibilities and punishments. To put it simply, the dead have not vanished from the everyday practices: in their ‘relational’ politics, in fact, most of the CPSJA’s current

mobilization practices but also their daily and ordinary itineraries have to do directly with them. The improvised meeting with women in the community restaurant referred to in Chapter 3 evoked their permanent presence even in very ordinary moments.

Principle 4 also declares that all participants should commit to working on the community days. Indeed, as many participants have told me, during those years they were accompanied by a group of nuns and ICRC staff. They just couldn't wait in San José de Apartadó for the promises of humanitarian aid from the government agencies. In fact, they also told me that very few actually registered as "internally displaced persons" in the government agencies. There was no trust or even knowledge of the whole IDP apparatus deployed by the government initiative during those years. It is interesting to note that for some of the CPSJA participants who are not part of the leadership structure, the 'community days' and the 'working groups' would synthesize what the CPSJA is all about. More than the defense of the civilian population or the other principles, the 'community days' encapsulated the basic logic of the CPSJA. Some of them would signal their first entrance to a working group as their rite de passage into the CPSJA.

> "I am 18 years old and I was born on November 22 of 1988 in Apartadó, Antioquia. I belong to the Peace Community since the process started in 1997, I think. Inside the community is where I grew up, where I became a woman, and when I became an adult I entered into a working group that was cultivating

> *primitivo* [banana] and have been working with my mother and other women and I have worked in that field until recently (…) I think that the whole process of the community has been strong, because we all have fought together, we have joined to move forwards in the community days and in the working groups in order to have a better future for our children" (Personal Communication, July 2007)

Indeed, as the same functionary of Acción Social told me while reviewing the office's actions in Urabá in the last ten years, during those years many peasants were not registered as IDPs nor given the proper humanitarian responses (Personal Communication, 2008). At that time, he said, there was too much inefficiency and lack of accountability. Now, he said, they were [Acción Social today] paying the enormous accumulated "social debt" with many internally displaced persons and communities. They were now registering those persons who were not accepted previously and were now aggressively finding new funds for constructing schools, hospitals, paving roads, funding small cooperatives and implementing other measures. And very importantly, he insisted; now they made them "sign" the certification of having received the humanitarian aid which frequently consisted in those mattresses. But in those days, he insisted, there was nothing. In that context of State negligence, CPSJA members remembered how in the middle of the threats and new assassinations, and the lack of protection from the armed forces, groups of more than 100-200 persons established in San José would go to the field every day accompanied by nuns and international escorts to work in a communal maize field. When they finished, they would be accompanied back to their refuge. They

felt more secure working together, they remembered, and the fact that the nuns were there together with those white t-shirts gave them more confidence. They celebrated how some months later they picked the first maize crop and distributed the profits collectively. But they were also terrified when one group of six men was massacred by the FARC while they were working in the field: there was no safe haven for them. One of them told me,

> "The nuns, yes that was an agreement that we ask the bishop of Apartadó that if we could have an *acompañamiento* from the nuns and the bishop that was very close to the community said yes. So they came and accompanied us, and many other people like you would stay in the community for eight days, a week or so, and when one day the army came and entered the community, then the community decided to confront them and interrogate them about what the army doing was around there, so we asked the nuns if they could accompany us and they willingly said yes. I was in that group and we asked the army what they were doing there, and they told us that they were registering the area. We told them that if they wanted to register the area, they had to do it outside the community terrains and not inside because they would violate the community's principles. And they replied, what principles, what you are is a bunch of guerrillas, and we answered, if you think we are guerrillas come and search us, and if we don't have arms what else are we. After that they calmed down. (Personal Communication, February 2007).

Throughout my visits, I have seen how all individual activities pause for one day and almost all participants, willingly or grudgingly, agree to work in those activities that have been decided upon previously by the "internal council". These may include carrying materials and cement to the new cacao processor under construction, road repair, constructing community buildings like the one I will just describe, digging huge holes of almost 8x8x5 mts for the new sewerage system donated by an Italian commune, the

construction of a communal library donated by a Swiss NGO, the construction of a small child care facility donated by my University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill through some of the working groups in which I participated, among other larger works, which demand the active participation of many working hands. Indeed, this same feature of the peasants in San José even before the CPSJA was established was highlighted by some of the ex-functionaries of the Dutch project I interviewed. For these, the Dutch project just had to strengthen what was already 'there'. Even more, in most of the discussions had with possible donors, mostly European NGOs and other types of organizations, leaders of the CPSJA would very often argue that they have the "labor force" available and that they just need the materials and some basic equipment to carry out these initiatives. Once talking inside the new chocolate processor, I could see from the inside how most of the participants of the CPSJA with whom I have talked throughout the years, carried small or large buckets depending on their age full of river sand to be deposited right next to where I was. For almost an entire morning, some, usually the youngest and fittest but also one of the oldest members of the CPSJA, would carry heavy loads of material from the river to the cooperative on their back without even taking a break. The young children would soon get tired and the adolescents would flirt between the sweat and mud finding some minutes to rest and to talk. "They just don't know how to work!!!" scolded one of the

oldest men of the CPSJA who almost didn't look in any other direction different from his straight path while he was carrying [I thought] an almost impossible amount of sand on his back. And then he continued, "Here is my weapon against the war", he told me smiling, while patting a small bag full of maize seeds he was going to sow in the afternoon. "There is no time to play and to rest, we need to produce our food", he insisted while walking away heading to his own field.

Protection beyond "good governance"

Principle 4 agrees that the CPSJA would take all necessary measures to control the transit and access of persons that are not part of the organization. Indeed, as I have often experienced, in these perilous environments there is an urgent need to know who is walking where and what are their intentions. "To control" becomes more an ideal task than what it really turns out to be. What they have are the typical tactics and strategies better exemplified in Pontecorvo's classic 1966 film Battle of Algiers for commenting and passing information between the different hamlets about strangers walking through the area. Without having the available technologies to communicate in any way between some of the hamlets set in the higher attitudes of the *Serranía del Abibe* with San José, what they use are "human messengers", gossip and very often, while they are walking

through the mountain, almost scripted yells for recognizing who is in the area. The news of any armed group walking through the area would be quickly disseminated through the hamlets. As I already described, it was precisely through these “messengers” that the CPSJA knew about the arrival of a paramilitary group in the whole region of Urabá; also, how we all knew about combats and bombardments in the highlands of the Serranía the same morning I saw the armored helicopters heading to these areas as I left San Jose(sito) when a young peasant arrived after walking all night through the mountains.

One leader that we took with other organizations through the US to have meetings with US senators and other organizations, once told me about an opportunity when some soldiers wanted to go in and search the houses in the hamlet of La Unión that belongs to the CPSJA. He and almost the entire community confronted them at the gate and told them that they in fact could go in, but without arms. The army superior became furious and vociferated against the whole community. But they were not going to let him in, he insisted to me. In the end, the official threatened him and he just reminded the officer that he knew where the CPSJA was settled, that the community was not going to go away. But that if he wanted to go inside, he would have to abide with the community’s principle which forbids the use of weapons inside their territory. And if things get “complicated”,

for example, when combats start or when the armed actors' approach the CPSJA's settlements, the satellite phones of the permanent international escorts settled in the hamlets inform their embassies in Bogotá of the threatening situation. Sometimes, as once an *acompañante* from the Fellowship for Reconciliation (FOR) told me, they have been successful enough to temporarily stop the aggressions. On other occasions, such as when they were recovering the dead bodies of the infamous March 23, 2005 massacre, their strategy has been to organize larger pilgrimages that would (peacefully) confront the armed actors if needed for finding them. In that pilgrimage, they were able to find the bodies. Some weeks after I came back to Bogotá, I heard that a commission was organized by the CPSJA and some escorts to go and review the situation in those areas that were heavily bombarded the day I left. But in the end, as I have hoped to demonstrate by now, "violence" here cannot be channeled, restrained or controlled. Even with those *acompañamientos* during the first months after the declaration was signed, and as has been almost recurrent throughout all these years, the aggressions, massacres, arbitrary detentions and displacements have continued.

It is precisely in this same context of looking for all means for their protection where those white T-shirts, jeeps and satellite phones arrived to the CPSJA to protect

them from the different human rights and humanitarian aggressions. As I already described, padre Giraldo requested the accompaniment of PBI in Urabá for both helping escorting Justicia y Paz staff through the communities along the Atrato River, but also some years later in San José de Apartadó. As I also described, some of the first volunteers had just arrived from other operations in Guatemala where they had been working on somehow similar schemes to protect the threatened civilian populations. Since then, PBI would set its central headquarter base in Turbo where different cycles of volunteers coming mainly from countries of the "North", Spanish speaking or not, would arrive to participate in operations through the rivers but also in the San José area. From volunteers in their 20s to others way above their 50s, most of them had histories of working in other peace, human rights and humanitarian organizations, some had been in college, others not and few had entered graduate studies, while others were just starting their career for the first time. Mostly clearly "white" and a few coming from a clear "Chicano" or Latin origin, which in that sense, could create all sorts of different and unpredictable surprises in their relation with the peasants, they would become an essential node in the complex assemblage of the CPSJA. Some of them, as I described, once their term in Colombia finished would go to work in institutions such as Amnesty International, Washington

Office for Latin America or even help the CPSJA to negotiate their products through channels of fair trade in their home countries.

Their type of *acompañamiento* as I also described follows the classic principle of non-interference in the community's activities. This means basically that they stay inside their "international" house in San Jose(sito) and would leave it just to escort any member of the internal council. Their logic is to escort only leaders as a strategy to protect the most sensitive nodes of the community; as they explained in Turbo in their anniversary meeting, they thought that without having enough staff for having a permanent deployment in these communities, they preferred instead to escort leaders through their travels through the hamlets and to Apartadó. If they stay with the community, they stay for a couple of days but not permanently. They would report to their offices in Bogotá, and with their array of international networks, they can communicate quickly with any international forum about any news. "That is how we protect them", the head of the PBI Colombian operation told me in his headquarters in Washington, "to hold a clear magnifying lense on the region so that all people around the world know exactly what is happening". And very importantly, "to make sure that all local authorities know about their presence". When confronted by a possible military roadblock, he argued, their staff

is trained to first remind the officer encountered that has the highest rank in the operation about the fact that his or her head in the line of command already knows about their presence. Calmly but firmly, they would inform him about what they were doing at that moment, what those white-flags signified and instruct them that as a “neutral humanitarian organization” they are not allowed to transport arms of any armed actor inside the vehicle; hence, they should be allowed to continue with their travel. Most of the times, those white T-shirts are well respected and they can continue with their operations; but in others, they can also be killed; the fact that some MSF staff were assassinated in their operations in the eastern oil province of Barranca is an infamous reminder of their vulnerability, as the head of the MSF-Holland operation informed me. For a moment, I just thought of the small altar in front of the UNHCR headquarter offices in Geneva with the names of staff (e.g. Sergio Viera de Mello) that had been killed (Chapter 1). The white t-shirts, after all, even if they were what these communities most cherished about their accompaniment, as one volunteer once told me reproaching this fact, did not always do their “job”.

Other ex-PBI volunteers are now working in their original countries in NGOs dedicated to denouncing and making visible the current human rights situation with the

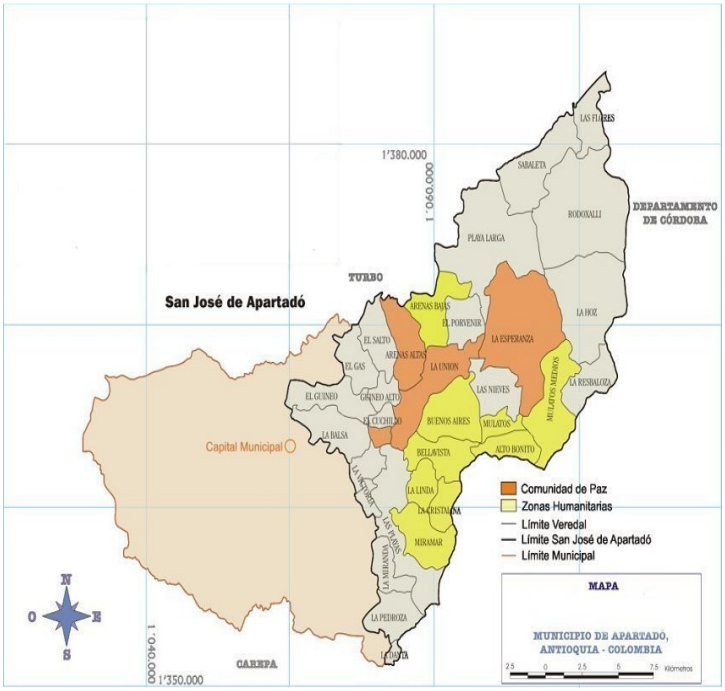
same communities in Colombia and other countries. Some of these coalitions or even NGOs have actually funded events and other activities in the CPSJA. A Spanish coalition actually gave funds to the CPSJA for the construction of what was then thought to be a temporary settlement after the community decided to voluntarily displace themselves again in 2005. Promoting organic and fair trade campaigns, arranging hermanamientos (sister cities) with other European and North American cities, or organizing tours and visits of PCN or PCJA leaders in their own countries, are some of the activities continued by these volunteers in their own countries. Others have turned their experiences in Colombia into research agendas thereafter. A recently published book written by an ex-PIB member originally written for his master's degree on the "genocide" of the Unión Patriótica has caught the attention of the media and has actually created some turmoil between leftist intellectuals in the country (Dudley 2008). Other volunteers would actually create new coalitions responding to their disagreements and frustrations with the methods and rationalities of the previous organizations they used to volunteer with. In similar ways that MSF was founded by ex-ICRC officers who disagreed with the notion of neutrality heralded by the latter humanitarian organization, so too recent organizations like the International Peace Observatory (IPO) was founded in 2005 by ex-PBI volunteers in Colombia. For members of IPO, working in other regions different from the CPSJA

and the PCN, they want to have a more ‘active’ and even ‘radical’ role in denouncing and creating pressure regarding the current situation of some of the communities they are currently accompanying. They thought that there was no space for that kind of vocal activism in PBI. In conversations had with one of these volunteers who had worked in different organizations working with the CPSJA, I was informed of other organizations who recruit volunteers coming from the South in an effort to (he told me) to redress the many hierarchies and exclusions in the humanitarian and human rights family.

Other gruesome memories that these staff remembered in their anniversary were when some leaders were assassinated regardless of the fact that they were being escorted or when armed actors attacked a community settlement once they were absent while escorting one of their leaders. They thought about quitting their operations, they insisted; if not even the armed actors respected their presence, what could be the “surplus” of their presence in the region for these communities, they evaluated. In fact, as I have witnessed, most of the time staff of PBI and also FOR would participate in long and closed collective discussions evaluating their operations, the security conditions in the area, and their cherished “surplus” that they can ultimately bring to the communities and leaders they are working with. Staff deployed in Bogotá would also endeavor to research and talk

to embassies and other organizations, and constantly be sending information through their international networks. In this context of requiring a more permanent protection, CPSJA requested to FOR some years later after their declaration a permanent *acompañamiento* not only to leaders but to the whole community. Their answer was to set up a permanent office in La Unión, one of the hamlets where they had first returned, where their volunteers could stay with their satellite phones informing Bogotá about any news. A much smaller national operation than PBI, with current operations in Medellín and San José de Apartadó escorting human rights leaders and organizations in the first case and the whole community in the latter, they would also be required to accompany leaders through the hamlets and travels to Apartadó on the condition that one of them always stays in La Unión. Locals would always find them curious and would joke about their diet, habits, clothing, long beards, and clumsiness while learning to walk in the first months of arrival through the mountains. But at the end, even if the first epitomized the classic peasant male figure in control of his territory and life, he still had to slow his pace so that his escort, very often, a blond European or North-American young woman less than 25 years old wearing the white t-shirt, reaches him after some minutes while walking at her own pace. After all, they need the company of the white t-shirts even while walking through their mountains.

Principle 5 defines the geographical scope of the CPSJA which includes both the different hamlets in which San José (and later San Jose(sito)) occupies a central role, but also those of La Unión, La Esperanza, Mulatos, Alto Mulatos, La Primavera, Arenas Altas, Arenas Bajas, etc. (see Map 4).



Map 4, the CPSJA area, humanitarian zones and the main hamlets (CPSJA 2008)

In general, the farthest hamlets from San José can be reached in a 10 hour ("peasant") walk and the closer ones can be reached in an hour and a half. The crop areas and water reserve areas that they use are also integrated in the area of the CPSJA. As such, this means that they indeed "control" some of the richest ecosystems of the

Serranía, which not coincidentally, are the farthest from the larger urban settlement of Apartadó. And not coincidentally, they are also fiercely disputed between the armed actors as strategic corridors for arms and drug trafficking.

Interestingly enough, the same principle also defines that the CPSJA would set the necessary conditions and infrastructure for receiving more peasants that could be forced to flee from their areas in the future. Indeed, when I asked the same leader that came to the US back in the small hamlet of La Esperanza that had recently been re-inhabited through a coordinated and self-managed return by the CPSJA, about what could be the future if all those responsible for the massacres are sent to jail and "justice" (i.e., legal justice) would finally prevail, he insisted that their role would continue nonetheless. As long as the objective conditions of violence that could create more IDPs in the future would remain, he insisted, there was still a role for them to play. Even more, as has been constant throughout these eleven years, they have not only set with their scarce resources some basic and rudimentary infrastructure to receive displaced persons, but have also created the possibilities for other peasants to return to their original hamlets. The leader of the return to the hamlet La Esperanza explained to me the logic behind the return:

> "Our strategy was to bring people that had the spirit and courage to come back and try to recuperate this land obviously accompanied by people from the same community, and then we call those people, people with courage, people that can be afraid but are able to control it….so in that moment el *compañero* Giraldo and I were delegated to coordinate these returns. Giraldo to Mulatos and I to La Esperanza. I came approximately one year and half ago. I entered an abandoned house through that area over there , we were like 30 people that came here to a house that was covered with roots and plants, so we first cleaned it and people that saw us from over there that didn't know us because they are not part of this community, so we told them that we are part of the community, that they should not be afraid, that we don't want to steal and appropriate their lands but that our dream is that the owners of those lands can also return to that territory and that was one of the main objectives of the community: that people could return. So I told people that if they knew some owners, that you should tell them to return to work since we are here accompanying and we are going to continue to accompany. (Personal Communication, March 2008)

Many of current members of the CPSJA who were "there" during those days, remembered how the fact of working collectively in the field with the accompaniment of those nuns and the ICRC, gave them more confidence in the whole process that they were just starting. Most of them agreed in the same answer when asked what exactly is a CPSJA or how would you relate your everyday life with it; most of them answered pointing at the fact of trabajar unidos (working united) or trabajar en comunidad (working in community); on other occasions, they would also mention the division between combatants and non-combatants. But for those peasants that could be thought of as being marginal to the central discussions of the CPSJA, they would point at this practice of working together as the basic answer for what the CPSJA meant for them in their everyday lives. During those early days, this confidence grew and they soon

initiated a whole set of economic, political and social projects which included both the recuperation of the old Dutch cacao cooperative but also, starting to organize self-managed returns of some families to their original hamlets. They remembered how working groups would travel escorted in the early morning to the abandoned fields to check what had happened there, what the conditions of their houses and other infrastructure were, etc.

One member of the CPSJA would be in charge of coordinating the work of all working groups. Instead of moving large numbers of people to work in just one field, the small working groups would diversify their activities that could include cultivating different products or repairing paths if needed. In those days, their activities were largely concerned with setting the right conditions for their return initially to the hamlet of “La Unión”. This means first and foremost to recondition the abandoned crops and secure the food provisions for those families that would possibly return to the hamlets as they actually did some years later. But one day every week, they would all stall their activities to work in the ‘community days’. Today, they have between approximately 70-100 working groups with different functions. Although currently geared to different activities and proposals, they still are the backbone of the whole economic strategy of the CPSJA.

A leader from the ‘internal council” explained his role as a coordinator of working groups.

> “Well, at the beginning I didn’t know much, I came to understand that what one can give to the community is a sense of responsibility and the conscience that one has, if they give you a task, you must responsibly commit to accomplishing it (…) In the meantime I am in charge of the cacao working groups and that is my job, I am visiting working groups, the fields and tell them what to do, give them some enthusiasm and help them in whatever I can (…) there are approximately forty working groups but not all are working with cacao… some of them cultivate yuca, maize, beans, not all are dedicated to the cacao cultivation, only a third of them. (Personal Communication, November 2008)

Months before the pilgrimage that accompanied some families on their return to the faraway hamlet of Mulatos after they had been displaced almost ten years ago, two working groups were specifically organized to re-construct some houses and to grow maize and beans and clean the abandoned crops so they could be re-utilized for new products. Marina, a current member of the internal council (the only woman today) and Giraldo, who had become a well-recognized constructer of houses in the CPSJA, were heading these working groups. With a small group of peasants and some international escorts from FOR, we visited them to see how everything was going and to take them new provisions. The participants of the working group would leave their hamlets for a week taking some provisions with them and for several days. Once in Mulatos, they would spend the whole day clearing the area with their tireless machetes just to sit down

under an improvised wooden stove during the night to talk about their daily performance and the next day's activities. Marina took her young son with her because there was no one to look after them while she was working. They hung their hammocks across the walls of the burned house that was covered with the mentioned sexually-oriented graffiti made by guerrillas, soldiers and paramilitaries in which they communicated how they joked about their enemies and what were they going to do with them if they had them under captivity. The working groups were also supposed to 'check' the area which was meant to see if they were movements of armed actors or strangers in the area. The area was inaccessible to any cell-phone range and only the large satellite phones that accompanied the large pilgrimage could actually communicate with the "external world".

In the meantime, they would just use the young peasants as their messengers who could easily take four or five hours descending the mountain to the hamlets of La Unión or San Jose(sito). One night, from one hammock to the next one, Marina remembered but also affirmed nostalgically the fact that they were staying perhaps in the best lands of the whole Urabá region. "You could grow anything here and it will flourish in all directions; you have the best water reserves, no mosquitoes, a gentle breeze and the best fertile lands. But war finished everything; however, we want to return and we [the working

groups] are heading that process", she insisted. She remembered the bombardments and the combats between all armed actors where the peasants suffered the most. As I already described, they had to have a white piece of cloth with them to wave at the helicopters and to try to stop their properties from being destroyed by projectiles. But when the war exploded and they had to abandon their houses, as I already explained, the armed actors didn't even respect the houses, but burned them and imprinted all kinds of "blasphemies" on their walls to inform all enemies that they were there. "They don't even have respect for the houses", she whispered before falling profoundly asleep after having working all day in the fields.

The day after we arrived in Mulatos with the large pilgrimage, padre Giraldo and members of the internal council gathered the whole group around the new constructed house to celebrate a mass. He insisted that the new house and the new crops symbolized the spirit of "courage" and "sacrifice" of the CPSJA that regardless of the new threats and strangers that had been reported in the area and in spite of the lack of any accompaniment from the government agencies, which they didn't expect after all, these families were voluntarily going back home through a self-managed return escorted by those white-shirts of PBI and FOR. They were precisely "reinhabiting the space of devastation again",

remembering Das' (2007a: 217) words, which is to say, that they were engaged, again in her words, in "making the everyday inhabitable again" (Ibid. 218). Indeed, I have always thought about the power that those white t-shirts could have here, but apparently, they were working at that moment. He remembered how Mulatos had been targeted by violence even before the recent cycle of violence started in the mid-1990s while he told of the first reported massacre in the area that occurred in 1977. During those days, a group of soldiers coming from the military base in Chigorodó captured a young group of peasants for several days. In the end, he continued, they killed them after accusing them of being "supposedly" members of the small "guerrilla" groups that were at that time emerging in the area.

The whole mass was being celebrated at the front door of the house constructed by Gerardo and his fellow workers. He explained that they couldn't construct more houses, because they lacked financial support. But the two houses already constructed were already a sign for them that they were returning to the abandoned places through their own projects, which in this context included returning to the "dignified" houses that they expected. At that moment, I just remembered the several dozen pre-fabricated houses donated as part of the humanitarian kit by Acción Social for the newly registered

IDPs along the road from Apartadó to San José(sito). They were indeed much smaller than the two that the CPSJA was constructing for their own return. And in such inclement weather with a pervasive humidity and strong rains, I wondered if those donated house could withstand some years. Hopefully yes, I thought, but I still have my doubts. But right at the end of the ceremony in Mulatos, I just saw the two wooden houses which were constructed following the classic "peasant" way and designs: a rectangular form with a covered lateral front patio where they hung their hammocks and ate, two large rooms at the opposite sides of the house, and at the center, the classic wooden stove which became the heart of the house. It was "theirs", they had constructed them, brought materials from far away and organized different activities through the two working groups for several months to have food for those families that were going to stay there.

During the same pilgrimage, on certain occasions, peasants who were not part of the CPSJA formally and who had also abandoned their houses and crops approached the larger group. They wanted to know more about the whole process and also, to warn them of the "strangers" that had been reported in the area. Several days after the pilgrimage returned to San Jose(sito) one of these peasants told me that he was convinced enough to return with his family to his abandoned farm. He was willing to live under CPSJA rules

and to be part of the whole project. His main worries rested on the fact of how were they going to re-inaugurate the schools and with what school teachers (willing to go to Mulatos) and who was going to pay for them. He didn't want his children to interrupt their schooling. He explained his decision to me:

> "If one enters the region on one's own and starts to work in two or three months one can grow maize and beans and other products. One has one's own animals and a house. But after three months many military operations would be taking place in the area and then one has to runaway again leaving everything behind. Meanwhile, if one returns with the community [CPSJA] one hopes that by the fact of the CPSJA being there they can support us because if anything occurs we have much more information and perhaps the military would not have any other options but to respect the peasants. So I am heading there [to Mulatos] with enthusiasm trying to give some morale to the peasants that are from there, so that we all work together to grow food for the well-being of our children and animals, to struggle because those lands are the better lands but no one has worked them because of security reasons. One has to be alert with the armed forces that enter this territory. But I think that with the CPSJA we have much more hope that we can stay longer, more calmly and be able to work. What we need is some respect as peasants that are working in the zone because we enter to cultivate maize. And that is very important because the peasant is the one who grows the product so that the town is able to eat. If we don't grow food, what on earth would people in the cities eat? (…) Many people had heard about the CPSJA but didn't know it before came and saw with their own eyes, and now they are saying that they want to return, that they feel confident, they understand that perhaps there can be more respect for people and they can come to work" (Personal Communication, March 2008)

In my next visit some months after I had this dialogue, I heard that the same community was going to send some school teachers from their own "alternative education program" to Mulatos and which were going to be financed by some of the NGOs that had been on the pilgrimage. These were participants of the CPSJA who had finished high school and were now working in the self-managed school of San Jose(sito)

“Anibal Jimenez”, named after one of the most charismatic leaders who had written the hymn of the CPSJA, organized much of the “alternative education program” and was shot in the April 4, 1999 massacre that occurred in the same settlement of San José de Apartadó (CINEP 2005). Most of them would study in Apartadó on Saturdays through a program where they could take certain academic years in just two or three years, and return to the CPSJA area during the night. Since 2002, as I will soon describe, the community has not accepted teachers imposed by the government but focuses instead on the instruction of its own teachers and setting its own curricula. The teacher sent to Mulatos was precisely the same I once saw in the bus stop crying after having resigned from the CPSJA because she was heading to Apartadó to work as a maid in a family house. Crying, she told me about how difficult that decision had been but she just had to do it. But several months later she would return to the CPSJA to participate in the “alternative educational program” dedicated to teaching the history of the last ten years to the young children. And now she was heading to Mulatos to teach the young and adult returnees.

Principle 6 of the declaration manifests that all places and areas that belong to the CPSJA would be marked with white flags and other visual signs that could be

incorporated in the years to come. Even today, right at the entry of the hamlet of La Unión and in San Jose(sito) there are large, visible signs which inform about the fact that the visitor is about to entry into a “private property”. It also lists some of the above mentioned principles such as not giving any information to any of the armed actors, about the collective working groups and the community days, and the fact that they are a “non-combatant peasant population”. A rustic gate and these signs clearly separate the CPSJA from the “exterior world”. From the same corridors of some of the closest houses in San Jose(sito) to the road to San José, one always sees those curious casual observers looking at the signs and flags, the white jeeps and the couple of blond and tall volunteers that reside behind the gate and that can be watched from the entry. I have stayed all morning just looking at those buses and improvised collective taxis stopping by the road to leave some passengers at the gate. At that moment, and almost without exception, all passengers heading to San José look curiously at what could be happening right there, behind the gate and the white flags. Needless to say, many of these passengers know perfectly well the history of the CPSJA. Most of the time, drivers would figure out one’s destination just by looking at the “backpacker’s” gadgets and general outfit that one has. They know that one stops at that precise gate. Some of these passengers do have relatives inside, behind the gate. Even in one family, some members have decided to find refuge

behind the gates while others have decided not to abide with those principles and live permanently in Apartadó and San José.

But in a practical sense, the rustic gate and the signs declaring the rules of the CPSJA are all the necessary actors needed for any new visitor or bystander to know that something “special” is happening behind them. For some of the armed actors, indeed it has meant that they are hiding something inside like arms, warfare provisions or even soldiers of any side. Some government commissions have stopped behind those signs and refused to enter without their armed bodyguards because they are afraid of what could happen to them inside. In my view, after knowing the history of the region and that road, I have often thought the contrary: what could happen to them outside of this “exceptional” space where the “civilian population” has been targeted by all actors. At least here there was some sort of “protection”. Indeed, one of the most respectable figures from one of the most novel leftist political parties in the country, the Polo Alternativo Democrático (Alternative Democratic Pole), had to enter the community without his bodyguards after being invited by padre Giraldo. They had to stay outside the perimeter. Indeed, in this example, the gates and the signs were “doing” their job. Indeed, many of

the alternative education programs of the CPSJA are geared to educate all participants on these frontiers and separations. One teenager explained:

> “” (…) if one of us is detained by the army or guerrilla then one has to confront them and talk with them, one has to know how to talk with them, if one arrives angry and they are angry too, then, one knows that one has to arrive calmly, and know how to talk with them and if they don’t react one calls the community and then a public communiqué is sent stating that this group has detained one of us, that is a strong pressure for them” (Personal Communication, February 2007)

Throughout the years, and experiencing new threats of being displaced again, the CPSJA has declared its own ‘humanitarian zones’. These are two or three very rustic hamlets located in specific areas where all inhabitants should find refuge in case of any new displacement. Not coincidentally, they are also located in the water reserves up in the mountains. The idea behind them was that peasants would not flee to Apartadó or any larger hamlet. They would head to this particular hamlet where a very (still) precarious infrastructure (a school) could host families during combat or new displacements. Before one enters any of these areas, white flags and other signs state that one is entering a “humanitarian zone” where all arms are banned and no armed group is supposed to be there. Until now, fortunately, these zones have not been used for their primary objective. But certainly, as is mostly applicable for all principles, all of the armed actors have moved throughout the humanitarian zone not respecting the CPSJA mandate. On the other hand, these mandates as well as those of the CPSJA and all its constituent principles

have been attacked by government officials and directives. In a letter directed to all embassies, the ministry of foreign affairs instructs all public servants not to use the terms "humanitarian zones" or "peace communities" for all the confusions it might generate.

Recently, a book written by an army counselor and founding president of the *Comité Nacional de Víctimas de la Guerrilla* (National Committee for Guerrilla Victims), with the cover title of *Comunidades de Paz: Estrategia de Guerra* (Peace Community: strategies of war) located on top of the Soviet hammer and sickle, accuses the CPSJA together with its escorts and humanitarian zones of their left-wing paranoia. They have accused them of creating a separate state inside the Colombian state, representing the San José de Apartadó Gulag of (Vargas 2006). Also recently, the ex-commander of the 17th military brigade would in the local newspaper accuse several NGOs working in the larger area of Urabá of wanting to constitute "independent republics". And the same head of Acción Social that I interviewed, would accuse those same NGOs of almost pretending to be beauty queens at the services of overseas leftist groups[2]. Indeed, these are not fairy stories in Colombia; unfortunately, they represent ultimate and real threats frequently materialized in massacres and selective assassinations where not even those white flags

and the signs of entering into a ‘humanitarian zone’ can stop them as has been evident throughout all these years.

Hierarchy and horizontality: following a complex assemblage

Finally, Principle 7 mandates the creation and constitution of an “internal council”. The council would be constituted by seven participants of the CPSJA elected by the whole assembly periodically, one member of a national NGO and one delegate from the Apartadó diocese. The main objective of the council would be to observe and reinforce the functioning and implementation of the declaration’s principles listed above. The general assembly would meet every six months to re-elect the members of the council. The latter normally would be in charge of organizing the pilgrimages, discussing logistics with the *acompañantes* NGOs, coordinating the working groups, travelling to Bogotá and Medellin but also to Europe and North America to meet with other agencies and international forums such as the Commission of Human Rights of the United Nations in Geneva, to be part of other pilgrimages to Palestine organized by the German organization currently living in Germany discussed above and have breakfasts in Bogotá with representatives of embassies to inform them time after time about the situation in Apartadó. There is almost no time to rest and no time to have a private life, one of the

leaders and members of the internal council told me while I cooked them some food at my house where they often stay in Bogotá. After having spent a whole week in meetings with embassies, international agencies, delegates from the attorney general and the ombudsman in Bogotá, they just came to say goodbye at my house, pick up their stuff and leave late at night to the bus terminal only to take an 18 hour ride back to the CPSJA. Most of the times they would be escorted by those white t-shirts. But other times, they would just have to go by themselves. And once they came back to San Jose(sito), they would spend most of the time visiting the hamlets that can be separated by an eight hour walk and informing the whole community about their visits.

In short, what the whole mechanism for electing and re-electing the internal council and its ultimate impossibility of turning into a separate power within the whole general assembly manifests, is what Zibechi (2007) names as the 'communal' form of power. For this author, this same model can also be found in indigenous and peasant cosmologies throughout Latin America. Some of the characteristics of this assemblage are that it restrains the concentration of power and/or the emergence of a separate power from the general assembly. There is no division between leaders and normal participants of the CPSJA because the same rotation-system and the way in which leaders are

scrutinized by the general assembly sediment an ultimate undivisive ‘society’. During the least years, some of the leaders of the ‘internal council’ have repeated endlessly their position until now. The consequences are clear as some of them confessed to me: they are tired, their families can sometimes feel abandoned and also sometimes the whole situation can get so tense, that they have thought of quitting their position. One of them desperately told me about the growing frustrations after lobbying with embassies, internacional agencies and the Colombian attorney general for new protective measures for the CPSJA. Their frustration grew after visiting so many offices. But later they would add: their destiny was not anymore their individual choice, but it ultimately rested on the whole assembly. And if the whole assembly asked them to continue in the ‘internal council’, they just had to accept.

In Clastres’s (1994) classic argument, this extenuating working rhythm was precisely the price they had to pay for “representing” the community in all these forums. Most of the times, they told me, the meetings with embassies ended with just a gentle pat on their back or when some of the most committed functionaries told them that what they are claiming is definitely true. The latter would argue that they know what is happening in the area, but that there is nothing they can do. Or worse, as I personally witnessed in a

breakfast with UN officers that the CPSJA had invited me to attend, when they were told to stop their “stubbornness” and their radical positions and finally accept the government initiatives if they wanted to move ahead. This offer translated into the “benefits” of the new frameworks of institutional administrative reparation which includes a quick payment of USD$5000 approximately to each victim plus the benefits of new infrastructure development schemes where hospitals, roads and schools occupy a central role in these deals. “Until when are you going to continue with such radicalism?” inquired the UN representative that morning. In the eyes of the CPSJA leaders, I could only see the deception but also some desperation after so many visits, talks and breakfasts with these officials.

Indeed, many of the offers and claims made to these leaders come precisely from those newly reconfigured schemes for the protection of human rights and good governance that seem to be prevailing at least in UN and other international agencies today (Mosse 2005b, Mosse and Lewis 2005). As my contact at the UNHCR in Geneva told me, these schemes also included the need for progressive legislation and strong interlocutors such as a strong constitutional court, etc (Chapter 1). Very much, the Law 387 of 1997 condenses this vision of State protection. The recent, flamboyant

inauguration in San Jose de Apartadó of a new hospital and a large communal salon funded by USAID was joined by the same vice-president Francisco Santos that headed the event of the Trujillo report at the National Museum. The whole inauguration was in fact proclaimed and celebrated by many actors as the "State" reestablishment in an urban settlement where it hadn't been for *years*. "We will not forget you any more, we will not leave you alone", were Santos' words. At the same, he was assuring that those peasants settled in "La Holandita" [the CPSJA] were reduced just to a couple of families because most of the others had accepted the government offers and now were working in their productive projects[3].

"Some of them were more committed before; now they just buy the official story", this leader told me after the meeting. But gentle pats on the back or this type of comments are only some of the answers they would get through their itineraries. They are also exposed to threats and persecutions such as when this same leader that stayed in my house was persecuted some days later by two armed strangers in Apartadó who put a weapon right on his forehead. After having miraculously escaped from an almost certain death, the armed men were able to steal his backpack with documents, some cash, notebooks and other information from the CPSJA. Another leader received a cell phone

call while I was writing this chapter from an anonymous voice attempting to bribe him and asking him to accuse the CPSJA of having supported and participated in guerrilla operations. Even the same teacher that went to Mulatos was detained for several days in Israel while she was heading to a pilgrimage in Palestine organized by the German neo-hippie community. Apparently, there were some problems with her paperwork. Just while I was writing this chapter, an anonymous voice called the cell-phone of the same leader that came to Chapel Hill. The news got "out" quickly through all the solidarity networks that the CPSJA would activate in this type of situations. The "voice" was offering and bribing him with money on the condition that he would give information about the CPSJA and assure their complicity with the guerrilla forces present in the area. These are just some examples of the price they have to pay for becoming leaders of the CPSJA; needless to say, there is no surprise when they tell me that they are tired, that they want to go back to their daily activities, but the "general assembly" would not let them; and they would just go the next day to another breakfast with another officer of embassies or agencies knowing what would be the most expected response.

Throughout the years, the positions given in the internal council to delegates from the Apartadó dioceses and the national NGOs have changed dramatically. Just a few years

after the declaration, the CPSJA "broke" their relation with the Diocese and also with Justicia y Paz in each case for different sorts of reasons. A lack of a more radical commitment to its causes in addition to its role in the demobilization of those paramilitary units responsible for many massacres against the CPSJA in the former case; in the latter case, by the fact that this organization was precisely taking the power given to it by the people to transform it into a position of authority were reasons enough to break with both accompaniments. As I already explained, both padre Giraldo and my *accompañante* in the bus working at *Justicia y Paz* voluntarily decided after agreeing with the CPSJA's perception about the role this organization was playing, to separate from it. They continued working with the community but with a different conception of their role. As I have witnessed after almost five years of work with the CPSJA, all sorts of international organizations ranging from Chefs without Borders, Clowns without Borders, Spanish municipalities, the German neo-hippie community and personal individuals approach them with their own schemes of intervention and aid.

Indeed, the CPSJA has indeed become a central target for particular desires, expectations, utopias and possibilities for all these actors in a context, as I have often heard, where "there are no more alternatives in their own countries". And also, it has

become a central tenet of the CPSJA's own agenda for many different and strategic reasons. And certainly, as when we were heading to a family house but surreptitiously took the longer way because the leader of the internal council just didn't want to cross through their cattle area with half a dozen "veggies" and "vegans" as he later confessed to me, the CPSJA is willing to play that role up to a certain point. In all these years, I watch how these 'internationals' are received, how they lay out their projects, ideas and desires on the table, and how leaders of the "internal council" would remain silent. Most of them would leave soon, once a member of the internal council told me, "they just don't know how to work with us and they just want to carry out their own agenda". Others will stay longer and for several years, but even if they can bring resources and political advocacy channels, they will be continually scrutinized by the internal council and the general assembly.

I have always remained silent when external commentators at different desks of national and international agencies just endlessly repeat the fact that the CPSJA has been co-opted by powerful external individuals who can set their own agendas and order the whole community to risk their own lives when returning to their hamlets while the objective threats are still there. I have also heard this same comment from other social

movements and grassroots organizations. I don't want to acknowledge that there are in fact no power relations and no hierarchies being reinforce there. I have often also wondered: where not? Certainly, some leaders can have more charisma and experienced capital than others and can win consensus around their own ideas more easily than others. Through their own itineraries through national and international arenas, they have been able to learn the languages, conducts, rhythms and difficulties of these discussions. But that is precisely how these complex assemblages are put together: through both the combination of horizontal and vertical networks, and also, through its dynamism, internal history and the daily negotiations where these relations are constantly played out and tested. The argument of cooption or even neo-colonialism by these external partners is just too bold and does not recognize the complex nature of these assemblages. Precisely, I have seen how most of these internationals are welcomed, how they are allowed to organize events, pilgrimages and put all peasants and guests to "salute the sun" through a sort of new-age rituals as I once experienced. But I have also seen how they would be also expelled and evicted from the assemblage at any moment. No matter how they would often claim the "good" they have done for the CPSJA, how they have given resources and leverage to their international lobbying and how they [the CPSJA] should

be thankful to them, I've seen them being removed and discharged by the internal council as quickly and easily as when they were first received.

In this precise sense, following Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) argument that there is no guarantee or permanent position inside the CPSJA, because the "social" is precisely a reservoir of frictions, deviations and wholes, where a horizon of "radical democracy' can be ultimately assured. I have asked leaders about how and why the need for an "internal council" that reinforces conducts, practices and even moral codes like the one that prohibits alcohol consumption inside their hamlets or controlling domestic violence in the community could be possible, if it generally shares many of the classical state-hierarchical forms and practices. He told me that in fact they had to be so disciplined and strict because any leakage or disruption of those principles could mean passing information to the armed actors, increasing the levels of violence inside the community, etc. In a country with historical records of peace agreements and general armistices that have been signed in the Congress through the official political parties, that is generally by the elite and not by the victims of violence, the peasants, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities (Sánchez 2006), these are precisely the mechanisms they have found to follow the principle of a "non-combatant civil population". As such, that is what it means

to be deploying this project and talking about “peace” and ‘neutrality’ in this perilous context in Colombia. It can rightly be argued that they are too strict or hierarchical, that they have codes of conduct and rules, specifically, the same “things” that some of the usual suspects, the “non-hierarchical anti-statist social” usually Northern movements, would reproach and critique.

It is also in this same context where the “alternative educational program” has become an integral part of their strategy. It encompasses several levels and strategies and has expanded in recent years in response to new dilemmas and also opportunities. From the beginning, right after the declaration was signed, another “code of conduct” was agreed upon which gives the “internal council” the function of guaranteeing the formation (and production) of those subjects who will constitute the CPSJA[4]. And here, precisely, following Faubion (2001), three questions raised by Foucault in his work on ethics seem to signal the basic tasks given to the “internal council”. First, “what is the substance of the project, the prima matrix of ethical concern?” Indeed, the defense and protection of the non-civilian peasant population. Second, “what mode of subjectification accompanies the project?” In this case, the answer would be following the above mentioned principles of the declaration and “code of conduct”. And lastly “what work

does a given ethical project demand?", precisely, the *acompañamiento* of the "internal council" to any new individual who wants to enter the CPSJA, the creation of "alternative primary schools" where children are taught the history of the CPSJA and its founding fathers. And very importantly, the "monuments of memory" of all dead with their names and dates of assassination, among other activities. In fact, the same pilgrimages celebrated almost every year can be thought of as those necessary performances needed for the CPSJA to be reproduced, repeated and sedimented in the memory of old and new participants but also of all the national and international escorts.

Remembering Leach's (1976) dynamic analysis of the Highlands of Burma, one has to consider that these same actions such as the 'community days' or the workshops on memory given to young children in primary school, or the same "monuments of memory" can be thought of as rituals that 'performance' an "ideal" society that momentarily makes explicit what is otherwise a very powerful and material fiction lived and experienced in very different ways by its members. Overall, in all these repertoires and performances, the ethical subject formation is not only about an individual formation or self-preservation. In contrast, as Boff (2002) suggests, what one finds and is reminded by different sorts of actions repeated every single day through work groups, communitarian

labor, child care, collective distribution of surplus, is that every decision for taking 'care' of oneself necessarily always includes a collective mode-of-being and an ethical concern with others. In this sense, following Gibson-Graham (2006) and Gudeman and Rivera (1990), these projects are also [performative] "community economies" that reinforce and sustain a 'communal space' of production and distribution.

Precisely in this construction and sustaining of 'autonomous spaces' is where the whole commercialization of cacao production seems so crucial for the CPSJA. As such, the commercialization of this and other products has allowed the CPSJA to establish an always insufficient meager community fund made out of donations and direct negotiations with external (national and international) buyers for their products. Most of the work on the fields would consist in keeping clean the old cacao trees brought by the Dutch project some twenty years ago. If the cacao is kept clean and the fruit is picked up on time, as one of the coordinators assured me, it will keep producing. Another leader of the internal council explained to me that in those early years of the CPSJA they saw the need to offer to their own cacao producers a much better price when compared to those of the local markets. It turned out to be the only way to sustain and produce "community economies". In San José or Apartadó, normally, peasants would sell their products and

still do for a much cheaper price to intermediaries. At that level, you can only survive, he assured me; but you still need medicines, school equipment for children. Thus, in 1998, he continued, while the local intermediaries would buy a kilo of cacao for 1800 pesos, the CPSJA comercializadora would buy it at 2050 pesos. They had their own trucks and better deals with the large commercial houses. Today, with the organic cacao, they can buy the cacao at 4170 pesos. For several years, they had some difficulties where paramilitaries stole their trucks with cacao inside. But nonetheless, he concluded, they have been able to sustain the price of the cacao at a much higher level than the local market. And it has also given the CPSJA some surplus to distribute within their own population in terms of paying their own professors and construct sewerage and other facilities. Today, this strategy, although with great difficulties and limits, has become the main strategy for sustaining the idea of a non-combatant peasant community.

Between resistances and larger assemblages

On December 4, 2003, the CPSJA's seven diverse communities ranging from Afro-Colombian to indigenous and mestizo groups, coming from substantially different geographical areas, met in Bogotá, Colombia. They came coming from the Pacific Lowlands, the Andean region in the Cauca province, the Eastern province of Santander,

the Urabá region in the Northwestern region of Colombia and from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a mountainous formation that emerges from the Caribbean and finishes in snow cliffs at more than 3,000 meters above the sea. Other communities were the Communitarian Council of La Nupa, Caunapi River, the Peasant Organization of Arauca, the Peasant Organization of the Cimitarra River, the Communitarian Council of the Naya River, Fedeagromisbol from the south of the Bolivar province, the U'wa indigenous communities and the Peasant Indigenous Association of the Northern Cauca. Although all had different social, historical and cultural trajectories and specificities, their shared commonalities were precisely the articulatory node that brought them together to participate in this meeting. In recent years, all these communities had been systematically persecuted, displaced and massacred by different actors. But in the long term, these communities were also the prime target of a coloniality of power which rested on the geo-economization of the planet which articulated it through the management [or violent effacement] of a labor, racial and epistemological difference (Quijano 1993). These communities occupied the lower ranks of a racial hierarchy that since the XVI century had been put in place in the Americas (Quijano 1993). These were the 'wretched of the earth' (Fanon 1963). Not coincidentally, and I do want to remember this structural condition, their territories had been stained by blood in recent years by the arrival of

paramilitary forces that (Uribe 2004). I say coincidentally, because these forces arrived right at the same time where their territories had been targeted by hegemonic projects (Slater 2004) of legal and illegal actors for the control of their territories and the extraction of various resources including banana, African palm, coca, oil, etc.

On this day, they signed a public document which announced their collective commitment to advance the idea and the practice of Redes de Comunidades en Ruptura y Resistencia (Network of Communities in Rupture and Resistance), RECORRE. In a general environment where their territories had turned into material 'landscapes of terror' (Cortes Severino 2006), and where the promises of the State's assistance, protection or investigation on massacres had utterly failed, this new subject position, RECORRE, became the connector of these different experiences. Through sometimes scarce and minimal encounters, meetings, communications and websites due to the lack of resources and certainly, where different agendas and specificities interact and do not always agree with each other (see below), this emergent network proposed in the year 2003 to declare their rupture initially from the Colombian judiciary system. Appalled by how their leaders had been judicialized by the armed forces and other functionaries, and very importantly, shocked by how so many individuals that gave their testimony found their

own death a couple of days after, they agreed not to collaborate with the judiciary system anymore. Interestingly enough, their decision was also based upon article 18 of the Constitution which declared that “no one can be forced to act against his/her conscience”, What they agreed to do was to just keep the record of all human rights and humanitarian violations and post them in reports, websites and other forums.

The idea of creating a Peasant University of the Resistance started here. This was to be the platform for sharing experiences of resistance and survival among the different collectives ranging from alternative agricultural practices to traditional medicine. The University has no central building, no professors and does not confer degrees; that was not the purpose. As one of the leaders of the PCSJA told me, the idea was to benefit from the different experiences and strategies that each collective had been mobilizing within their own processes. He mentioned, for example, that the indigenous communities brought their knowledge of traditional medicine, the PCN shared their experience in negotiating their territorial rights and they [villagers from San José] could talk about their strategies for surviving during military blockades. Until now, the University has met twice, the first time in San Jose de Apartadó in August 2004, and the second time they met in San Vicente del Caguan in March 2005. Both courses were dedicated to exploring

and sharing experiences on “food sovereignty” or “food autonomy” (soberanía o autonomía alimentaria). During the first encounter, he narrated, they met for almost a month and each community sent a delegate. Their “sessions” of almost eight hours a day were held in the fields under the severe sunlight. The community in San Jose had prepared itself to receive what were more than 70 “students”. They had collected enough food and small shelters were improvised to host their guests. Some months thereafter, conversations had occurred to organize a third encounter of the University this time in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta dedicated to discussing “customary and autonomous law” (derecho propio). But unfortunately, no resources arrived to fund the event.

Only in October 2008 did the next session occur. This time, the German neo-hippies funded the event and paid for the transport of several national delegates from different peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. But this time, many difficulties including a larger indigenous revolt that was occurring in the Southern provinces of Cauca and the lack of more resources to fund more travel made the event more “international” than “national”. I guess they [leaders of the CPSJA] obscured these predicaments by naming this encounter the “Global University”. This time, the whole group made the same pilgrimage I had made before and later arrived in San Jose(sito) to

begin the sessions of the Peasant University. Some ‘internationals’ told me that they had encountered peasants on their way who alerted them about the presence of paramilitary units in the area. They tried to confront them [paramilitaries] but they didn’t find them. The situation was tense. Once in San Jose(sito), as I already described, some members of the CPSJA arrived with the dreadful news of those graffiti threatening the general population with the arrival of an unknown paramilitary group in the region. A couple of days later bombardments were heard from San Jose(sito). But at this moment, most of the national participants had to go back to their own settlements. In the end, the remaining sessions were mostly led by the German neo-hippies teaching the peasants and a few indigenous participants how to dry fruits and build more sustainable fire ovens right underneath the increasing tension.

The ‘codification’ and overflow of violence

Current members of the CPSJA settled today in San Jose(sito) remembered nostalgically the almost eight years they had lived in San José de Apartadó once they signed the declaration. In those years, they argued, they had a thriving organization with a formation center named after one of their assassinated leaders, a primary school for children, a monument of memory that remembered all dead during the first years of their establishment, and a most successful economic strategy which included both the

commercialization of cacao but also other products. They were able to accumulate some capital that allowed them to buy a truck and also a property in a distant state in the central highlands of Colombia where many of their threatened leaders could escape the hostilities. During the first years, however, they would all agree, and as the women in the 'communitarian restaurant' would confirm that day, they were scared at night to leave their houses or to be stopped by civilian armed men who would accuse them of complicity with the FARC guerrilla or with the UP political party. As I explained, they were used to escaping during the night to sleep in the jungle with their mattresses and blankets just to return the next morning to San José. Even more, most of the first peasant leaders of the process, including the already mentioned Bartolo Cataño and the manager of the cacao cooperative during those years were assassinated in broad daylight right in the middle of a street in Apartadó or hanged on the banana hooks just to be seen by all peasants in San José.

As Uribe (2004), has argued, many of the assassinations that occurred in Colombia during the same years followed the same logic, the countersubversive campaigns, and executed and deployed clear cultural codes meant to terrorize the civilian population. In these "cultural acts', she argued, many of the same grammars that were

seen during the period of La Violencia re-appeared such as the manipulation of the bodies, the calculated way in which they were slashed and cut and how the perpetrator would change the location of an organ and locate it in other areas of the body of the victim. As padre Giraldo explained to the internationals in one of those memorable guiding lectures, this particular 1996-1997 cycle of violence in the region, mostly perpetrated by a systematic countersubversive operation, was meant to terrorize the civilian populations through this type of action. Once the declaration was signed, the first months were characterized by the massacres and selective assassinations of many of these first leaders even though they were accompanied by nuns and other international and national escorts. This means that the leaders and members of the "internal council" of the CPSJA are not the same ones that were there in 1997 although some of them were there as observers. The new leaders, much younger in age in some occasions, were at that time just kids, sons and/or daughters, of those first leaders that were immediately executed after the constitution of the CPSJA in 1997.

But as the years were passing, they argued, their organization grew and consolidated allowing them to have a much more "settled" life. They had enough resources and a mature economic organization centered on the cacao and banana

commercialization that allowed them to survive in the middle of the new threats and armed campaigns directed at this strategic and historical corridor of guerrillas and leftist organizations. As the list of aggressions against the CPSJA that were perpetrated during these years collected by CINEP clearly shows, the 'civilian population' was permanently threatened, detained or accused of being sympathizers of the guerrilla groups by the army, police and the paramilitaries (CINEP 2005). They remembered how they could survive during the paramilitary road blocks for months because they had enough food stored for everyone. Even though controlled road blocks could remain for months stopping peasants from going and buying goods in Apartadó, they were able to survive with what they had already accumulated. During these years, they consolidated their self-managed returns in the neighboring La Unión after they had already organized working groups that were already producing food for the returnees. Once the working groups had done their work, entire families would join the return and go back to their abandoned houses. But infamous massacres occurred like the one perpetrated on July 8, 2000 where paramilitaries arrived at this hamlet and selected six young members of the CSPJA to execute them in front of all neighbors in central plaza. Meanwhile an army helicopter was flying above the hamlet. The massacre forced the terrified population to displace again to San José. When I first arrived in La Unión on 2006, a small fenced garden with the six

catholic crosses and some flowers evoked the massacre. “We didn’t even want to move the bodies; although the authorities wanted to move them, the community resisted and they were buried right there”, they explained to me. As in San José where the CPSJA would build a small ‘monument of memory’ made out of small stones painted with the name of each victim right in the central plaza of San José, they insisted on having them buried right in the middle of the hamlet.

Indeed, as I argued in Chapter 2, similar ‘monuments of memory’ were also constructed where many of the same NGOs working with the CPSJA were also accompanying other victimized, displaced and targeted communities of countersubversive operations. Very frequently, in the same areas where the Jesuit human rights NGO Justicia y Paz would work, monuments of memory would also emerge. Needless to say, a very Christian connection with the tragic past where the dead occupy a central tenet in their present day agendas created and organized ‘monuments of memory’, ‘pilgrimages’, ‘hymns’ and a “record-keeping” practice of all dead in several grassroots organizations in Colombia. It is no coincidence that both in the CPSJA but also in the notorious case of Trujillo, Valle which became the first case studied by the Group of Historical Memory (GHM) of the National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation

(CNRR) and whose final report was presented at the National Museum (Chapter 2), Justicia y Paz was also 'there' (Justicia y Paz 1998). I do not want to claim a 'Justicia y Paz'' overdetermination on these grassroots initiatives; as I already described, the CPSJA broke with this NGO when it perceived that it was taking too much authority into their own hands. Only padre Giraldo and my *accompañante* in the bus decided to work under the authority of the CPSJA. But nevertheless, one cannot underestimate the weight that Catholicism had had in these communities and especially in one of the most Catholic provinces in the whole of Colombia, Antioquia, where stories about 'pilgrimages', 'sacrifices' and 'martyrdom' are not new but have traditionally been central. In this context, the 'pilgrimages' and the history of the persecuted people of Israel makes sense within their own life-worlds and cosmologies, even if 'Justicia y Paz' was not there. The peasants identified themselves in these scripts, and the same scripts together with that of the "civilian population' became the 'floating signifiers' by which the whole assemblage sedimented and consolidated through time.

After these massacres and displacements and new threats from all armed actors occurred, the CPSJA would return to *La Unión* with new accompaniments. Through their international connections, they were accompanied by FOR volunteers who would

permanently live in the same hamlet. Different from the type of accompaniment of PBI that would only accompany leaders, the CPSJA asked FOR for a permanent escort for the whole community. By that time, news about their process was starting to become known through solidarity networks and the international news. Not only Justicia y Paz and padre Giraldo, but also the ex-mayor of Apartadó, Gloria Cuartas together with the escort of FOR, PBI, Oxfam among other NGOs and lawyers' collectives helped to locate these small hamlets into larger networks of solidarity. Also, their claims presented to the Interamerican Court of Human Rights and the UN Commission of Human Rights, among other forums, started to bring international attention to their dire situations. For Uribe (2004: 101) this curious situation where peasants in San José are visited by ambassadors and officers of international NGOs and agencies, where some of their leaders travel to Geneva and are mentioned in international human right reports, perfectly expresses the "worldization" of the local that "not only defies the hierarchical subordination of the State, moving beyond the substantial traits of sovereignty, to contact many international actors in a direct and unmediated way without the intervention of the government". Certainly, I would problematize what this "moving beyond" means by considering the fact that these channels of human rights and humanitarianism are precisely a most potent reserve where the assemblage of territory, authority and rights seems to reconfigure and

sediment in present days (Sassen 2006). They are, after all, conscripts of modernity (Scott 2004). But nevertheless, one should not underestimate when, why and what "rights" matters, how they get actualized, by "whom" and in "what" different ways. Above all, these are precisely the questions that a complex approach to this type of assemblages would rightly pose (Escobar and Osterweil 2009).

In this sense, as Sassen (2006) argues, it is clear that the "human rights" regime has been changed by forms of Third World resistance to development. We could expand her argument by suggesting that by following those vectors of popular education and liberation theology in Latin America, the same "human rights" agenda has been actualized by these particular struggles that have located "the victim" as an historical subject and articulatory principle from where to interrupt those same regimes of human rights, humanitarianism and good governance (Law 387 of 1997). For her, not only new subjects but also new claims and resistances to those global designs and rationalities behind "post-conflict" prescriptions have altered and destabilized the existing political hierarchies of legitimate power and allegiance (Ibid). In this sense, the CPSJA asserts a creative and active form of neutrality that very much remakes a sense of place through the very apparatus that produced the IDP (Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, a 'non-

combatant civilian population'). But simultaneously, it moves along a post-development imagining of peasant life.

As chapter 1 has already outlined, and following Cheah (2006), it is clear that the human rights regime is dependent on the political techné of states which emerged through the project of a normative universal Enlightment better exemplified in the formation of democratic republicanism (e.g., Kant's dream of perpetual peace). Hence, the problematic to move forward is this: how does this 'appropriation', 'mind-colonization', or what have you, in which the 'poor', the 'victim' or the liberated 'slave' in Scott's (2004) example, reconfigure the same normative contents of a cosmopolitan vocation of democracy better exemplified today in those new projects of "post-conflict' resolution heralded by the World Bank (World Bank 1997) and other international agencies? Hence, perhaps the concepts of a 'new radical cosmopolitanism' (Cheah 2006) or a 'subaltern cosmopolitan legality' (Santos 2002) can better capture the complexities of these projects that are characterized not by having clear goals or completely successful strategies to overcome their threats, but by the intensities and affections they bring. Thus, although it may be strategic to win all the legal battles they are currently having with national and international courts that would 'even' their losses, this different cosmopolitanism can

better be characterized precisely in the vibrations, encounters and openness that characterized the situation in which those projects were crafted, always in becoming, like those cairns of rock accumulated over time after different travelers piled their own rock (Deleuze and Guattari 1993).

Thus, against those linear conceptions of time which relied on burying the "victims" and turning the page or just relating justice to the legal dimension, one has to ponder that behind those pilgrimages, monuments of memory and record-keeping practices lay a profound cultural dimension where a different temporality, subjectivity and mourning and even more, where different answers to the question of what it means to be human are thoroughly being struggled over. As Hall (1981) clearly argues, this is why "culture matters", because it points precisely to the terrain of difference where different claims, rights and arguments are being staged, actualized and deployed. Thus, when compared to those schemes centered on the "productive projects" or the reconciliation between victims and victimizers through ceremonies staged by the same State that seem to emerge throughout the country, these practices that precisely insist on staging the losses, the "suffering stranger" and the dead while simultaneously connecting with other marginalized and victimized populations, should be perceived precisely as "cultural"

projects that not only envision a different conception of justice, but also of the “good”, the desirable, the affective and the intensities. Even more, about the “human” that needs to be protected, alleviated and as the same peasants would agree, to be left alone from all those economic, political and military projects that want to take control and determine their own life-projects. I am not suggesting that this difference exists “outside” those same configurations which they are precisely interrupting. Needless to say, it is far from obvious that moving through international agencies presenting legal claims against the Colombian government for its negligence and direct responsibility in many of the violent actions perpetrated against the CPSJA, can be perceived as the best example of the successful finalization of the state-making process. But against these simple-minded and almost counterintuitive arguments, I am suggesting instead an “exteriority” whereas those victims are using the same “rights-language” to affirm a politics of difference that moves beyond the prevalent regimes and forms of government of “the victim”, “the IDPs” and “the poor”. Needless to say, as characteristic of this “radical cosmopolitanism’ or subaltern cosmopolitan legality’, without guarantees and moving beyond the Law 397 of 1997.

New excesses: the March 21 massacre and a new voluntary displacement

An infamous example of this insistence on difference and the mechanisms of differenciation (Deleuze 1994) were precisely the type of responses that the CPSJA gave to the already mentioned February 21, 2005 massacre. One of the most charismatic leaders together with his children and wife were slaughtered in the hamlet of *La Resbalosa* located in the highland of the *Serranía del Abibe*. Before the massacre, leaders of the CPSJA and government officials had established several forums to discuss the location of the police station outside the range of the urban ratio of San José and to inquire about the lack of results of any judicial investigation regarding the systematic aggressions against them. A pilgrimage organized by the CPSJA with other international escorts and members of grassroots organizations was quickly organized to search for the bodies. Rumors spread throughout the regions that have later turned into legal evidence pointed at joint operations between the military and paramilitaries as responsible for the massacre. Some days thereafter, an official press release from the ministry of defense stated that the assassinated leader was soon going to quit the CPSJA and hence was executed by the FARC guerrilla forces before he could leave[5]. The same President of Colombia would some days later argue through national television "that the peace

communities have the right to install themselves in Colombia thanks to our regime of freedom. But they cannot, as that of San José de Apartadó does, obstruct justice, reject the Public Force, prohibit the commerce of legal goods, or control the liberty of those citizens that are living there. In that community of San José de Apartadó there are good people, but some of their leaders, promoters and defenders have been seriously identified by persons that have resided there, of helping the FARC and wanting to use the community to protect those terrorists" [6]. But with this massacre and these indictments, the CPSJA decided to abruptly break with these discussions. Even more, after the same President decided to neglect all the previous discussions on the location of the police station and decided to establish a police station right in the plaza of San Jose de Apartadó, the same peasants and leaders of the CPSJA decided to voluntarily displace again.

I was in Chapel Hill when I heard this news. I hadn't been in the region before that. My first trip would happen almost one year later during summer break; by that time, I'd only heard about the CPSJA through the news and websites and also through interviews with Gloria in Bogotá. I thought that this massacre had been enough to divide and fragment the idea of a "peasant non-combatant community". "They" had assassinated one of the most visible leaders who had gone all the way to Europe and North America to

talk about the CPSJA with congressmen, activists and other interlocutors. A leader who some of the NGOs described as a young, timid and inarticulate peasant but who would later become a most convincing, clear and articulate public speaker as padre Giraldo once confessed to me, who was not ashamed to talk with congressmen and ambassadors in his peasant outfit, was savagely killed together with his family with machete blows. From a distance, I thought that this was it; “they” have given the final blow and the whole process was surely going to end. Some years later, in our conversations, padre Giraldo would also agree by suggesting that after watching the eyes of those peasants around the dead corpses, he thought that they were almost ready to “throw in the towel” , abandon their principles and just leave to the larger cities to wait for those mattresses given to IDPs by the State authorities. He also thought that this was it, that the process was about to end. Indeed, some peasants did precisely that and left for the larger cities; no need to be surprised about their decision, they had been stripped of from their most visible leader. But against the possibility of dividing and stripping completely the “bare life” (bios) from its “social life” (zöe), the whole assemblage responded by repeating once again the decision to continue with a self-managed cultural, social, political and economic project notwithstanding the hegemonic powers that were attempting to erode it and erase the same terrain of “the political” (Laclau 2008). In this precise sense and against the

teleology of nakedness and ‘bare life’ better exemplified in the muslimization processes in Agamben’s argument (2000, 1998, 1998a), here the same excluded, persecuted and threatened by these deadly massacres, still insisted on participating in antagonic social practices (Laclau 2008).

As was common in their own organizational practices, new working groups were established to start building temporary houses in an empty spot some kilometers away from San José in direction to Apartadó. With the funding of some external Spanish partners, they started to construct what later would be named San Jose(sito). A young woman described this new displacement:

> “At the beginning we had to pack in one house, three or four families and it was very uncomfortable. But then they helped us with some food for three months while we organized ourselves. The idea was that each family had its own house and we proceeded in that way. Little by little and today we have been able to locate each family in a separate house. At the beginning it was very difficult but we were all patient and thought about everything that we had done inside the community and thought that it made sense to continue struggling with this process. This has been a community that even during the worst moments has organized and struggled to find ways out, to construct something different, and to show the State that we are a community that is able to move forward without its support even though it is the same one that attacks us.” (Personal Communication, February 2008).

When the houses were ready and the water drainage channels were constructed, then the rest of the families moved in. In what still today looks like a temporary refugee

camp with three long lines of continuous wooden houses covered by thatch or zinc roofs with one or two central larger bathroom batteries, Doctors without Borders and Peace Brigades International would also install their temporary staff. The first organization would soon start to give those “post traumatic therapy” orientations referred to in Chapter 1 and adequate water filters for purification purposes in the temporary settlement. When I told the MSF officer in Geneva about what have I seen in San Jose(sito), he answered: “This is what they would normally do in those situations”. Doctors without Border staff would stay for a short period of time there. “That is what we also do; we don’t want to be indispensable nor become a stable, heavy, bureaucratic administrative agency in any place where we operate, we move quickly”, he insisted. Meanwhile, Peace Brigades International would later raise their white flag making it visible for all external passersby’ along the road that something “special” was happening: the “white t-shirts” were there.

The new settlement was guarded by a small gate with a sign that informed one about the CPSJA principles and the fact that they were entering private property and their entry should be authorized beforehand. After all, they had the property rights there: Gloria the 1994-1998 major of Apartadó, decided to hand the property rights to them because they complied with the desires of the Dutch officer who had gave her the legal

rights to her before the Dutch left the country: that all the Dutch properties including the old chocolate factory where Balsamar once worked together with its farms (where San Jose(sito) would be located) should be handed to any organization that followed the main rationalities behind their projects on the peasant economy. And for Gloria, the CPSJA fitted perfectly with these requirements. But before they left San José, the peasants took the painted rocks with the names of their dead with them just to construct a new "monument of memory" in the new terrain in San Jose(sito). Once the families of the CSPJA were established, the new policemen settled right in the central plaza in San José would destroy what they had left of the monument. A new story for the CPSJA started in San Jose(sito) where I finally arrived for the first time in summer 2006. A new story possible precisely for all the vectors that I have traced until now which encompass both a liberal tradition of colonizing peasants struggling for their own autonomy, a leftist vector oriented by unions, political parties and other organizations, another coming from the progressive church and its commitment with the defense and protection of the "poor" and "the victim" and yet another coming from the international humanitarian definition and practice of a "non-combatant peasant population". These have been the conditions of possibility for their emergence in 1997, of their survival during all these years, and also of the new settlement of San Jose(sito) notwithstanding the new threats, assassinations

and new displacements that have also occurred. Indeed, a complex assemblage that has sustained the possibility of engaging in antagonistic social practices while struggling for creating the possibility of living according to their own life-projects.

While in San Jose(sito), the general coping economic strategies continued almost the same as in San José. The main backbone strategy of the working groups organized by one coordinator member of the internal council continued with their work which mainly included plantain and cacao cultivation. The 'communitarian days' were focused on house construction and preparing the facilities in the new temporary settlement that would become permanent in the following years. During all these years, 'pilgrimages' have been organized remembering both the anniversary of its formation in 1997 but also the February 21 massacre. Other working groups have prepared the "returns" of families to their hamlets located in the Serranía like Mulatos and La Esperanza. The CPSJA leaders and other members have been invited to the United States, Switzerland, France, Spain, Ecuador, Austria, and Germany among many other countries to give speeches about their history. Many international *acompañantes* coming from many of the same countries have arrived and stayed with them for a while. No one has stayed for more than one year, obeying the mandates of their own organization. Currently, many of them have

connected the CPSJA with networks of fair and organic –trade in countries like Germany and the United States. Today, almost 70 working groups are changing their own agricultural practices in order to meet the requirements of their new partners. Until now, approximately 25 tons of cacao has been exported. A huge truck with several containers marked in German arrived to San Jose(sito) to pick up the first harvest. I could see the huge monster struggling to advance through the muddy and narrow road. When I was arriving in San Jose(sito) in October 2008, the truck was leaving with the loaded merchandise. Behind the truck, the same leader that was threatened by two armed men in Apartadó was carefully guiding the driver through the sinuous road. When the truck arrived to safer grounds, I could see his face and his joy. He saw me and just yelled with his open arms: “we did it again!!!”

Some final remarks

Right when I was finishing the first draft of this paragraph on March 2008, I met again with him in a coffee shop here in Bogotá. As usual, he came to have meetings with embassies, agencies and the ombudsman’s office. The dire situations continued. Not only had one of their leaders been asked to take bribes to accuse the CPSJA of having helped the FARC in certain occasions, but they had known that one of the FARC commanders that had been demobilized and was confined inside the 17th Brigade, was starting to

accuse its leaders of many actions committed by guerrilla groups. The leader who had been asked to take the bribe was also leading and coordinating the working groups that conducted the return to La Esperanza. But armed men were constantly asking for his location since he received those calls and refused to take the offer. He had to return again to his own hamlet and leave the coordination of the "return" to another less threatened leader. Hundreds of heavily-armed soldiers were occupying the Serranía looking for any person suspected of being a sympathizer of the guerrillas. They would often stop peasants and ask them for any information about the CPSJA. Meanwhile, the meetings with the ambassadors ended as usual: with the same admonishment heard so many times criticizing their stubbornness and radical postures against the new government offers for reconstructing the region through productive projects and infrastructure investments. The fair-trade deal was not going so well; the transport costs and the fact that they were not producing the amounts required by their partners had reduced their final profit. But at least they could pay the working groups almost double the price of what the local market would pay them.

Also, other new hamlets located on the other side of the Serranía that were not part of the CPSJA were asking the "internal council" for primary teachers for their own

school since the government teachers would not dare to go there. New peasants wanted to join the organic cacao production. “But they have to leave according to the CPSJA principles”, he argued. “And if with 1200 persons we have some problems that escape our control, just imagine with having almost 6000”. He just laughed, arguing that even living within such a perilous and complex environment, there had to be a time for humor. And he took a sip of coffee. But perhaps his laugh hinted at something larger that although they could have imagined, it was still challenging when facing it and which I can only understand like this: that ultimately, through their politics of refusal of the conventional practices of State sovereignity and their same ‘communitarian’ forms of power that had ultimately made possible the defense and protection of a non-combatant peasant population, they were challenging the same axiomatic and codification of the State. A geographically limited counter-power but possible within larger networks and assemblages; but still, a counter-power to all State forms including the centralized government, guerrilla and paramilitary states. And even more, hinting at what a post-human rights regime would look like, of a counter-power to all those [modern] human rights and humanitarian interventions made in the name of the “suffering stranger” condensed in the Law 387 of 1997.

This chapter has explored the convergence of those vectors described in the previous pages in order to explain how and why the CSPJA emerged here and right at this moment. Rather than suggesting that it was created by a single agency, I have analyzed the complex arrangements where many actors are gathered together informing the organizing schemes which have oriented their political and economic strategies. In particular, I have been interested in those decisions that have allowed them to continue with antagonistic social practices throughout outlived massacres, displacements, threats and new predicaments. I have not romantized the CPSJA but have preferred to just follow some of their projects, aspirations, frustrations, disillusions and losses. Instead of offering those romantic and liberal narratives of clear and unproblematic overcomings and successes (Scott 2005), I have preferred to dwell into their own itineraries, intensities and affections to think otherwise about our own understandings of politics, rights, agency, resistance, autonomy, time and the "human". As Mahmood (2005) argues when studying forms of Islamist virtue, one cannot and should not fix these in advance. Indeed, these peasants are "rough", "patriarchal", deeply "catholic" and also rooted; precisely, some of the "things" that the liberal (radical) cosmopolitanisms heralded by Hardt and Negri (2000)[7] and the followers would normally oppose. Instead, as she argues, I have preferred to apply critical scrutiny for the precise forms in which their actions take place which

emerged precisely from the contingent nature of the same complex assemblage and historical context in which they are located (Mahmood ibid).

Endnotes

[1] For a review of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'virtuality' and its explanatory purchase for social movement theory, see Escobar and Osterweill, 2009.

[2] "ONGs quieren formar república independiente" El Heraldo de Urabá, May 2008, No. 315

[3] "Ahora San José de Apartadó es otra cosa. Gobierno, busca confianza" El Heraldo de Urabá, May 2008, No. 315

[4] Indeed, this has been a major influential line of thought in anthropology in recent years inspired by Foucault's latest work on ethics (for a recent collection of essays, Ong, Collier and Lakoff 2005, see also Gibson-Graham 2006). And although I will not go into the detailed analysis of these debates, two reasons seem apparent for this reception: the analysis of different ethical 'practices' and the delinkage of ethics from rationality (Collier and Lakoff 2005). In the first case, more than an 'anthropology of ethics', an "ethnography of ethics" follows the different particular practices by which a notion of a 'good life' is sustained and embodied. For Faubion (2001), Foucault raises three questions that an anthropological analysis of ethical practices should respond to. First, "What is the substance of the project, the prima matrix of ethical concern?" Second, "What mode of subjectification accompanies the project?" And lastly "What work does a given ethical project demand"? For Collier and Lakoff, these questions involve a normative, technical and political dimension that are brought into alignment into what they call a 'regime of living' arising around a particular problematization. Hence, the ethnographic analysis will be precisely dedicated to particularizing and specifying the diversity of sites and subjects in their historical, cultural and social configuration produced within these 'regimes of living'.

[5] Ministerio de Defensa, Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares. "Press Release". March 1, 2005. Oficina de Información y Prensa Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares.

[6] Presidencia de la República, Casa de Nariño. "Press Release". Carepa, Antioquia, March 20, 2005. From the Official presidential website: http://www.presidencia.gov.co/sne/2005/marzo/20/03202005.htm Last accessed, March 12, 2005.

[7] Mouffe (2005) would point at the unexpected convergence between Empire and liberal cosmopolitanism. As she argues, "there is not much difference between those who celebrate the perspective of a universal order organized around a 'cosmopolitan sovereignity' and the radical 'anti-sovereignty' stand taken in Empire. In a similar vein, instead of fetishizing movements or an extreme deterritorialization that would evacuate any sense of sovereignty or "placing" mechanisms, I have precisely focused on how these assemblages were already territorialized in particular forms, how these vectors were actualized and took the form they way they did according to different historical, political, economical and cultural specificities.

Conclusion

> "The ethical conscience of humanity feels committed to the search of TRUTH and JUSTICE and is willing to accept the institutionalized mechanism that facilitates the social approaches to TRUTH and JUSTICE even though it carries enormous dangers, efforts and personal burdens. But what an ethical conscience cannot accept is to become involved in the same institutional mechanisms that, behind fictions and simulacra of truth and justice, makes one contribute in practice and positively to falsehood and injustice. The consequences are enormous because in this simulacrum the life and dignity of numerous human beings are compromised. For all of these reasons, I respectfully pledge you to be excused from giving this declaration, version, interview given the moral impossibility to do it. The National Constitution establishes that "no one should be forced to act against his conscience" (Art. 18). (Giraldo 2009).

On March 16, 2009, padre Giraldo posted this letter on his own website that would circulate through whole networks of human rights and humanitarian agendas. In conversations with friends and even colleagues, the content of the letter was vividly discussed. The letter was directed to the head of section 23 of the Attorney General's Offices in Bogotá. This officer required him to declare and defend himself in an investigation against him by the current General of the XVII Military Brigade accusing him of defamation. He had to present himself on March 11, 2009. The 43 single-spaced letter was intended to explain to the officer why he hadn't attended the requirement by

justifying his decision on moral grounds. In the letter, he recollects his own experience of more than thirty years as lawyer, defender and observer of the victims of human rights abuses perpetrated by State forces in Colombia. Specifically, he narrates his experience as observer of the incapacity of the judiciary system to investigate and prosecute those responsible. Even more, he narrates the way in which testimonies and the legal evidence that supports those cases had been consistently and systematically manipulated by different authorities. Also, on how witnesses he had personally known and protected and that had the courage to inform authorities about what they had seen or known about, were later found killed[1].

Throughout his pages, as he even admits, he had some trust and confidence in the Judiciary investigations but he soon learned that what seemed to be just one or two cases of evident corruption seemed to multiply in all directions. He talks about courageous attorneys who had the courage to denounce these leaks and manipulations of the whole judiciary system just to find their own death some days later. As he argues, he has learned with great sorrow that these are not exceptional but seem to be confirmed throughout the whole system. Thus, he revisits the memorable massacres of Trujillo, Valle where one of his own friends, padre Tiberio, a central figure in the whole victim's movement of

Trujillo, was dismembered and thrown into the river. He also revisits other municipalities like San Vicente de Chucurí and Barrancabermeja that I have only heard about through the news of massacres and assassinations. The Justice Palace's 'holocaust' where many civilians disappeared at the hands of angry state forces that entered to retake control of the building also figures in his descriptions. And finally, he talks about the CSPJA and the many occasions where discussions and commissions between the attorney general officers and its leaders took place trying to resolve and explain why the investigations into those found responsible by the same peasants for several massacres hadn't arrived at any decisive conclusion.

With all his arguments and quoting certain principles of the 1992 Catholic catechism of which the search and the value of truthfulness becomes a central tenet of the Christian identity, he justifies his absence from the attorney general's offices by suggesting that his own religion and value has led him to 'conscientiously object' to the judiciary system. He sustains that collaborating in any way with a judiciary system sustained by falsehood and corruption would suppose a direct contradiction against the same Catechism. He even quotes Article 18 of the Colombian constitution which claims that "no one should be forced to act against his own conscience". In certain paragraphs,

he becomes surprised as to how a justice system that prides itself on its independence and neutrality at least from its Enlightment origin can become so privatized within clientelist relations and networks that have attempted and were successful enough to make evidence disappear in order to protect those responsible for murders and displacement. He also quotes Erich Fromm's comment on the 'pathology of the normal' created by the routines of institutions of any society which allow these to pacify the ethical conscience of the majority of citizens while conducting the same institutional mechanisms for uses contrary to their own nature. He laments how the judiciary system by founding itself on "juridical positivism" has cut itself from the realm of values, ethics and humanisms of all religions by creating and promoting an "aseptic technique" as the core of the procedural truth of Law. A true believer in the defense and the radicalization of the democratic project and in Montesquieu's notion of 'liberty and equality of all', as he has often commented in our walks through the mountains of Apartadó, I guess he will share Mouffe's (2005: 32) argument on the need "to fight for their effective implementation".

While reading his profoundly complex letter where western philosophers and passages taken from the Bible are combined with persecutions of witnesses and the permanent negligence of all judiciary investigations, I also remembered Eduardo

Umaña's (2005) famous essay on the history of impunity in Colombia. A courageous lawyer who had not only co-written the famous *La Violencia in Colombia* with Orlando Fals Borda and Germán Guzmán Campos and whose son had been killed for his work as a human rights lawyer, and whose funeral was also presided over by padre Giraldo, wrote a painstaking essay on the 'legalist tradition' of the country inherited by the Spanish presence and its meticulous bureaucratic nature where "everything" was carefully registered and safeguarded. In Colombia, we usually differentiate between "the country of Santander", the man of law, and "the country of Bolívar", the man of force, two of the most important generals of the independence armies, while recognizing our dependence on the first tradition of grounding our disputes on legal claims based on decrees, laws and constitutions. But after Umaña reviews the history of the legalist tradition in Colombia, this is, el país Santanderista (the Santanderean country), he concludes with a popular saying still in use until today: "la ley se obedece pero no se cumple", loosely translated as the law is written but never obeyed. It can be rightly argued that we have a progressive constitution which gives rights and channels of participation to the "suffering stranger" whether it be the indigenous, Afro-Colombian, displaced or the one who lost his property during the financial crisis of the 1990s. At least, the 'modern' State project has been working all around.

From the 1990s, as I described, Colombia has entered the "era of human rights and humanitarianism" by ratifying conventions, declarations and recommendations by rapporteurs, representatives or international commissions. As I have argued, these conjunctures must be seen and evaluated through a complex vision that describes them as both the product of grassroots initiatives but also by a whole new technique of government that ceded many areas to the 'civil society' mandate (Alvarez 2008, Rose 1999). But whatever the history of how we got there, the fact is that all these legal vocabularies and courses of action populate our everyday lives in all directions, something which the same Representative pointed out in Geneva. One could say, echoing my interviewee in Geneva and remembering its 'magical presence' for the desires and expectations it draws upon (Taussig 1992a, Coronil 1997, Das 2007), that the "State is there". But certainly, following the popular saying, it never gets accomplished at least in the "Enlightment way".

Certainly, this has been one of the major channels through which 'violence' has been channeled and filtered. A profound paradox thus emerged whereby one of the first functions of violence has been precisely the law-preserving function (Arendt 1978) and

has become one of the main mechanisms which the same State has used to guard against the excesses of violence. From the land reforms of the 1920s and 1930s that secured the protection of large concentrations and dispossession of lands to the same Law of Justice and Peace of 2005 that regulated the demobilization of paramilitaries and foregrounded the basic framework from which a 'post-conflict' scenario could be achieved, certainly 'the law' has become a major strategy for the 'the mechanized discourse of consensus' (Richard 1994) that has 'talked about violence and silences' in Colombia. As Sánchez's (2006) study of armistices in Colombia has described, this has been historically a discourse monopolized by internal regulations concerning who could talk and in what way, and more specifically, on what prescriptions should be followed to 'end violence'. Not coincidentally, it has been a discourse where the main victims of violence, the rural poor, the indigenous and the afro-Colombian populations have been absent although they have certainly been re-presented by experts, technicians and bureaucrats. As several chapters of this dissertations have described, 'violence' does have an agency throughout the history in Colombia defining very clearly who is considered a friend, adversary or antagonist, who can be disposable and abandoned and what populations and territories have suffered the worst deal.

But as Sánchez (2006) argues, most of these discourses on peace and armistices have been managed by the clear winners of 'violence' in Colombia, the elites, head of armies and landowners. Even more, as Arango's (2008) critical analysis of the Law of Justice and Peace has shown, the original text of the law stemmed from the dialogues and conversations that took place between paramilitary leaders and government officials. When the law went to the Constitutional Court for its final approval, some of the progressive magistrates I have pointed out here raised serious observations on the fact that the 'victims' were absent in all the prerogatives of the law. As a result, the magistrates approved it but only after introducing and ordering the creation of the Comisión Nacional de Reconciliación y Reparación (National Commission of Reconciliation and Reparation), CNRR, an institutional space where they thought, I guess, that these 'suffering strangers' could be finally 'heard'.

This dissertation has precisely described the way in which the protection, empowerment and alleviation of the "suffering stranger" became an issue and an excess of State concern (the IDP and the Law 387 of 1997). More to the point, I have analyzed a specific problem area, the one of the forced displacement of populations that was codified throughout the twentieth century as a 'problem of refugees' for signaling those who cross

international borders and “the problem of internally displaced persons” for those who remain within their own borders. I have argued how this drive or connection with the “suffering stranger” goes deep and blurs the distinction between the secular and the religious world (Asad 2003). Thus, by overviewing the classic figure of the “good Samaritan” to the struggle of Henry Durant, founder of the ICRC, to alleviate the wounded and the displaced of the Battle of Solferino 1859 and the role that the progressive church played in the emergence of grassroots initiatives in Latin America, I have argued that the conditions of possibility of not only large scale international institutions dealing with these “suffering populations” but also the same creation of the CPSJA must and needs to be traced to these realms. Both questions of ‘Why do we care?’ and ‘Why do we care in that way?’ must be also analyzed in the context of major ethical debates lingering through modern institutions and religious cosmologies on the “good”, the “human” and the same practices that might lead us “there”. Indeed, taking care of its populations for their own “well-being” has been one of the central tenets of modern techniques and rationalities of government. And certainly, these diagrams have been operating throughout discursive and non-discursive practices that have opened up a space for the deployment of power. Far from localizing an individual source of these intensities, I have chosen instead to trace how these forces “consist of organizing the relations which

are supposed to exist between power and Goverment, and which are molecular or ‘microphysical’ relations, around a molar agency” ‘the’ Sovereign or ‘the’ Law, in the case of the State; the Father in the case of the family; Money, Gold or the Dollar in the case of the market; God in the case of religion; Sex in the case of the sexual institution” (Deleuze 1988: 76).

Reviewing the emergence of those massive international institutions dedicated exclusively to these functions during the twentieth century, I have traced how the scripts of ‘promoting rights’ and having an adequate legal framework for protecting those suffering populations have been one of the major translations of this concern in the era of modern states. More specifically, they condensed right after the World War periods where European powers set limits to what was considered for the first time ‘crimes against humanity’. But it has certainly not been the only one. This dissertation has also tracked the water filter tanks, the post-traumatic therapy sessions and the white jeeps and flags directed to protect the ‘civilian population’. Not the Spanish conquest of America nor trans-Atlantic slave trade, which had their own critics right from the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the ‘Jewish’ holocaust came to be thought and seen as the limit experience of what ‘humanity’ could bear and tolerate. New ‘guardians’ different from

but inextricably connected with the one of the ‘pastor’ and the ‘priest’ emerged: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the same United Nations and its wide system of agencies, the Truth Commissions and the massive and small humanitarian operations promoted by a plethora of actors concerned with those “suffering populations’. As Das (2008a) has rightly argued, these same diagrams must be always seen as encompassing particular theories of suffering and time and also as powerful disciplinary machines for creating subjects, experts, mechanisms, standards and regulations. They create both new codes and axiomatics that convert and striate matter into specific forms with finalized functions that can be ethnographically tracked and also problematized.

The ‘ethnography of institutions’ I have presented here has treated these particular entities as the products of power relations that have emerged around particular problem areas. Each of the various institutions I have followed ranging from the ICRC, UNHCR, the Group of Historical Memory (GMH) of the Colombian National Reconciliation and Reparation Commission of National (CNRR) and also the CPSJA must be seen and analyzed as complex assemblages where discourses, practices and objects concerning the protection of the IDP are always mediated. Not a hierarchical predictable determination nor as entities standing outside these ‘planes of consistency’, each of these ‘nodes’ is

collected and made possible through the complex articulation and condensation of local histories, travelling theories and their particular and different articulation. They are always provincial, whether in Geneva, Washington or in Urabá, and so they are the particular actualizations of these vectors coming from all directions. Needless to say, some are more powerful machines than others in the sense of affecting more the 'chaotic sea' than others. Their ultimate effects are truly hegemonic but always simultaneously contested and interrupted at different scales and intensities. The poster signs along the road from Apartadó to San Jose(sito) describing new productive projects and cooperatives funded by Acción Social and USAID do seem to confirm and disseminate a powerful axiomatic between development and the defense of human rights of those displaced populations. Meanwhile, the CPSJA pilgrimages become truly 'minoritarian' and 'molecular' by escaping the particular logic of time, justice and reconciliation fore grounded in these development schemes and molar agencies. So too are the songs and narratives of modern maroons along the rivers of the Pacific region. And so are the desires of that young woman wanting to stay and nurture her child in the same village where her husband was assassinated, and the memories of those women who narrated the fears and horrors of those nights where they had to escape to the jungle at night to camp while their houses were been stormed by paramilitaries.

On an ethnographic level, these machines are ‘doing’ very different things: from populating a territory with water-tanks, white jeeps, t-shirts and flags, IDP certificates and mattresses, to the different principles abided by the CPSJA in order to defend the idea of a ‘peasant non-combatant population’, all of these are traversed by adjustments, adaptations and condensations that emerge from their ‘local’ predicaments, territorialities and histories. Not only do they articulate those local histories with the scripts of international humanitarian law and its defense of the non-combatant civilian population or with the larger discourses of structural racism, but they also inform the same ways in which the space of devastation can be inhabited again (Das 2007a). Not through ‘returns’ managed by the government and their schemes of productive projects, but by self-prepared and managed returns made possible by complex articulations of human rights and humanitarian networks. In sum, what I have been doing here precisely responds to the question of the ‘history of the present’ which necessarily leads us to ask about the conditions of possibility of all these different nodes: the CPSJA, UNHCR, ICRC, MSF, GMH, FOR and the CNRR, among many others. And even more, not only about their conditions of possibility but also their particular actualizations by focusing on the type of ‘things’ they are doing in their operations which can be analyzed through the

characteristic tension of the ‘power bloc’ and the ‘popular’ (Laclau 1977). By signaling this inherent tension along the many diagrams of power I have followed throughout the dissertation, I want to precisely dwell on the possibilities of thinking about a post-human rights regime.

A post-human rights regime: between the ‘power bloc’ and the ‘popular’

On April 6, 2009, I received an electronic communication from the CPSJA sent to a list-serve whose extension surely grows and grows with time. In it, the CSPJA discusses the recent speeches of the mayor of Apartadó and functionaries of Acción Social in Urabá who had been claiming in recent days that ‘peace’ and ‘progress’ had finally arrived to the region. In their vision, the difficult process of the demobilization of the paramilitary groups had finally terminated and now the armed conflict had lost intensity to a level where everyone could perceive that finally ‘peace’ had arrived to an historically disputed region. Commenting these recent claims, the person who wrote the message from the CPSJA reminds all these ‘voices’ of the recent bomb attack that partially destroyed one of the most recognized grocery stores in Apartadó. One could not talk about ‘peace’ when bombs are exploiting right in one of the most exclusive neighborhoods in the city, argued the unknown author. Much less when the same peasants confirm the hundreds of armed actors that are currently walking through the Serranía threatening them to give

information and accusing the CPSJA of links with the FARC guerrilla. And even less when human rights defenders such as padre Giraldo and the ex-major Gloria Cuartas are still been persecuted and denounced for lying when they insist about the ongoing threats to the whole process and idea of a 'non-combatant peasant community' situated right in the middle of armies and drug-traffickers and private interests eager to control routes and arms in the 'best corner of America'. In a very general way, as Chapter 2 acknowledges, this particularity of having a permanent armed conflict that doesn't end has been indicated by the head of the CNRR as the major challenge of Colombians when compared with other countries like Chile, Argentina or South Africa. A final armistice was signed 'there' that ended all confrontations between the different parties. 'We still have to deal with the conflict', he has often repeated in his newspaper columns and interviews since he was appointed to the job.

Nelly Richard (2004) has thoroughly discussed the 'mechanized discourse of consensus' created in Chile whereby the memories, wounds and scars of the dictatorship were abruptly closed and secured under the new script of a 'post-conflict scenario'. In this context, she is interested in recollecting the 'cultural residues' that whisper in an almost untranslatable language the ongoing pains, memories and mutilations that still

inhabit and haunt the present in a spectral sense (for Colombia, see Cortés Severino 2007, Orrantia 2009). Perhaps, what precisely do they 'haunt' is the nutshell of the whole problem raised along these pages. Certainly, it has not been a problem of the 'now' but precisely on how the 'now' has been constructed, normalized and territorialized in particular ways. The point precisely is that this territory, whether through the Law or the pathetic mattresses, grounds limits, it includes and channels vectors through specific direction leaving or perhaps creating a place where 'life' is both abandoned but once again manageable. Throughout specific interventions where victims are finally recognized and interpellated as IDP and the whole simulacrum of the magic of the State can continue one more time: "and so be it". Indeed, as Foucault (1973a) argues in his analysis of discourses, these State interventions carry profound logophobia struggling against the events, against the mass of things said, against the appearance of the statements, against whatever can be there of violent, discontinuous, disorder and dangerous, against the grand and incessant and disordered murmur of the discourse exists throughout this new territory. In a similar fashion of his attempt to disorganize those discourses, one could also ask for Colombia: What is left behind the 'monuments of memory', the 'rights-based languages', the 'humanitarian operations', the 'administration of justice' and the same official theories of suffering currently managed, coordinated and

mobilized the hegemonic machines? What is left behind the ‘‘mechanized discourse of consensus’? And even more, what about this consensus in Colombia notwithstanding the everyday presence of the threats, massacres, disappearances, displacements, sorrows, hate and vengeance?

Perhaps, following the critical continuum of Benjamin, Derrida, Fanon and Dussel and what lingers behind Padre Giraldo words, and the same practices of the CPSJA reviewed here, we might as well accept the impossibility of any closure for these arrangements when exposed to the memories of the ‘victims’ and their suffering. These are indeed epistemological and ontological debates concerning the limit of what can still be called proper of a ‘human’ subject in contemporary times. Not an idealized nor romantized ‘victim’, but a ‘victim’ whose role precisely is to show and highlight the fact that ‘behind every document of civilization lies a document of barbarism’ (Benjamin 1968). ‘A finger in the wound’ (Nelson 1999) for the Law 387 of 1997, we might as well argue, and incomplete narration. But neither a deterritorialized, naked nor unnamable ‘victim’ that appears to hang around many of the fashionable contemporary thought (e.g., Agamben 2000, 1998a, 1996). A ‘victim’ that needs to be pointed to and named and that even more, makes presence and presents the dead ‘here’ and ‘now’ in the streets of

Apartadó through the pilgrimages, the untold stories and the loud silences. A ‘victim’ that could serve as an ‘empty signifier’ for new and unpredictable articulations across different constituencies actualizing the possibility of continuing antagonistic social practices in the face of the growing anaesthetized consensus. That makes presence of the rooted, sedimented and structural histories of marginalization, extermination and in humanization, the states of exception and the inherent violence of the State. A ‘victim’ that perhaps shows us the impossibility of reckoning the past through those discourses of consensus while signaling the different modes into which the place of devastation can be inhabited again (Das 2007a). Only in this sense can the term of a post-human rights and humanitarian regime make sense here, of a regime that paradoxically consists in endlessly deterritorializing those consensuses made in the name of ‘peace’ and the protection of the human which precisely serve to epistemologically and ontologically obliterate all residues left behind.

Certainly, the productive projects organized by the Law together with the humanitarian aid given to IDPs do contrast with the self-managed returns and the ‘community economies’ sedimented through the working groups, communitarian days and collective surplus. One commentator of the dissertation, Peter Redfield, put it boldly

in these terms: “if the IDP offers minimal recognition through an international framing that accepts conventional sovereignity, the CPSJA membership offers a disruptive re-assertion through an international framing that disrupts conventional sovereignty (Electronic Communication, July 2009). Several questions are thereby opened: How can we assess the ‘refusal’ of the CPSJA to escape to the cities just to stand in line and wait for the mattresses? Or echoing Padre Giraldo’s letter, the refusal to trust the justice system to judge and investigate those responsible for massacres and displacements? How can we analyze the possibility of some peasants in the ‘best corner of America’ for cultivating an autonomous space through creative connections with larger networks for sustaining the possibility of a ‘non-combatant peasant community’ in the middle of the armed conflict? What about their refusal to be part of the ‘administrative consensus’ of a post-conflict scenario in Colombia? Certainly, there are no easy answers to these questions. But surely the answers would point out or delineate what a post-human rights and humanitarian regime would look like or even more, how it has been practiced today. Even more, when the same victims and not academic-intellectuals, national and international technocrats, State functionaries and alike are the ones delineating ‘ethical projects’ embedded in relational networks where no ‘entity’ can be left behind. Whether the dead, the poor, the marginalized, the past and the same ‘place’, what matters is that

these same practices acknowledge the impossibility of separating these entities from their relational existence.

To conclude. Right here in the ‘best corner of America’ a complex assemblage has emerged to counterpose the ‘minimal biopolitics’ materialized in those mattresses guaranteed by the IDP and the Law 387 of 1997. This is, of constructing a multi-layered and complex possibility for moving beyond the frameworks of ‘good governance’ and ‘state-responsibility’ that are directly conducting, orienting and delineating most of the human rights and humanitarian operations in Colombia. The CPSJA, while still moving through the circuits of these State bureaucracies, is currently bringing forward alternative genealogies for the care of the ‘suffering stranger’ reconfigured both by the Geneva Conventions but also by liberation theology, Marxism and the peasant struggle tradition in Colombia. In this complex space full of frictions and tensions, they have been able at least to construct an autonomous space that defies the desires of States and Para-states to massacre, displace or relieve populations. Meanwhile, they are also constructing throughout great limitations a ‘community economy’ whose various surpluses are collectively distributed to the whole community. Through these different and complex articulations, the CPSJA is courageously affirming a space of difference derived from a

particular understanding of a ‘human’ being. A difference that stems out of ‘relational’ politics where the dead are not just buried and dissected from the present but very much inform and participate in the everyday life and the larger patterns of mobilization.

Conclusions

[1] Last accessed, April 4, 2009. http://www.javiergiraldo.org/spip.php?article170

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