

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND EXCLUSION: AFRO-COLOMBIANS FROM
SLAVERY TO DISPLACEMENT

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

By

Sascha Carolina Herrera, B.A.

Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.
October 31, 2012

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND EXCLUSION: AFRO-COLOMBIANS FROM SLAVERY TO DISPLACEMENT

Sascha Carolina Herrera, B.A.

MALS Mentor: Kevin Healy, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In Colombia, the Afro-Colombian population has been historically excluded and marginalized primarily due to the legacy of slavery deeply embedded within contemporary social and economic structures. These structures have been perpetuated over many generations of Afro-Colombians, who as a result have been caught in a recurring cycle of poverty throughout their history in Colombia.

In contemporary Colombia, this socio-economic situation has been exacerbated by the devastating effects of various other economic and social factors that have affected the Colombian society over half century and a prolonged conflict with extensive violence involving the Colombian state, Paramilitaries, and Guerrillas and resulting from the dynamics of the war on drugs and drug-trafficking in Colombian society.

In addition to the above mentioned factors, Afro-Colombians face other types of violence, and further socio-economic exclusion and marginalization resulting from the prevailing official development strategies and U.S. backed counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics strategies and programs of the Colombian state.

Colombia's neo-liberal economic policies promoting a "free" open market approach involve the rapid expansion of foreign investment for economic development, exploitation of natural resources, and the spread of agro bio-fuel production such as African Palm, have impacted negatively the Afro-Colombian population of the Pacific coastal region.

To show the historical roots and evolution of the structural causes of Afro-Colombian marginality and exclusion, the first chapter examines this history as a background for understanding contemporary Afro-Colombian problems.

The second chapter provides an analysis of two major Colombian public policies for regional development of the Pacific coastal region. The first is CONPES 3491 which enhances the region's role in the national economy. The second policy is CONPES 3660 purportedly aiming to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Afro-Colombian minority. The major argument of this chapter is about the detrimental effects these policies have had on the region and its people, namely the Afro-Colombians. The policies have thus far proved inadequate to effectively addressing severe and widespread the social and economic problems faced by Afro-Colombians.

The third chapter focuses on the municipality of Buenaventura of the Pacific coastal region by presenting a socio-economic profile of the municipality's Afro-descendent population. The chapter argues that there is a major contradiction for Buenaventura as Colombia's most important port city which is generating tens of

millions of dollars in revenues for the nation's economy, yet its population, which is 80% Afro-Colombian, receives scant benefits. The chapter includes an analysis of Buenaventura's high levels of social and political violence affecting the Afro-Colombian population which arises also from the dynamics of the regional economy, drug trafficking and the Colombian internal armed conflict.

The fourth chapter links the discussion about severe poverty in Buenaventura and social violence, drug trafficking, and Plan Colombia backed by the United States and the Colombian state have perpetuated and deepened conditions of marginalization and exclusion for Afro-Colombians in the Pacific coastal region as a whole and in particular in Buenaventura. This chapter also shows how the socio economic and security conditions for this Afro-Colombian minority group have worsened in recent years due to the devastating effects of the above mentioned factors. This chapter discusses and analyzes the internal displacement of the Afro-Colombian population from their communities to other locations and regions in the country.

The concluding chapter summarizes the findings on these topics and provides policy recommendations for more effectively address these issues and problems affecting Afro-Colombians in within the Colombian Pacific coastal region. This chapter also makes recommendations for the improvement of U.S. policies towards the region, especially Plan Colombia and uses benchmarks for measuring the success of various U.S. aid programs in Colombia.

DEDICATION

To my son Patrik, the true love of life, who faithfully “accompanied” me the last two semesters of class, and was good enough to let me finish this work.

To my mom, Rosa, my dad, Ricardo, and my wonderful brother, David, who have got my back – always - and have loved me so much.

To my country, Colombia, and all the invisible and stoic Afro-Colombian heroes, men and women, who have inspired this work and who have thought me so much about dignity and courage.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 COLOMBIA: COLONIALISM AND SLAVERY FROM 1600 TO 1851	6
CHAPTER 2 COLOMBIA'S PROMOTION OF NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES AND AFRO-COLOMBIANS IN THE PACIFIC COASTAL REGION	31
CHAPTER 3 BUENAVENTURA: PROFILE OF POVERTY	70
CHAPTER 4 CONFLICT AND DRUG-TRAFFICKING IMPACT IN THE PACIFIC REGION AND BUENAVENTURA	91
CONCLUSION	118
REFERENCE LIST	124

INTRODUCTION

In Colombia, the Afro-Colombian population has been historically excluded and marginalized primarily due to the legacy of slavery deeply attached to current social and economic structures. These structures have survived over generations of Afro-Colombians who, as a result, have historically lived in a never ending cycle of poverty.

As observed by George Reid Andrews, this historical marginalization, is the direct consequence of slavery not only in Colombia but in every Latin American country with significant black population - “citizens of present day afro-Latin America struggle to escape the economic heritage of poverty and dependency left by plantation agriculture, they do so over the shadow of the social heritage of racial and class inequality left by slavery” (Andrews 2004, 5).

Slavery in Colombia can be traced back to the sixteenth century when African labor was brought to the European colonies to replace the declining native indigenous populations. African slaves were forced to work in different areas such as mining, cattle ranches, mills, textiles, tobacco, cotton, artisanry, domestic work, etc. Major concentrations of African labor were found mainly in two economic sectors: mining and coastal plantations. These sectors were especially prolific in the Colombian Pacific in the departments of Chocó, Antioquia, Cauca, Valle and Nariño. During the colonial period, slaves were the pillars of colonial economy. Currently, this Colombian Western region is home to the vast majority of Afro-Colombian population in the country.

However, it is important to note that the Afro population in Colombia is not a

homogeneous population. Particular regional processes and dynamics have produced a wide variety of socio-economic factors that have shaped Afro-descendants in Colombia (PUND 2011; Sanchez and Garcia 2006).

The Colombian government through its National Department of Statics (DANE), has identified four representative groups of Afro-descendants in the country: Afro-Colombians from the Pacific who mainly are peasants, fishermen, and traditional miners mainly located on collectively owned territories; Raizal communities from the Caribbean Islands of San Andres and Providence; Afro-Colombians from the “*palenque*” of San Basilio in the Bolivar Department; and Afro-Colombians living in municipalities and Colombian cities.

Each of these groups has unique social, economic and cultural characteristics and structures resulting on issues and needs affecting each particular group. Thus, in Colombia, Afro-descendants issues are very diverse -from ethno-territorial issues to social inclusion and equal access to opportunities.

This particular work will primarily examine the first identified group of Afro-descendants, who are located in the Colombian Pacific and whose economy has been predominantly developed around mineral extractions and exploitation of forest resources (Leal 2008).

The Colombian Pacific, a region covering nine percent of Colombia’s territory, is divided in two zones: the North Pacific territories (Chocó) and the South Pacific territories (Cauca, Cauca Valley and Nariño departments). Afro-Colombians in the area have traditionally practiced subsistence agriculture, mining, fishing and hunting. These

black communities have their origins in the large livestock, mining and agricultural haciendas found during the colonial period.

Also, in this region is located the city of Buenaventura, which is Colombia's main port and is the second largest city in the Cauca Valley department. The city, whose population is mainly black, has the biggest socio-economic gaps in Colombia.

For the purposes of this work, Buenaventura's unique characteristics will serve as an excellent case study to illustrate Afro-Colombians' common conditions in the country. For instance, it is observed that despite the millions in revenues generated by the city for the central Colombian government, Buenaventura still has the biggest number of people living in poverty or extreme poverty in the country (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

Also, over the last decade, the city has been severely impacted by drug trafficking and the violence produced by Colombia's long internal conflict between paramilitaries, guerrillas and the Colombian state. In 2007, the levels of violence experienced by Buenaventura's population earned the city the title of Colombia's deadliest city (Romero 2007).

Besides poverty and violence, Afro-Colombians are disproportionately affected by internal displacement due to the concentration of Colombia's internal conflict in their territories. It is estimated that Colombia has more than 5'000,000¹ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Afro-Colombians and indigenous populations account for

¹ This number is according to the Colombian NGO Consultancy for Humans Rights and Displacement (CODHES). Official data from the Colombian government put the number of IDPs in 3'000,000.

the majority of Colombia's IDPs. Women and girls from these minorities are especially impacted by this issue. However, in recent years, large scale economic projects have also been associated to displacement in Colombia.

Violence, drug-trafficking, internal displacement and the legacy of slavery in current Afro-Colombian socio-economic structures have profoundly impacted Afro-descendants ability to integrate into Colombia's social and economic systems.

Furthermore, Colombia's neo economic policies seek international investment and economic development for macro-economic development, exploitation of natural resources, and proliferation of mono crops such as African Palm (e.g. U.S. –Colombia Free Trade Agreement, state policies for the Colombian Pacific or CONPES 3491, Policy to promote equal opportunities for black population, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera and Raizal populations or CONPES 3660); Colombia's security polices (e.g. "democracy security" and National Consolidation Plan); and U.S. security, and drug policies towards Colombia (Plan Colombia, aerial fumigation and military aid) have disproportionally affected Afro-Colombians and their ability to secure access to education, economic growth, and good living conditions.

More importantly, these policies have directly threatened Afro-Colombian's right to determine their own destiny, and the right to be protected and fully recognized by the state.

When speaking about minorities in Colombia, state and international polices designed to address development, investment, and issues such as security, drug trafficking and poverty have negatively impacted these groups, and have reinforced

minorities' historical position of marginalization and exclusion in the country.

This work will analyze the perpetuation of poverty over generations of Afro-Colombians in the Colombian South Pacific region, especially in the city of Buenaventura, including both rural and urban areas. This work will also examine how Colombian policies and the U.S. policies towards this country might have contributed to maintain Afro-Colombian's historical status quo of social exclusion and marginalization.

Within this context this work will look at the following three Colombian state policies: States Policies for the Colombian Pacific or CONPES 3491, Policy to promote equal opportunities for black, Afro-Colombians, *Palenqueras* and *Raizal* populations or CONPES 3660, and State Policy to Improve Living Conditions in Buenaventura's population or CONPES 3410. This work will also examine the chief US policy towards Colombia: Plan Colombia, especially its emphasis on drug eradication and military aid.

CHAPTER 1

COLOMBIA: COLONIALISM AND SLAVERY FROM THE 1600 TO 1851

The origin of the slaves brought to the *Virreinato de Nueva Granada* (Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador) is hard to determine as no records were kept to identify African slaves' origins. For colonial authorities, keeping records of Africans origin was irrelevant as they were mainly considered objects - "tools for physical work and non-carriers of culture" (Nina Friedemann, 1993, 20, citing Roger Bastide).

However, historical analyses of colonial slave trade documents show that the slaves brought to Cartagena to be distributed among the *Virreinato de Nueva Granada* came from every zone involved in the African slaves' trade: Guinea, Sierra Leone, Congo, Carabali, Arara, Mina and Angola (Friedemann, 1993 49); and belonged to several African ethnicities such as Angol, Carabalies, Congo, Bambaras, Minas, Mandigas, Yolofos, Luangos among many others (Friedemann 1993, 50).

Friedemann's review from well-known works of historians and linguists observes Africans brought to Colombia came from seven regions in Africa: Senegambia, Pepper Coast, Gold Coast, Benin Gulf, Biafra Gulf, Central Africa, and West Africa; and belong to more than twenty different African ethnicities.

During the colony, the city of Cartagena de Indias was the colonial epicenter for slaves' trading. Thousands of slaves arrived to Cartagena, and were sold and distributed among the colonies. Between 1695 and 1735, Cartagena's slave trade reached its highest point (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999).

In addition to the legal trade market of slaves dominated by Cartagena, illegal slave trade took place in other areas of the Colombian Atlantic as well as in the Pacific region. African slaves were brought illegally to the colonies through the Atlantic arriving to the cities of Santa Marta, Tolu, Darien and Rioacha; and through the Pacific arriving to the cities of Buenaventura, Charambira, Gorgona and Barbacoas (Friedemann 1999, 41).

However, Afro descendants not only arrived to the colonies as a result of slave trading and illegal trafficking through the Colombian Atlantic and Pacific coasts, they also came as part of the Spanish conquerors' expeditions to the "New World." These Africans, known as "*negros ladinos*," were born under Christian Spanish and Portuguese owners and were familiar with the conquerors' culture and language (Friedemann 1993, 33).

The *negros ladinos*, who were a combination of free blacks and slaves, were the only people, apart from the conquerors, allowed to enter the colonies. For instance, in the 1501 instructions from the Crown to Nicolas de Ovando, Governor of the Indies, the colonies were forbidden to bring moros, Jews, heretics, and the recently converted. It is unknown how many *negros ladinos* arriving to the colonies were slaves, and how many were free blacks (Friedemann 1993, 34).

In the seventeenth century, due to the expansion of mines and "haciendas" and once the indigenous¹ population had considerably diminished due to harsh treatment,

¹ In 1542 Indian slavery was legally prohibited in the Spanish Colonies; however, as pointed out by Peter Wade on his book "Blackness and Race Mixture," Indian slavery continued in different areas after its prohibition.

extermination or fallen victims of European's diseases, slaves replaced indigenous workforce in livestock and farming haciendas and mining (West 1957).

During this century, the demand for African slaves increased and became critical to support new forms of social and economic organization in the colonies. This shift from indigenous work force to African slaves work force marked at the same time the end of a colonial socio-economic system supported by indigenous societies and the beginning of a new colonial system supported almost exclusively by slavery.

Author Anthony McFarlane explains this transition as follows:

“...the decimation and destruction of indigenous societies (...) was paralleled by the emergence of new forms of social and economic organization designed to meet Spanish needs and aspirations. Two basic patterns emerged. One was a rural economy in which arable farming combining with cattle raising to meet the basic needs of Spanish settlers; the other was a mining economy that extracted gold, essential for trade with Europe” (MacFarlane 1993, 16).

In Colombia, the pacific rural regions of Cauca, Bolivar, Valle del Cauca, Antioquia and Chocó had the greatest concentration of slaves. Mining, sugar production, cattle, among others economic activities, were concentrated in the region, where economy heavily depended upon exploitation of African slaves - “the slaves, arriving to Cartagena who were fit to work in the mines were taken in small groups throughout the Magdalena and Cauca rivers to their destinations in Santa Fe, Antioquia, Cali, Popayan y Chocó” (Friedemann 1993, 58).

Thus, colonial economy relied almost exclusively on slave work force. Slave work force was present in both the rural and the urban sectors. However, their presence

was heavily concentrated on the rural areas working primarily on mining, agriculture and livestock. “In the seventeenth century, the economy in the Nueva Granada was unthinkable without the blacks. Over their shoulders rest the development of mining, agriculture, livestock, crafts, commerce, domestic work and pearls extraction in the Caribbean” (Friedemann 1993 citing Jaramillo Uribe, 59).

Between 1620 and 1670, the first gold explorations took place in the Pacific coast. Groups formed by African slaves and Indians under the command of a Spanish conquer, “*cuadrillas*,” went in search of gold along the rivers in the region. The “*cuadrillas*” were usually formed by a group of up to 30 men living in camps along the rivers (Leal 2008; Friedemann 1993). Miners’ camps were established along the rivers due to easy access to food -fish, mollusks, manatees, veal, and wild boars (Friedemann 1993). “Thus, the miners’ camps were built along the following rivers: Santa Maria del Puerto that later would become Barbacoas, over the waters of Telembi, Quibdo (Citara) and Lloro, at the borders of the Atrato, Novita and Tado, on the border of the San Juan river. The routes of the expeditionaries moved north by navigating the Atrato and from Antioquia over land, throughout the valley of Urrao; and in the South, from Buenaventura towards the San Juan. The camps also spread throughout the gaps of the mountains of the west ‘cordillera’ ending in Popayan, Cali and Cartago...” (Friedemann 1993, 78).

By the eighteenth century, mining became the most profitable colonial activity: (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999). African slaves from the Pacific region became the major labor force for developing not only the mining but also the agricultural sector

(Friedemann 1993).

In the urban areas, African slaves were also an essential part of the economy as they supplied the labor in micro economic niches in cities such as Cartagena. African slaves performed a wide range of occupations from artisans to street vendors (fruit, food and sweets), transported goods along the Cauca and Magdalena rivers, worked in port and cargo activities, and were also commonly found as household servants responsible for domestic work.

Despite their importance to colonial economy, African slaves at the time had fewer rights than indigenous who enjoyed some legal protections. The colonial “black codes” from the Spanish Crown, apparently written to “protect” slaves, were a legal framework to institutionalize slavery as a socio-economic system, and served as a legal tool to segregate Afro population. As a result of these colonial laws, African slaves were segregated and relegated to agricultural labor and other rural activities (Friedemann 1993).

The codes also “prohibited the access of blacks and *pardos*, until the fifth generation, to the sciences” (Friedemann 1993, 60). African slaves were legally banned from education further condemning them, for generations, to occupy low places within society and without the possibility to economic advancement to maintain their position on the bottom of the social ladder.

The Pacific coast mining economy stimulated haciendas economic expansion where large scale production of sugar cane, plantain, tobacco, and cattle became the norm (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999). The need to haciendas became a repository of African

labor for sustaining mining activities. Gonzalez Sevillana explains that mine owners were dependent on slaves as their workforce and some large mines exploited up to five hundred slaves at the time to meet production targets. In addition, mine owners' food demands to feed the slaves increased, and the "*platanares*," which were small portions of land around the mine for slaves' food production, became insufficient. Mine owners then realized the need of haciendas' large food production to sustain mining economy.

As a consequence, it was common to find mine owners in the Valle region who were also hacienda owners: "in the eighteenth century the development of gold mining on the Pacific lowlands injected a new dynamism into Cauca's economy. Sugar cultivation, using slave labor and often organized by "*hacendados*", who were also involved in mining and who transferred their slaves between agricultural and mining activities, now became the most profitable aspect of agrarian economy" (MacFarlane 1993, 65).

Mining and huge haciendas became dominant economic activities in the Pacific region and this continues through the present. Both institutions were sustained by the colonial slavery system. Mining economy not only stimulated agriculture in the Pacific coastal areas but also regions in Colombia such as the kingdom of New Granada, Antioquia, Popayan, upper Cauca Valley, and Pasto. However, the extraction model has traditionally been the primary economic structure in the Colombian Pacific (Leal 2008).

The Path to Emancipation

During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, slaves had few opportunities to escape to freedom. As slaves were the core of the colonial economic

system, slavery was aggressively enforced by the Spanish Crown and harsh punishments were in place to suppress slaves' intent to seek emancipation.

However, at the same time, the Crown over the centuries, and with the support of the Catholic Church, issued a series of mandates, known as "*ordenanzas*" to protect slaves.

Although mainly directed to fiercely and legally enforced slavery, the "*ordenanzas*" included articles to protect slaves from excessive punishment and to secure slaves' proper alimentation and clothing (PUND 2011).

Contrary to what one might think, the mandates issued by the Spanish Crown as early as 1556 (PUND 2011) were never an intent to humanize the practice of slavery. These primarily were a legal instrument to regulate, control and protect slavery workforce, which was essential to colonial economy. However, in many instances, African slaves used the mandates to negotiate better conditions, moved from abusive owners and even to obtain freedom.

Despite the challenges imposed by the colonial system, some slaves were able to gain freedom before slavery was formally abolished by either escaping to "*palenques*," which were black independent communities formed by runaway African slaves in remote territories, or buying their freedom from the owners.

In the Colombian Pacific, and thanks to the mining economy, more slaves were able to exercise the right to buy their freedom by paying their owners with gold powder extracted from the mines, where slaves were allowed to work on their free day, which was usually Sundays (Leal 2008).

Contrary to other colonial territories such as the Colombian Atlantic or the Caribbean coast where African slaves seeking freedom would usually ran away to the “*Palenques*” as it was the only option, in the Colombian Pacific once slavery was abolished only 10% of the region’s black population remained slaves (Leal 2008 citing Aprile-Gnisset 1993 and Almario 2003).

Palenques

The first “*palenques*” for slave colonies were established in the sixteenth century along the Atlantic coast, close to northern Caribbean city of Cartagena: Tofeme, La Ramada, Malambo and Ure. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries’, the numbers of “*palenques*” multiplied extending along the Atlantic through the Pacific coast, from Cartagena to the Patia river. However, very little is known about the lives of the *cimarrones*, as African runaway slaves were known, in the *palenques*: “there is a deep lack of data about the daily lives of the peoples’ in the *palenques* ...” (Friedemann 1993, 72).

According to McFarlane’s article cited by Gonzalez Sevillana, “Cimarrones y Palenques en Colombia: Siglo XVIII,” en Revista Historia y Espacio, No 1, the first runaways slaves were from the Atlantic region and the palenques were formed directly by African slaves as autonomous societies with African traditions.

After the seventeenth century, other palenques spread to other regions that became more easily integrated with other colonial populations (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999 citing McFarlane).

Among other contributions, palenques played an important role in the conservation of African traditions and culture. For instance, the *San Basilio Palenque*, in the Atlantic coast, has survived for centuries. It has also been the subject of various historic, anthropologic and linguistic studies documenting cultural and historic aspects of the African tradition, culture and history in Colombia as well as social and cultural structures maintain within the palenques (Friedemann 1993, PNUD 2011).

The Carolinian Code

The Carolinian Codes or Black Spanish Code of 1784 (*Codigo Negro Carolino*) were one of the most significant and comprehensive mandates dealing with slaves produced by the Crown. As previous mandates, the Carolinian codes were focused on prohibitions directed to strictly control slaves, but they also contained provisions to regulate owners treatment of their slaves -from food and clothing to type of acceptable punishments (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999).

African slaves in the colonies used this particular code to buy their freedom, negotiate with their owners to gain better conditions, and to benefit from their owners “merci,” who in exchange for loyalty or a lifelong service freed their slaves (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999). This process, known as manumission, also benefited women slaves, who were forced to become whites’ concubines, and with whom their owners, in many cases, had children as a result.

The Republic: Abolition of Slavery

In the nineteenth century, the crisis of the slavery system in Europe, and

frictions in the colonies between the colonial dominant elites, Spaniards and the “*criollos*,” as were known the Spaniards’ descendents born in the colonies, also influenced the African slaves’ path to emancipation.

The independence wars of the nineteenth century became an opportunity for the slaves to achieve freedom. African slaves were actively involved during colonies’ battles fighting on one side or the other pursuing their only interest - freedom. Spanish and Republicans leaders, desperate to enlist as many slaves as possible into their armies, offered slaves freedom. Furthermore, the Spanish even offered land and official titles. The Republicans in response offered “absolute freedom” (Lievano-Aguirre cited by PNUD 2011).

On August 7, 1819 the independence army defeated the Spanish army in New Granada (Colombia), in what is known as the *Boyacá* Battle, fought near Bogota, for the final battle of independence. Once freed from the Spanish rule, the Republicans, also known as “*criollos*,” established a provisional government headed by Independence army general Simon Bolivar, as President, and Francisco de Paula Santander as a vice-president.

In 1821, the Republican congress, dominated by the liberal party lead by Francisco de Paula Santander, initiated talks regarding slaves’ freedom. This discussion produced the “Womb’s Freedom Law” (“*Ley de Libertad de Vientres*”), which was a law that would gradually provide children of slaves freedom. Unfortunately, the law was plagued with provisions to favor slaves’ owners and served to legally prolong slavery for 30 more years.

Although the “Womb’s Freedom Law” mandated immediate freedom for children born after the law’s approvals date, these children would only obtain freedom once they had turned 18 years old. Until that time, they were to remain under their custody of their mother’s owner, and were required to work for them to cover the expenses incurred by the owners while in their possession for food and shelter.

In 1840, after the liberal government lost the power to the conservative party, slaves’ trafficking and export was again legalized. However, once the liberal party regained government’s control in 1849, slavery finally ended.

On May 21, 1851, the Republic was constituted and slavery was abolished. The abolition law stipulated freedom to all slaves by January 1, 1852. This change in status, among others socio-economic and political aspects, triggered a relocation of mine and slave owners from the Pacific coast to the closest urban areas in the region - “the large slave owners of the Pacific coast experienced a crisis due to loss of workers, and a subsequently critical situation from a depression of the mine industry along with the outbreak of political conflicts provoking the civil wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These negative factors finally compelled former mine and slave owners to abandon gold mining and to move to cities such as Cali, Popayan, Pasto, Tumaco and Medellin” (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999, 64).

After the independence wars, peasant families and free slaves settled in vast unoccupied state lands (Cauca valley), practicing subsistence agricultural production with some cash sale for markets (Andrews 2004; West 1957). This new economic practice gave rise to a new rural social class. Within this new social sector, land was

communal and farmers had right “to farm, hunt, gather forest products, and pan for gold” (Andrews 2004, 104). This economic strategy has been practiced over generations for Afro-Colombians in the Cauca Valley.

Another sector of ex slaves left behind the *haciendas* and the mines and made their way to the Pacific coastal jungle and to the lands along the rivers being exploited by huge mine owners, *Mazamorras* or *Troncos*. During the colonial period, free blacks and Indians were allowed to work as independents and were able to claim any gold found within the *Mazamorras* (Friedemann 1993; Leal 2008).

Other former slaves remained in the haciendas and were offered by hacienda’s owners housing and small farming areas within the haciendas in exchange for money and basic products from the hacienda owner, as well as periods of work in the hacienda’s crops. This system known as “*terraje*” (Friedemann 1993) was a peonage system found in various forms throughout the Americas exploiting labor, and creating labor dependency.

As observed by Friedemann, “*terraje*” had elements common to the slavery system. Free blacks “had no freedom of movement,” and the workers had to request authorization to be absent for a short period of time. In addition, celebrations were restricted by *hacendados* and the free slaves were required to submit expenditures” (Friedemann 1993, 85).

Furthermore, Friedemann states that during that period, labor shortages generated the creation of coercive measures such as laws authorizing bosses to use physical punishment via lashing and withholding basic foods from their rebellious

workers: “all this happening in 1885, twenty five years after black were declared free” (Friedemann 1993, 85).

Abolition, however, did not change Afro-descendants colonial conditions in the Republic’s society. In fact, the Republic model reproduced many colonial policies where Afro-descendants were marginalized and grossly exploited lacking economic means of subsistence outside of haciendas owners or any other white patron willing to take them as servants or peons. Afro-descents during the Republic wound up being dependent and controlled by the dominant, usually white, elites for subsistence.

Republicans were unable to fulfill the promises made to slaves during the independence wars, mainly because laws ending slavery were seen as a direct threat to property’s right, which was ultimately recognized by the government (PNUD 2011).

As a result, the government was quick to establish provisions to compensate slave owners, especially those from large plantations and mines in Cauca, for lost property. However, the government never recognized the need to compensate former slaves for the damages and prejudices suffered as a consequence of slavery (PNUD 2012) such as huge social and economic gaps with respect to non-slave population.

In this respect, Friedemann also adds that in rural areas lack of land reform measures and/or any other stipulations to provide free slaves with means of subsistence, and work, once slavery was abolished, contributed to the continuation of the slavery system in post colonial period (Friedemann 1993).

During the Republic, free blacks’ subsistence conditions were very poor and dependent. In rural and urban areas, they struggled in poverty unable to cover their

main needs, and lacked any real possibilities for social and economical mobility within the post-colonial system. “Thus, it was left a big human group with absolute freedom, but without resources such as land, means of production, rents, literacy , and without any other option that passing from being slave to be day laborer, lessee, peon or household servant; in other words, the ‘*liberto*,’ (free black) continued to occupy the lowest social status in society. It went from slavery, to waged slavery” (Gonzalez Sevillana 1999, 75).

The Republic failed to recognize and respect Afro-descendants as citizens of the new state, and ultimately did not reserve a space for this minority in the newly formed society. Thus, Afro-descendants ended up in a social system dominated by elites that had little respect for their rights as citizens (PNUD 2011, 25 citing Mosquera), and where they were ultimately marginalized and excluded.

Escaping the Republican System

In rural areas, some free blacks used the strategy of settling on wastelands along the rivers escaping from the place of poverty, dependence and marginalization reserved to them within post-colonial system.

This strategy resulted in the formation of a socio-economic and cultural structure organized around family ties and communities. This socio-economic model, known as “*trancos*,” limited land access to parentage, and at the same time established rules to land’s access (Rodriguez 2008).

The Troncos

As essential Afro-descendants' socio-economic organizations, *troncos* were formed by family groups who had inheritance and work rights over territories. These territories initially claimed by the family's founder were divided in mines and agricultural crops, called "*chagras*." (Friedemann 1993; Rodriguez 2008). Within this model, the family was the basic organization unit and land access was structure around family and community (Rodriguez 2008). Members of a *tronco* sought marriage with members of another in order to increase collective access to landholdings.

This organization allowed members of a particular family or community to have rights over a wide variety of "*troncos*" from mining lands to farming *chacras* expanding members' possibilities of socio-economic activities. Rodriguez notes that "the tangled web between family '*troncos*' leads to inhabitants from one place inheriting agricultural land and forest land alike (...). (Thus) those belonging to a *tronco* have residential, work and inheritance rights over mining lands and farming '*chacras*' ..." (Rodriguez 2008, 48).

Troncos also comprised socio-economic units, *Minas*, common in mining areas of the community. *Minas*' territory had four distinct areas of organization: the residential area for the nuclear family, the collective area for mining excavation, the area for washing gold and the farming area for subsistence food production. There were distinct roles for sexes and children, this division of labor characterizing the *Mina*. Men had the responsibility for cleaning forest or bushes, cutting wood to build houses and canoes and heavy work in the mines. Women and children provided farm labor in

chacras, cut banana and sugar cane, and made *panela*². Women and children also were responsible for collective farm work (Friedemann 1993).

This socio-economic organization remains in place today within Afro-Colombian rural territories of the South Pacific coast, representing the socio-economic model in which this particular group of Afro Colombians has maintained their subsistence and production for centuries. Thus, “the *tronco* as a social and cultural reality have shaped the subsistence of black groups” (Friedemann 1993, 81).

Furthermore, the *tronco*, as observed by Friedemann, became for Afro-Colombians in rural areas of the south Pacific region a response to discrimination from the dominant society - “the *tronco* continues to function for blacks contemporary groups as a response to socio-ethnic and economic discrimination” (Friedemann 1993, 81).

In addition to *trancos*, Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific have established two traditional forms to access land that were equally structure around family and communities: the inheritance system and the selling -buying land system among the members from the same community (Rodriguez 2008).

Under the inheritance system, children received land to work from their parents, known as “*plante*,” once the children had formed their own nuclear families. Also, the rights over land inherited were never lost by the descendants even if the family leaves the territory. Therefore, children and grandchildren from those families retained the right to claim inherited territory upon their return.

² Panela is a solid piece of unrefined sugar cane typical in Colombia and other countries in Latin America. In Colombia, Panela is mainly used in Colombian homes to make a very popular hot drink called “aguadepanela.”

The second system allows to only members from the same community to buy land from another member to assist the fellow seller to overcome any kind of financial hardship. It is important to note that this practice is viewed as a favor to another member of the community and it is not practiced to accumulate land by one member of the community or his family (Rodriguez 2008).

The Export Agro-Industrial Model

With the establishment of the Republic, modern social, economic and political European ideas entered to the country. The '*criollos*' realization of their economical and political power, their desire to join the free markets, and the new dominant economic system, capitalism, resulted in the country's development of an export agro-industrial economy based upon foreign investment, land monopolization (private property), mass production of products and exportation. "After about 1850, an export agricultural economy expanded in Colombia, based on short-lived booms of tobacco, cotton, and cinchona bark (from which quinine is extracted) and on more stable exports in coffee and bananas ..." (Wade 1993, 59).

In the Colombian Pacific region, agro-industry generated the rapid proliferation of massive plantations of highly demanded agricultural products such as sugar cane, plantain, and African palm, especially in the Cauca valley (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004).

At the same time, proliferation of Afro descendants' settlements in wastelands around the rivers served as an alternative to circumvent haciendas' low positions reserved for them (day laborers, peons or servants), created a particular type of

economy for this group: an economy model based upon development of subsistence practices rather than development of mass products practices for commercialization. However, more than providing Afro-Colombians with a particular economic model, the practice of establishing settlements in wastelands allowed them to develop their own social-economic organization (e.g. *troncos*, *minas*, *chacras*), essential to ethnical validation, and autonomy

Afro Colombians developed artisanal mining, traditional fishing, and artisanal logging, which became their traditional ways of subsistence. However, these practices were directly opposite to the economic trend in the country; and therefore, it created a sub-economy and a sub-class totally excluded from the country's main economic system - the agro-industrial model in Latin America vs. the Afro- descendant model of subsistence (Andrews 2004).

The agro-industrial economical model generated a process of industrialization and urbanization while the Afro economical subsistence model generated a process of peasantization and rurality (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004). Thus, following the old socio-economic pattern established during colonial times (e.g. black codes) and continued during the post-colonial Colombia (e.g. *terrajé*), Afro descendants in the country were one more time relegated to the rural-agricultural sector or pushed to remote territories in the region.

Urrea and Barbary observe that the abolition of slavery produced a “peasantization widespread phenomenon of the black population throughout the Pacific and the Caribbean region” (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004, 72) while the Afro

subsistence model “prolonged lag rurality” (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004, 72).

Thus, during the second half of the nineteenth century to the first part of the twentieth century, industrialization and urbanization, and especially export agro-industrial economy, which was led by Colombian elites, and foreign investment, further marginalized and excluded Afro Colombians within the region.

Furthermore, during the turn of the twentieth century, and pressed by the export demands, the government supported policies that resulted in Afro descendants’ dispossession from their territories in areas of sugar plantations in the Cauca valley. For instance, for those Afro-Colombians who remained within the main territories of the region, labor contracts were forced upon them (Andrews 2004).

Plantation’s accelerated growth, as a result of the export agro-industrial boom, severely deteriorated conditions for Afro-descendants in the Cauca Valley region. Those, who stayed in the territories to work on the plantations, went from owners of their territories to wage laborers: “while the capital, the mechanization of wit and rapid expansion of land converted plantations into the mills, workers began their entry into to the proletarian world” (Friedemann 1993, 86).

In the 1930’s, Andrews observes that the situation got worse for Afro-Colombians once the Panama Canal was opened and the railroad from Cali to the Pacific was completed. Their territories were now part of a national transportation network that opened new opportunities to export the region’s products: “during the 1930s, haciendas spread south from the Cauca into Patia Valley, as the new Pan-American Highway tied that the region of black towns and palenques into the national

transportation network” (Andrews 2004, 134).

In the 1940’s and 1960’s, the situation for Afro-Colombians in the region further deteriorated with the entrance, along the southern Pacific area, of massive foreign capital with state’s support and agro-industrial modernization credits for massive exploitation of wood, cattle ranching, oil palm plantations, and shrimp ponds (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004).

State policies tied technical assistance with regularization of land tenure and land titling over peasants territories to state sponsored agro-credits destined to the development of tech-crops (Urrea-Barbary, 2004). Some black peasants saw these rural development programs as an alternative to economic development; more importantly, to regain lost land for the practice of traditional agriculture (Friedemann 1993).

These policies proved to be harmful to peasants, Afro-Colombians and other minorities who applied for the credits. In addition to the challenges posed by free markets, these groups had to face the technological challenge. Technical failures in the application of agro technologies made peasants lost everything, including their lands. Once peasants could no longer afford the payments for their credits, the lands were foreclosed by the lender, the State’s owned bank “*Caja Agraria*” (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004): "thus, agricultural modernization in this area results in loss of land and resources for farmers, and the spectacular development of cattle ranches and African palm around the Pasto-Tumaco road (1950-1960)" (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004, 206).

Afro descendents who had lost their lands in this venture either migrated to the

cities to face extreme poverty or started alternative economic ways of subsistence such as commercialization of clay tiles (Friedemann 1993).

However, state sponsored credits for agro-industrialization were not the only factor that contributed to Afro-Colombians' loss of land. Later, during the 80's, 90's and the first decade of the twenty-first century, other factors such as the violence produced by the fifty years Colombian conflict, drug-trafficking, and mega projects, as well as national and international policies to address these issues, seriously impacted this minority and produced the modern phenomenon of internal displacement.

In addition, socio-political black and national movements started to surge claiming a profound changed in Colombia's politics and society.

The Constitution of 1991, Ethnic Rights, and IDPs

During the 1980's, Colombia was undergoing profound economic, social, and political transformations. In this decade, Colombia's agro-industrial economy was strengthened thanks to the creation of state policies to promote economic liberalization, decentralization and democratization. In the Pacific region, economic liberalization policies resulted in "increasing pressure on land and resources" (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004, 211).

In addition, mass cultivation of African Palm spread among the regions of Uraba and the South Pacific, and companies were established in Tumaco to cultivate shrimp. Afro-Colombians lost territorial control to private companies becoming workers with little labor guarantees due to companies' proliferation of the practice of indirect contracting (PUND 2011).

At the same time, black social movements within the region seeking socio-political ethnical recognition started to surge. On the national level, Colombia had formed a National Constitutional Assembly charged with the task to produce the country's new constitution.

The 1990's were marked by large migrations of Afro-Colombians from the rural areas to the cities. During this decade, Buenaventura, Tumaco and Cali received large numbers of Afro-Colombians peasants who ended up settling in the poorest parts of these cities (PNUD 2011 citing Escobar). Economic policies and violence resulted in a massive rural exodus of Afro-Colombians to urban areas.

The port city of Buenaventura, in the Cauca Valley, was especially impacted by the phenomenon of displacement. The city received a large number of displaced Afro-Colombians from the Cauca valley area as well as departments of Chocó and Nariño.

In September 1995, the Colombian Government started to recognize the need to address the issue of displacement, and its responsibility to care for persons displaced by the violence. This prompted the government to adopt the National Program of Comprehensive Care for People Displaced by the Violence.

Although economic dynamics in Colombia, as shown in this chapter in the case of the Colombian south Pacific region, were clearly causing Afro-Colombians' displacement in the region, the Colombian government failed to recognize this issue as a direct cause of internal displacement. In the particular case of the south Pacific region, large agro industrial plantations of African Palm, and shrimp business have been cited as causing displacement among rural Afro-Colombians (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo

2004; PNUD 2011).

The Colombian Constitution of 1991 recognized for the first time in Colombia's history the rights and cultural importance of the country's ethnic minorities as well as the right of these minorities to collectively own and live in their ancestral territories. Law 70 of 1993, for Afro-descendants and Law 60, for indigenous, legally provided them with this right.

However, providing ethnical groups with the right to territories without other government guarantees (e.g. security) to exert this right proved to be detrimental to these minorities. Within a country with a long history of economic disparity affecting ethnic minorities and deeply involved in a long internal armed conflict, the result of these very progressive laws were, and still are, devastating for these groups.

As territorial control in Colombia represents the key to gain economic and political power, highly valued by legal and illegal actors in the country, Colombia's long lasting armed conflict started particularly affecting ethnical territories. The actors involved for decades in the conflict, including the State, fought to exert territorial control: " 'the ethnic space' is now coveted and fought for, while the geographical space is the object of large financial investments from foreign actors to the region. The space's control and appropriation is the object of negotiations and competition, accords, and actions conducted by actors whose means are disproportioned among them, and have different objectives" (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004, 220).

Within this context, the constitutional recognition of ethnic minorities and their right to collectively own ancestral territories intensified the conflict in the Colombian

Pacific region: ethnic groups vs. ethnic groups (Afro-descendants and Indigenous groups primarily over ethnical territories); ethnic groups vs. legal actors (agro industrial, private interests, and the government); ethnic groups vs. illegal groups, (guerrillas and paramilitaries).

At the same time, economic disparity within the region reached high levels. Large capitals from agro-industrial projects created an even deeper economic disparity within the south Pacific region. For instance, ethnical projects with minimal or none capitals were forced to compete with well-financed large projects.

Urrea and Barbary observe that not only the large difference between capitals contributed to economic marginalization of ethnical projects, but the national favoritism for one, agro-industrial projects, over the other, ethnical projects, further influenced this disparity. Under these economic and political conditions, ethnical projects hardly made it while the agro-industrial machinery flourished (Barbary and Urrea Giraldo 2004).

Furthermore, economic disparity also was present within the realm of illegal economy. There, ethnical groups were not only subject to violence from illegal groups but were unable to compete with the illegal economic resources produced by narco-trafficking.

New economic dynamics that produced a bigger economic gap within the country's minorities, the intensification of the conflict in the Pacific region, and the Constitutional ethnic and territorial rights negatively impacted Afro-Colombians during the 1990s. Lack of proper guarantees from the Colombian government to allow Afro descendants to exercise their rights was equivalent to the conditions in which their afro

slaves ancestors endured once slavery was abolished in 1851. On both occasions, in 1851 and then 1991, Afro-Colombians were left totally unprotected by a State that, one more time, ignored its responsibility to care and protect Afro-descendants rights.

Thus, within the complex Colombian context during the last decade of the twentieth century, Afro-Colombians were left without the State's adequate protection against legal and illegal groups and their interests over ethnical territories. As a result, Afro-Colombians were caught in the crossfire, and were also victims of legal maneuvers to size their territories.

CHAPTER 2

COLOMBIA'S PROMOTION OF NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES AND AFRO-COLOMBIANS IN THE PACIFIC COASTAL REGION

In keeping up with a globalized world and its economy, during the past 20 years, Colombia has adopted and vigorously promoted the Neo-Liberal economic model. This model based upon creating economic policies favoring private property rights, free market, and free trade, has been promoted in Latin America, and other underdeveloped countries by the world's economic powers (e.g. the U.S.) and has been supported by international financial institutions such as, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank.

Implementation of these policies has exacerbated inequality issues in Colombia and has increased the country's socio-economic gap among Colombia's population. For instance, the entrance of injections of foreign capital has made it impossible for ethnic minorities and peasants – who traditionally engage in the subsistence economic model – to compete with big international enterprises; has hurt labor rights and people's living standards as promotion of privatization has lowered wages and workers rights and concentrated wealth within a few hands; and has hurt the environment as policies seeking to deregulate preservation and conservation for the sake of profit have taken precedence.

Additionally, these policies have particularly impacted Colombia's minorities in regions like the Colombian Pacific, where an ethnic majority –Afro Colombians– represents the population's majority. In this region, neo liberal policies have further

pushed Afro-Colombians to socio-economic marginalization and extreme poverty. All while, the dominant minority monopolizes capital and resources, accumulates wealth, and enjoys positions of power.

Andrews observes that the transition from subsistence to market economies was detrimental not only to Afro-descendants in Colombia, but to Afro-descendants in Latin America. He describes the economic impact of the twenty-first century's policies for Afro-Latin Americans as follows: "throughout capitalism's long history, the process of transition from subsistence to market economics has been a wrenching and painful experience. Most Afro-Latin Americans have already made that transition, but many still remain in the subsistence sector and now stand on the threshold of being abruptly catapulted into the wage-labor market. Once in the market, they are likely to remain at the lowest levels, prevented from moving upward both by their own lack of skills and education and by the racial strictures that keep black workers in the lowest paying, most menial jobs" (Andrews 2004, 193).

The promotion of neo-liberal policies negatively impacted ethnic minorities, peasants, and the majority of the low income population in Latin America. When a bigger gap is opened between the people controlling the capital, and those who have no access or means to compete within the new economic dynamics set by this model, issues of inequality worsen with these policies.

For Afro-Colombians, the expansion of the neo liberal model during the twenty-first century was not the only responsible for their precarious socio-economic conditions, historic racial barriers deeply rooted in Colombia's society further pushed

Afro-Colombians into a sub-class, underpaid when working, and usually living in poverty or extreme-poverty conditions.

On this particular aspect Andrews states that neo-liberal policies with its “acute maldistribution of the regions’ wealth severely limits opportunities for people of color, who are disproportionately concentrated among poor and working class. Further reducing their ability to profit from economic growth are the long-standing racial barriers that continue to channel black workers into the least remunerative, lowest-paying areas of the economy” (Andrews 2004, 194).

State Policies for the Colombian Pacific

The Twenty first century saw the Colombia’s Pacific coastal region rise at the center of Colombia’s economy as the region economic potential and strategic geographical position was ruled critical to Colombia’s economic future.

The country, following the Western global trend of implementing the neo-liberal economic model, started to focus specially on promotion of international trade and investment as well as deregulation for the sake of profit and privatization as the center of the country’s “new” economic policy in the Pacific coastal region. Consequently, Colombia issued a set of socio-economic policies for the region with the objective of advancing Colombia’s economic agenda for the new century (XXI) and securing a place for the country in the global economy.

From 2000 to 2006, the Colombian National Planning Department (*Departamento de Planeacion Nacional*) throughout its National Council of Social and Economic Policies (CONPES) initiated the process to develop a set of policies to assist

the state to comply with its short, medium and long term economic objectives.

However, the task would not be an easy one.

In addition to Colombia's long armed conflict, drug-trafficking and lack of State control over rural areas, the State had to face another socio-economic reality in the Pacific: the historical lag of this region and its inhabitants compare to the country's national level. For instance, as of June of 2006, 64.7% of people in the Pacific coastal region were poor compared to 49.7% at the national level; 28.1% were extremely poor vs. 15.7% at the national level. In addition, only 39.0% homes in the Pacific coastal region had aqueduct vs. 83% at the national level; and 26% of homes in the Pacific coastal region had sewage system vs. 73% percent at the national level (MERPD 2005; DANE 2005).

Thus, the State came to the realization that in order to address economic, social, cultural and environmental issues in the Pacific coastal region, it needed to create policies to address the particularities of this area.

In addition, as a region with a majority Afro-descendant population, the policies should include the ethnic factor, which was recognized by the Colombian Constitution of 1991, and how to deal with collectively owned territories.

From 2000 to 2006, the state issued a number of policies to address those issues: Pacific Agenda 21st Century (*Agenda Pacifico Siglo XXI*), Colombia's Vision 2019 (*Vision Colombia 2019*) Internal Agenda for Competitiveness and Productivity (*Agenda Interna para la Competitividad y la Productividad*), The Integral Program for Development and Sustainable Reconstruction of Antioquia's and Choco's Uraba and

Low and Medium Atrato (*El Plan Integral para el Desarrollo y la Reconstrucción Sostenible de Uraba Antioqueno y Chocoano y el Bajo y Medio Atrato*), and the Proposal for the Long Term Integral Plan for Afro-Colombian Population (*La Propuesta Integral de Largo Plazo para la Población Afro-Colombiana*).

Although developed to address Afro-Colombians and the Pacific's coastal region special conditions, these policies mainly focused on the advancement of the state's economic policies while ignoring, for the most part, Afro-Colombians' particular needs and socio-economic conditions as well as their status as a constitutionally recognized ethnic minority.

This miscalculation on the part of the Colombian state may be the result of Colombia's traditional views of the region. In its article, "Buenaventura y Tumaco: los Puertos del Olvido," published in Colombia's main newspaper "El Tiempo," Antonio Caballero describes the historical dynamic between the Colombian state and the Pacific region as a forgotten territory: "this region of Colombia, which begins in the north, Chocó and ends in the south, in Candelillas Sea (Nariño), got used to the fact that the national governments would never turn their eyes to it, unless there were elections coming up" (Caballero Velasco 2011).

From 2007 to 2010 the state produced two new important policies for the region and its people: State Policies for the Colombian Pacific (*Políticas de Estado para el Pacífico Colombiano*), CORNPES 3491, and Policy to Promote Equal Opportunities to Black Population, Afro-Colombians, Palenque's and Raizal Population, CONPES 3660 (*Política para Promover la Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Población Negra, Afro-*

Colombiana, Palenquera y Raizal).

The first document, CONPES 3491, is a compilation of the State's policies from 2000-2006; while the second document, CONPES 3660, particularly addresses, for the first time in terms of national policy development, Afro-descendants' issues in Colombia. This latest policy was finalized on May 10, 2010.

An analysis of these two documents shows that Colombia's state policies for the Pacific coastal region – for the most part- fail to address the region's and its inhabitants particular needs. It is observed that government policies seem to be focused on the state's advancement of its economic agenda rather than on the advancement of the region and its people.

But, perhaps the most problematic aspect of these policies seems to be that they are based upon faulty ideas such as, the state's ideas about development, socio-economic advancement, environmental protection, resource management and exploitation, among many others. When comparing these ideas with those from ethnic groups, states' policies are found usually at odds with ethnic groups.

In this way, policies for the region created by the central government have proven to be ultimately ineffective in addressing issues affecting Afro-Colombians in the Pacific.

CONPES 3491: State Policies to the Colombian Pacific

According to the Colombian National Planning Department, CONPES 3491, sought to address poverty and precarious living standards in the Colombian Pacific region. In addition, the policy also presented solutions to the region's historic situation

of exclusion.

Thus, given the region's great potential, its resources, and its geographical location, the Colombian government throughout CONPES 3491 sought to integrate the Pacific coastal region into its vision of socio economic development nationally and internationally.

According to the Colombian government, by promoting and implementing the policies contained in CONPES 3491 the Pacific region would experience an economic and social reactivation that would benefit not only the country but its heavily afro-descendant population.

CONPES 3491 formulated its policies around five key areas: democratic security; poverty reduction, promotion of employment and equality; high and sustainable growth; environmental management to promote sustainable development; and especial growth dimensions.

Democratic Security

The principal objectives on this area were to regain control over the territory and to legitimize the State. The strategy focused on incrementing manpower in the Armed Forces, and Police in the region, and provided funding for military equipment and infrastructure.

By taking these military measures, the State sought to debilitate, what the government labeled as terrorist groups (FARC guerrillas and paramilitary groups), and eradicate illicit crops by promoting programs for manual and voluntary eradication of

illicit crops. The government also offered financial and technical assistance to replace illicit crops with legal crops. Although Afro-Colombians in the South Pacific area have long opposed expansion of mono crops in their territories, especially African Palm, funding for legal crops under this policy was limited to promote cultivation of five products: cacao, coconut, African Palm, and coffee.

According the June of 2011 report, from the United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes on illicit crops, the major concentration of hectares with coca crops is located on the Colombian Pacific Region (Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, and Chocó). This area has been constantly affected by the presence of illicit crops since 2008. In 2010, out of 62,000 hectares with coca crops, 25, 681 were located in this region. The report also notes that the Colombian departments of Chocó (in the Pacific) and Cordoba (in the Atlantic region) have been particularly hit by an increment of illicit crops during the year of 2010. Unlike any other departments in Colombia, coca crops in Chocó have rapidly increased since 2004.

Event though, Colombia's coca crops have decreased over the years (from 140,000 hectares in 2001 to 62,000 in 2010), the report states that today coca crops in the Chocó are nine times bigger than they were in 2004 (UNODC 2011).

These numbers are an example of how democratic security in the region as the main policy to regain state control over the Pacific territory and curbed proliferation of illicit crops has failed in the region.

Poverty Reduction, Promotion of Employment and Equality

According to government's data for the elaboration of CORPES 3491, almost 65% of the Pacific's population lives in poverty, 21% are illiterate, education's quality is at 1.4%, and malnutrition reaches 15.5% compared to 49.7% in poverty at the national level, 13% in education quality and 13.5% in malnutrition (Colombia National Planning Department 2007, 7).

In addressing the issue the government sought investment in five areas: education, health, promotion of children's well being and protection of seniors, food security, and access to government programs for people in conditions of extreme poverty: "*Familias en Accion*" and "*Red Juntos*."

To improve living conditions in the Pacific coastal region, the government planned to improve access to potable water and sewage systems. According to the Colombian National Administrative Department of Statics (DANE), in the Pacific region only 39% of the population has access to potable water and 26% have sewage system compared to 83% and 73% at the national level (DANE 2005).

In addition, the government intended to implement land titling programs, and provide the population with access to credits and healthy housing.

High and Sustainable Growth

Four main areas are part of the State's policies for high and sustainable growth: transportation, mining and energy, telecom, and agriculture investment.

The government prioritized investment in ground transportation infrastructure to

“strengthen road transportation as an instrument to reduce high costs to external trade and achieve region’s integration” (Colombia National Planning Department 2007, 55) as well as other transportation infrastructures such as aerial and fluvial.

The transportation policy also secured investment for port’s modernization and expansion. The implementation of the policy is still highly controversial for Afro-Colombians living in port cities such as Buenaventura – as we will see later on this work- where large modernization projects have displaced Afro-Colombian’s and/or made it difficult for them to keep engaging on their traditional ways of subsistence (e.g. fishing)

Roads and highway projects were divided in four programs: road infrastructure and regional development program (*Programa de Infraestructura Vial y Desarrollo Regional*) or Plan 2500, competitiveness pathways (*Corredores de Competitividad*), regional roads plan (*Plan Vial Regional*), roads for municipalities (*Vias Municipales*). These projects with different levels of funding have been managed and prioritized by the Colombian Transportation Ministry according to their particular relation with expansion of Colombia’s external trade. It is observed that a big portion of state and private investment has been reserved for projects directly and/or indirectly dealing with the construction of adequate infrastructure for this purpose.

Funding for other roads and infrastructure projects not directly dealing with external trade is mainly directed to construction of roads to connect municipalities and regions with external trade pathways. These projects are considerably less funded.

Although some funding is reserved for road maintenance, and to improve access

to rural areas, this kind of investment to improve people's quality of life seems to have low priority for the state as it does little to advance external trade.

For instance, to implement Plan 2500, the government invested \$58,000 million pesos while it allocated \$18,000 million pesos for assistance to the municipalities with road improvement or the Regional Roads Program (*Plan Vial Regional*). The gap in funding is even larger when comparing the amount allocated for Competitiveness Pathways (*Corredores de Competitividad*) with the amount appropriated for roads directly benefiting the majority of the population within the different Pacific municipalities: \$1, 04 billion vs. \$18,000 million (CONPES 3491).

Port's Modernization and Expansion

As briefly mentioned before, policies directed to ports as part of the government's main policy for High and Sustainable Growth in the region is maybe one of the most problematic as it has often negatively impacted the port's population. The government's policy is mainly structured by granting years-long concessions to private sectors with minimal government investment and oversight. Thus, under this policy from a total investment of \$878, 6 thousand million of pesos for ports and ports' industry, \$800 thousand million were expected to come from the private sector.

The concessions system has left ports and the ports industry in private hands allowing for a private monopoly. For Afro-Colombians, private monopoly of this lucrative industry has hurt labor rights and access to employment. In addition, some of these concessions have caused displacement for many Afro-Colombians families.

Currently, Colombian ports are operating under five concessions: the Regional Port Society of Tumaco: a 20 year concession that started on May 5, 1994; the port concession of Buenaventura; the port concession of Agua Dulce; the port concession of Bahia Malaga; and the port concession of Tribuga.

As the main port in Colombia, the Buenaventura concession is crucial for the government. For this project, the government has estimated a private investment of \$450 million dollars, plus \$79.89 thousand of million pesos coming from the State. The Buenaventura concession is the only one with some government investment. For the port concession of Bahia Malaga and Tribuga, the government has estimated an investment of \$380 million dollars and \$ 800 million dollars respectively. The funding for both of these concessions comes entirely from the private sector. In addition, as part of the port concession of Tribuga, the government has agreed to build a road to connect Anima-Nuqui.

The Port Concession of Agua Dulce recently allocated by the government requires special attention as it has been directly linked as a cause of displacement for many Afro-Colombian families in the Bajamar area in Buenaventura. Apparently, the territory allocated by the State for the port's development has jeopardized the livelihood of many Afro-Colombian families. Even though the State has pledged to relocate these families, relocation for them is not an option as Afro-Colombians in this area have relied on their easy access to the water for subsistence. Advocates for these families and the families have argued that once they are removed from Bajamar and relocated, they will lose their means of subsistence:

About 3,500 Afro-Colombian families are at risk of becoming displaced from five neighborhoods located in the Bajamar area of Isla Cascajal. In their place, the local government is planning an expansion of the port (...). The government is looking to relocate the residents into a proposed large scale housing project further inland. Although the living conditions in Bajamar are substandard, many residents do not want to move because being close to water affords them the opportunity to sustain themselves through fishing, transport or traveling to and from their lands along the rivers. (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011, 6)

Railroad Transportation

This project is also developed with private sector funding through government concessions with some state funding. As well as other transportations polices, the government has prioritized the projects based upon their relation to international trade and competitiveness. The railroad transportation policy mainly focuses on the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of a railroad system to support trade. However, even before the formulation of this policy, the Pacific railroad system has been controlled by the private sector through a government concession for 30 years.

Airports Infrastructure

This project seeks improvement and maintenance of small airports in the region. The policy allocated funds to improve nine airports in the Pacific: five airports in the Chocó department, two airports in the Cauca department, one in the Valle department and one in the Nariño department.

Although this project has state funding, some airports have been given as a concession to the private sector. This is the case for airports in Rionegro, Medellin, Monteria, Quibdo, Corozal and Carepa.

Fluvial Transportation

The government has developed three projects to consolidate and improve fluvial transportation in the region. The construction of a canal on the rivers Atrato and San Juan; establishing communication between San Martin River-Bahia Malaga- Bahia Buenaventura; and communication between Bahia Buenaventura and Bahia Tumaco.

Other important transportation investments include massive transportation, and stilt bridges in Tumaco.

Mining and Energy

Energy

As every other living, social and economic standard in the Pacific region, power coverage is lower than the national standards where 93.6% of the population has power. For instance, in the Chocó department only 62.2% of the population has power coverage. In rural zones, just 50% of the population has power coverage. In the Pacific coastal region municipalities of Charco (Nariño), Bojaya (Chocó), Murindo (Antioquia) y Alto Baudó (Chocó) the numbers are even lower: only 10% of the population has power coverage (CONPES 3491). The Government mainly attributes this phenomenon to the lack of proper energy infrastructure as there is not infrastructure in place to deliver power services to Afro-Colombian households in the Pacific region.

To improve delivery of power and natural gas for uncovered households in the Pacific region, the government through its ministry for mines and energy has planned to take a series of strategies to ensure the vast majority of the population is covered.

Projects using alternative energy, new technologies and connecting the existing systems to national systems are part of the government's plans to deliver power to millions of Afro-Colombians families,

Resources for many of the projects are mainly from the State. However, state funding for municipal energy projects would be considered as long as they fit the mine and energy ministry's criteria of economic, technical and environmental sustainability (CONPES 3491).

In addition, the government seeks to promote - when possible and applicable - the usage of alternative sources of power such as biodiesel, which is obtained from the African Palm.

Mining

In developing economic policy for the Pacific coastal region, the government prioritized mining exploitation. The government's mining policy focuses on promoting legal mining, attracting foreign and national investment for large scale mining exploitation, and promoting and protecting minority mining projects.

To promote legal mining the government has proposed the creation of associations for certified miners. These associations, established around identified mining districts, would provide miners with access to training and financial and technical assistance funded by private, public and multilateral institutions. The government states that in protecting Afro-Colombian mining projects, the projects shall have preference over any other project as long as they are located in collectively owned

territories.

According to critics of this policy, mainly U.S. based NGOs and Afro-Colombian Community Councils, the government's mining agenda is negatively impacting this ethnic minority as Afro-Colombians usually struggled to protect their territorial rights.

For instance, in the emblematic case of *La Toma*, a gold mining community in southern Cauca, the government concession for a large scale mining project on the area was allegedly made without following policy recommendations and ethnic laws over collectively owned territories. In 2009, this case formed part of a hearing in the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

For many, *La Toma's* case demonstrates how government mining policies are detrimental to Afro-Colombians' territorial rights. The critics also note that in addition to socio-economic instability, and violation of ethnic rights, Afro-Colombian mining communities face displacement and violence as a consequence of the emphasis placed by the government on large scale mining projects in the Pacific coastal region.

Telecom

In the area of communications the government seeks to improve urban and rural telecommunications by extending coverage and services such as internet to public schools, hospitals, libraries, and local majors' offices as well as opening telecommunication services throughout the region.

Agricultural Development

Agricultural policy for the region focuses on investment to support land titling, strengthen fishing and aquaculture, promoting African palm crops, strengthen sanitary and phytosanitary measures, promotion of productive projects, and investigation and technological development in the region.

It is important to highlight the government's efforts to bust African Palm crops, and Biodiesel projects in Guapi (Cauca), and Tumaco (Nariño) is at odds with Afro-Colombians groups in the Pacific. Afro-Colombians' groups have strongly opposed massive plantations of African Palm due to the irreparable damage cause by the palm to the subsoil. Afro-Colombians claim that once palm has been cultivated, the land loses its ability to produce any other product. The subsoil essentially becomes infertile.

According to the government, the goal for 2010 was to cultivate 5,000 hectares of African Palm in Guapi. The government's numbers estimated that massive investment in this area would generate 1,350 jobs, and promote sustainable development directly benefiting Guapi. In 2007, for the first stage of the project, the government invested \$9,198 million of pesos (CONPES 2007).

In addition, the government invested \$1,500 million pesos for a biodiesel plant in Tumaco and \$5,549 million pesos to investigate and control biological factors affecting African Palm crops (CONPES 2007).

Environmental Management to Promote Sustainable Development

Promotion of private investment in eco-tourism in national parks and consolidation of eco-tourism in the region form part of the government's plans to promote sustainable development in the Pacific region. It also promotes conservation and protection programs using the concession model. For instance, in 2005 the government awarded a ten year concession for the Park of Island Gorgona, an island located on the Colombian Pacific Ocean 50 kilometers (about 25 miles) from the municipality of Guapi in the Department of Cauca (CONPES 2007).

The government's goal was to triple the number of tourist visiting the region: from 5,219 people in 2002 to 17, 500 in 2010 (CONPES 2007).

Special Growth Dimensions

The government plans to invest on promoting ethno-culture and ethno-education, improving local governments and consolidating c ethno-territorial/socio-political structures.

Through the promotion of these programs, the government seeks to strength socio-political ethnic organizations and the government's offices dealing with ethnic issues. For instance, the government allocated \$456 million pesos to community councils, the High Consultative Commission for Black communities, and Departmental Consultative. In addition, the government, through the Ministry of Interior and Justice, allocated \$536 million pesos to improve ethnic organizations' structures and to promote participation their participation as an ethnical group (CONPES 2007).

However, the government funded Afro-Colombian organizations have been strongly criticized by Afro-Colombian communities and grassroots organizations. These groups have claimed that these organizations do not represent them, as many of the members of these community councils are not directly involved with Afro-Colombian communities in the region.

Furthermore, the community councils have also questioned the High Level Consultative Commission for Afro-Colombian communities, which is the most prominent organization representing Afro-Colombians before the government. Currently in Colombia there is a big debate over the mandate and the legitimate position of the High Level Consultative Commission for Afro-Colombian communities.

In January 2011, more than 156 Afro-Colombian community councils sent a letter to President Santos questioning the mandate of the consultative, and its role in the negotiations with the government regarding two very important laws affecting Afro-Colombian territories: The Victims Law¹ and a package adjusting Colombia's legal code in order to facilitate the entrance of foreign investment in Afro-Colombian territories in the context of the expansion of Free Trade Agreements.

In addition, CORPES 3491 consolidates the main investments in the Colombian Pacific between the years of 2007-2010.

¹ The Victims and Land Restitution Law is aimed to restore stolen or abandoned land to Colombia's internally displaced people and provide reparations to victims of human rights violations and/or international law. The legislation was signed into law by President Juan Manuel Santos on June 10, 2010.

CONPES 3660: Policies to Promote Equal Access to Opportunities to Black Population, Afro Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal Population

This policy is aimed at addressing two big issues identified by the government in the Black Population, Afro, *Palenquero* and *Raizal* populations: lack of access to opportunities for human development and precarious living standards (below national levels). According to the government, successful implementation of CONPES 3660 would improve Afro-Colombian historic socio-economic conditions plagued by issues such as inequality and poverty.

The government has identified six main causes directly responsible for Afro-Colombian socio-economic lag in the country: low productivity and low competitiveness of productive activities; difficult access to education, education quality and permanence in the education system; fragmentation of social net; insufficient policies, plans, programs, norms and projects or lack of proper implementation; loss of territorial governance and institutionalization; and social discrimination practices.

Low productivity and Low Competitiveness of Productive Activities

Urban Afro-Colombian populations are usually found playing roles in the informal economy, as they have done so for centuries. Afro-Colombians in the cities usually make a living as street vendors, working on domestic services, buying and selling products, crafts, etc. These jobs are usually poorly paid and lack employment benefits. Afro-Colombians in the urban areas are generally low income people lacking minimal labor standards.

On the other hand, Afro-Colombian populations located in rural areas are

generally poor peasants, owning some land and working in agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry. They lack financial and technical resources to fully exploit their lands, which generates low productivity. In addition, Afro-Colombians lack proper infrastructure for commercialization of their products.

Difficult Access to Education, Education Quality and Permanence in the Education System

According to CONPES 3660, the Afro-Colombian population in general has low education and higher rates of truancy, especially between children from 5 to 6 years old and 7 to 11 years old (CONPES 2010). Among Afro-Colombians in Colombia, Afro-Colombians in the Pacific region have even higher rates of truancy. In rural areas, the government states, that difficult physical access to schools is one of the main reasons for high rates of truancy among Afro-Colombian youth.

The document also states that in both, rural and urban areas, Afro-Colombian children usually join the work force early in their childhood to help supporting their families instead of going to school.

The principal issues identified in this area were illiteracy, high dropout rates, difficult access to higher education, and child malnutrition.

Illiteracy

While between the years of 2002 to 2008 illiteracy in Colombia was reduced and it went from 7.62% to 6.62%, the document found that a great number of Afro-Colombians still don't know how to write or read. For instance, according to the 2005

census data, some municipalities in Canton de San Pablo in Chocó and Guapi in Nariño have illiteracy rates of 70 and 30 percent respectively. Illiteracy in the Chocó Department reaches 18, 70 percent, three times greater than the national rate: 6, 62 percent. In all regions, Afro-Colombian women are more affected as illiteracy numbers among them doubles (CONPES 2010).

Access to Higher Education

Access to higher education is very difficult for Afro-Colombians mainly due to lack of economic resources. Afro-Colombian families usually live in poverty and the scarce resources available are used to provide basic necessities. In addition, as previously noted, poverty forces Afro-Colombian youth to enter to the job market at a very young age to help support their families.

Another issue impacting access to higher education for Afro-Colombians is the lack of quality education. Afro-Colombian students who are able to graduate from high school overcome economic obstacles and usually perform poorly on standardized tests scores, such as the ICFES, which is required to gain access to higher education institutions. The results of this test determine the kind of higher education school the student can apply to. Thus the higher the score, the greater the chances are to enter to the best schools in the country.

Afro-Colombian high school graduates generally receive very low scores on this test limiting their ability to access to good schools. Lack of quality education also affects Afro-Colombians' permanence in higher education institutions. Once accepted

to a program, Afro-Colombian students are usually discouraged from staying and graduate once it becomes clear that the education they received did not adequately prepare them for higher education.

As in any other sector, Afro-Colombian students enrolled in higher education institutions are below the national level of achievement. Thus, while 34.1% of high school graduates have access to higher education at the national level, the departments with major concentrations of Afro populations are usually below the 20%: Chocó 19.5%, Nariño 17.5%, San Andres 19.2 %, Cauca 22.1 %, Bolivar 24.9%, and Valle del Cauca 27.8% (CONPES 2010).

Child Malnutrition and High Vulnerability to Health Issues in Scholar Age Population

In Colombia, malnutrition primarily affects children from ethnic populations. According to the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF), almost 17% of Afro-Colombian children are at risk of having malnutrition and just about 67% have the proper weight and height for their age. Lack of proper nutrition makes these children, especially young children, more vulnerable to present life-threatening health issues, such as respiratory infections, chronic diarrhea and tuberculosis. As a consequence, Afro-Colombian child mortality rates are the highest among Colombia's non-ethnic population – from 10% to 50% (CONPES 2010).

In addition, it was determined that poverty, and limited - or no - access to sanitation systems, and potable water in heavily populated Afro-Colombian regions are direct causes of malnutrition and poor health among this ethnic group.

Fragmentation of Social Net

Fragmentation of Afro-Colombian's social net occurs due to various factors, such as forced displacement, loss of territory, and extreme poverty preventing Afro-Colombians from developing strong and permanent cultural, personal and social ties.

During the last decade, forced displacement has become a major social issue affecting mainly minorities, but especially Afro-Colombians. The issue of forced displacement has disproportionately affected this ethnic group that according to official government records² represent 8.1% of the total of Internally Displaced Persons in Colombia. Other minorities, such indigenous peoples and gypsies represent 2.8% of the Colombians displaced. More than half of displaced Afro-Colombian people are young women and girls (CONPES 2010).

Living in precarious conditions with limited access to basic services such as power, potable water, sewage system and waste disposal³ also directly affect Afro-Colombians social net. The Pacific and the Atlantic region have high numbers of precarious housing settlements. In addition, forced displacement has diminished Afro-Colombians' quality of life as many migrate to cities, such as Cali in the Pacific region, where they are forced to live in marginal areas. These areas usually not only lack basic services and sanitary conditions but expose this population to criminal gangs, forced recruitment, and sexual exploitation.

² 2009 National Registry of Displaced Population or RUPD

³ In the Pacific, which is predominantly Afro-Colombian, just 39% of the region has aqueduct, and 26% has sewage system. While at the national level 83% of the Colombian population has aqueduct, and 73% has sewage system (CONPES 3660).

According to CONPES 3660, 2003 DANE data showed that the Pacific region is the second most affected by precarious living conditions. In this region 30% of urban areas are located in high risk areas or areas usually affected by flooding.

It was also found that displaced people are living under precarious urban conditions in cities such as, Cali and Bogota.

Low Institutional and Fiscal Capacity of Municipalities with Majority Afro-Colombian populations

Because Colombia has a central government system; policy decisions are made at the national level. Currently, this system presents many challenges to implementing policies at local level. Local governments usually lack capabilities, infrastructure, and especially funding to implement policies set forth at the national level. For municipalities with large Afro-Colombian population, local governments also lack basic ethnic knowledge to address minorities' issues.

Generally in Colombia, municipalities usually rely on funding provided to them at the national level (Bogota) as their fiscal – and structural - conditions are very fragile: low revenues, large debts, and operational expenses higher or equal to income. This is especially true in the case of majority Afro-descendants municipalities.

In addition, municipalities' systems to track and address population characteristics and their operation capabilities are either weak or not in place.

Insufficient Policies, Plans, Programs, Norms and Projects or Lack of Proper Implementation

While recognition on behalf of the governments that it lacks enough policies to

address Afro-Colombian issues or has improperly implemented the few policies in place affecting Afro-Colombians in Colombia is a step in the right direction, CONPES 3660 does not provide insight on how and/or why government's policies in this area are insufficient, or how current policies have not been properly implemented.

For instance, the Colombian government acknowledges the need to develop policy for land titling in compliance with Law 70⁴ of 1993, as well as the need to adjust some laws to better address Afro-Colombian issues. However, the document tends to be very general as it does not clearly identify what laws would require adjustments, what kind of adjustment would these be, when they would be made, etc. Moreover, it does not provide a timeframe for developing land titling policy.

Loss of Territorial Governance and Institutionalization

According to the Colombian government, poverty directs Afro-Colombians to implement practices “negatively affecting biodiversity” (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 72). These practices, which are not described on the document, have prompted the government to intervene to protect the territories from these practices; and as a result, some Afro-communities, have lost their territorial rights.

In addition, CONPES 3660 states that one of the causes of lost of territorial rights in Afro-Colombian communities is the violence exerted by armed groups, especially paramilitaries, on minority territories.

⁴ This piece of legislation granted black communities in Colombia the right to collectively own their ancestral territories, acknowledged Afro-Colombians traditional production practices, and recognized Afro-Colombians as an ethnic group.

Even though CONPES 3660 uses the cases of Afro-Colombian and indigenous territories of *Curvarado* and *Jiguamando* in the *Uraba* region (Chocó department) as examples of Afro-Colombian's loss of territorial rights, it does not explain how or why the government has deemed necessary to initiate a "process of property clarification with the purpose of self guard these collective territories" (Colombia National Department Planning 2010, 72).

For almost two decades, the *Uraba* region was hardly hit by violence from paramilitary groups that were illegally seizing Afro-Colombian collective territories for agribusiness investment (palm oil, bananas and cattle). The communities of *Curvarado* and *Jiguamando* have been emblematic cases in Colombia, exemplifying how small, marginalized and poor minority communities in Colombia have been the target of violence, displacement and loss of territorial rights by powerful economic groups (Armenta 2011; Isacson 2008).

However, CONPES 3660 does not elaborate on illegal armed groups systematically targeting Afro-Colombian territories, which is one of the biggest issues affecting and victimizing Afro-Colombian communities in the country.

Furthermore, the document does not mention the relationship between these groups and economic interests (legal or illegal) in these territories or the economic dynamics given in this region that has emerged as the center of large scale-multinational projects.

One more factor affecting territorial governance is the rapid proliferation of illegal economy (coca) within Afro-Colombian territories. According to the United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as of December 2010, two departments in the Colombian Pacific were at the top of the list in the country's cultivation of coca: Nariño and Cauca with 15,951 and 6,597 hectares respectively (UNODC 2011, 16).

Moreover, during 2010 the department of Chocó reported a significant increment in coca crops: from 1,789 hectares in 2009 to 3,158 in 2010. Out of the four Colombian departments (Cordoba +618; Vaupes +358; and Antioquia +333) that reported increments in coca crops in 2010, the Chocó number was by far the most dramatic: +1,402. Coca crops in Chocó almost double during 2010 (UNODC 2011, 16-17).

Social Discrimination Practices

The Colombian constitution of 1991 directs the state to protect its citizens from discrimination and to recognize every Colombian citizen as entitled to the same rights. The country has also adopted international resolutions, such as UN Resolution 2106, to end all kind of racial discrimination. However, Colombia acknowledges the existence of social discrimination, as well as lack of knowledge and disregard for racial and cultural diversity in the country (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 73).

It also recognizes Afro-Colombians' historic structural marginalization and exclusion as the direct consequence of slavery, and how these conditions have made this population especially vulnerable not only to poverty, but to violence and internal displacement.

Furthermore, CONPES 3660 also cites scholarly studies from two well known

Colombian Universities, *Universidad de los Andes and Universidad del Valle*, on Afro-Colombians issues linking exclusion and marginalization with racial discrimination, and racial discrimination with poverty levels, access to basic services, education and quality education, health care and quality health care among other socio-economic factors.

As observed throughout this work, all of the issues cited by the university studies as clear indicators of racial discrimination perfectly match evident racial discrimination in the country against. . Data consistently has shown that the numbers in all of these areas for the Afro-Colombian population tend to be below the national level.

Although the recognition on the Colombian government's part of the issues affecting Afro-Colombians in the country is – once again - a step in the right direction, the very mention of them in this policy document, as in this case, does translate in real policies to effectively address the reality faced by this minority. Part of the issue, as stated by these studies, is the lack of proper understanding about ethnic issues, in this case, Afro-Colombians' issues, by decision making parties.

However, the following policies were developed by the Colombian government to address the identified issues. As it will be seen, these policies for the most part are either problematic, and in some cases go directly against the expressed will of Afro-Colombian communities, insufficient and /or ineffective; and most importantly, challenging because municipalities and local governments are not really involved in the implementation process.

Government's Plans to Address Identified Issues

Addressing Low Productivity and Low Competitiveness for Productive Activities

In general, the government's strategies to address this issue are based upon promotion of big industries, international investment and export with what one could call an "ethnic twist". For instance, it proposes the promotion of general and specific training for Afro-Colombians based upon big business' demands and existing providers' business nets. It also focuses on projects that have identified Afro-Colombian's regions full economical potential (e.g. large scale mining projects and palm oil) as well as attraction of international investment to these regions to promote international extraction and commercialization standards for fishing and aquaculture products. In other words, from the subsistence/artisanal economic model, which has been traditionally practiced by these communities for centuries – as mentioned in chapter 1 of this work - to the neo-liberal economic model. Moreover, the policy clearly identifies what economic initiatives will be supported by the government: those in accord with the State's economic policies for the region.

These policies clearly go against Afro-Colombians best interest as they are not in the social or economic condition to participate in the economic model imposed by the government. Furthermore, even if they would accept these conditions; they would go against their traditional cultural and social practices.

By favoring international investment with its large capital, Afro-Colombians are forced into an absolutely vulnerable economic position as they can't possibly compete economically with international investors. Moreover, favoring large scale projects to

generate high production volumes for exporting opposes Afro-Colombian traditional models of their territories and resources, as it is not based on production of large quantities, but small quantities for consumption and modest local commercialization. The Afro-Colombian model would never sustain an economy based upon mass production for international commercialization or export.

In addition to the promotion of these economic policies, some programs in this area are directed to improve equal access to employment and economic opportunities to aid Afro-Colombian economic development.

However, the proposed policies for this area are insufficient as they focus on the Colombian government economic policies and the promotion of their interest in this area, rather than on effectively addressing lack of equal access to employment and economic opportunities for Afro-Colombians. As this was not enough, the language used in this part of the policy is questionable.

For instance, it proposes to hire Afro-Colombians through State contracts but the policy's language promptly states "when quality and compliance with the contract are not hampered" (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 82). It also adds that the government will promote Afro-Colombians' plans, projects, and investments as long as they "follow national economic plans for the region" (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 82).

The policy continues to states that it will promote Afro-Colombians access to loans but it is quick to add for "productive activities" (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 82).

Addressing Difficult Access to Education, Education Quality and Permanence in the Educational System

Promoting ethno-alphabetization programs, improving access and permanence to education for children and youth from preschool to median basic education as well as education quality, and access to higher education are the government's set objectives to improve education within Afro-Colombian population. For instance, the government has envisioned that for 2013 ethno-alphabetization programs aimed at reducing illiteracy will benefit 80,000 Afro-Colombian children and adults.

The policy pays special attention to the Chocó department and emphasizes the need to implement comprehensive programs for pre-school aged children that include attention on other areas such as health care and nutrition.

Investments in infrastructure to improve existing schools and creation of strategies to work hand by hand with national, local and ethnic communities to address education issues affecting the Afro-Colombian population, as well as to implement programs to “strengthen their own educative programs” (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 89) are part of the suggested government's strategies.

The government also planned to promote scholarships and access to student loans for Afro-Colombian youth pursuing higher education.

Although the government's education policy for Afro-Colombians targets – for the most part- this population's needs, the measures taken will be always inadequate to effectively address the issue as long as Afro-Colombians are living in poverty and are victims of violence. Under these circumstances, any proposed policies will fail as Afro-

Colombians lack basic conditions to succeed.

Addressing Fragmentation of the Social Net

The programs in this area have been created to meet three main objectives: prevent forced displacement and territory loss and attention to displacement taking into account ethnicity; improve living conditions for Afro-Colombians; and strengthen Afro-Colombians' values and family structure.

As previously stated, internal displacement has disproportionately affected Afro-Colombian, especially young females, as a response to this phenomenon the government has pledged to strengthen humanitarian assistance for Afro-Colombian populations in communities or areas at imminent risk of displacement as well as to prioritize attention to Afro-Colombians IDPs within the context of the national public policy for the displaced (“Public Policy to Prevent and Care for the Displaced).

In addition, the government plans to improve the national program for IDPs (“*Red Juntos*”) in majority Afro-Colombian municipalities.

Other proposed programs to address Afro-Colombian fragmentation of the social net focus on housing, income generation for local governments, ethnic education for government employees and inclusion of the ethnic concepts among government institutions.

Addressing Insufficient Policies, Plans, Programs, Norms and Projects or Lack of Proper Implementation

The government plans to meet two objectives in this area: strengthening and

including the ethnic factor within the government to better address and create policies directed to Afro-Colombians; and improving government programs.

The plan mainly focuses on adjustments to government procedures at the national level to include the ethnic factor in order to quantify the impact of plan, programs and policies specially created to address Afro-Colombians in the country, and strengthen international cooperation on Afro-Colombian issues.

Another important plan to highlight is the creation of ruling proposals for some articles from Law 70 of 1993. These articles deal with very important territorial and socio-economic issues for Afro-Colombians: land usage, protection of natural resources and the environment, mining resources, and planning and promotion of socio-economic development.

This part of the policy seeks a better understanding by government institutions of ethnic issues in order to effectively address, create and implement programs to address Afro-Colombians' very specific needs.

While it is true that a better understanding of ethnic issues among government institutions will positively reflect at the policy level, it is of utmost importance that the Afro-Colombian communities are actively involved in this process, especially on identifying their issues and defying their interest.

Without Afro-Colombians active participation in policy development, policies at the national level aiming to address this minority group's issues will be ineffective, and in many cases problematic, as they do not always take into account this minority group's will, and in many cases has gone against it.

Addressing Loss of Territorial Governance and Institutionalization

Weak institutions and lack of territorial control are major issues in Colombia.

These issues particularly affect local institutions and rural areas in the country.

Therefore, rural population and/or inhabitants from remote and /or poor municipalities are highly affected by these phenomena. As Afro-Colombians usually live in rural and poor local areas or municipalities, this population's ethnic rights are severely impacted.

To address weak institutions, the government plans to strengthen Afro-Colombians community councils, keep working on training of government employees, and inclusion of the ethnic concept at all government levels (local, municipalities, national)

To address loss of territorial governance, the government plans to implement a national system to coordinate national institutions involved in the process of acquisition and collective land titling, as well as establish the conditions of collectively owned territories – especially in the Pacific region.

Additionally, as proliferation of illicit crops are a major factor contributing to loss of territorial governance, the government plans to support projects focused on integral development on lands free from illicit crops. As part of this plan, the government seeks promotion of Pacific Rangers, a big project partly financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that seeks protection and sustainable development of community owned Pacific territories free from illicit crops (Colombia National Planning Department 2010, 101).

Addressing Social Discrimination Practices

The Colombian government has come to the conclusion that discrimination in the country is one of the sources of inequality in Colombia. For this reason, one of the government's main goals is to pass legislation to penalize discrimination. Increasing Afro-Colombian participation in government and the military are part of the government plans to help ending discrimination in Colombia. The programs seek to educate Afro-Colombian candidates to hold public offices, encourage Afro-Colombians to join the military, as well as to recognize Afro-Colombians' historical contributions to the country and strengthen relations with the international Afro Diaspora.

Although these policies, CONPES 3660 and CONPES 3491, are certainly steps in the right direction to address Afro-Colombian issues in the country, they also expose issues that seem to repeat themselves over time: poverty, marginalization, and discrimination, which are constant factors in Afro-Colombian's historical socio-economic status.

During this overview of recent policies to address Afro-Colombians issues in Colombia, it is observed that in modern Colombia, as in the Colony, and the Republic, policies for the Afro-Colombian population tend to be paternalistic.

Furthermore, in recent years, the promotion of neo-liberal economic policies that emphasize on open markets and exports has advanced the country's economic agenda at the expense of this minority group.

Under the current socio-economic conditions, Afro-Colombians' have remained in the lowest place of society, as their situation marked by centuries of marginalization,

exclusion, discrimination and poverty has hardly changed. Moreover, constitutional recognition of this population as an ethnic minority and their rights set forth by Law 70 of 1993 has failed to improve Afro-Colombians' status in Colombia.

While CONPES 3660 does a very commendable job identifying the factors affecting Afro-Colombians socio-economic status, the policy fails to address those issues, when ignoring - for the most part - Afro-Colombians' wishes and needs to improve and strengthen their own conditions within the context of the country's constitution and ethnic laws.

Furthermore, the country's economic agenda is –for the most part– detrimental to Afro-Colombian communities. The government's economic imposition on ethnic groups directly opposes and threatens Afro-Colombians socio-economic traditional practices (e.g. mining, fishing, etc) especially in the Colombian Pacific.

Colombia sees the Pacific as an extraordinarily biodiverse territory and as “a strategic point to the country's insertion in world economy and a fundamental factor for its competitiveness” (Colombia National Planning Department 2007, 6). Thus, the government has actively promoted multimillion dollar projects focused on large scale production, mono-crops and mining exploitation by multinational companies. In the Pacific, many of these take place in collectively owned territories where projects usually have been approved without prior consultation⁵ as set forth by the Colombian constitution, on violently usurped territories or otherwise unlawfully obtained Afro-

⁵ In 1991 Colombian Law 21 ratified Convention 169 for Indigenous and tribal peoples from the International Labor Organization (ILO) that recognizes the right of prior consultation before making decisions that could potentially affect communities' existence. This convention is supported by the Colombian constitution by articles 1, 2,7,70,329 and 330.

Colombian lands.

Thus, while the policies seem to be directed to reduce Afro-Colombians' socio-economic gap and make a point to recognize and institutionalized the ethnic factor in Colombia by substantially improving the region's social and economic status and that of its population, it is also clear that these policies are primarily concerned with the country's economic advancement by maximizing exploitation and commercialization of the region's resources.

It is also observed that CONPES 3491 and CONPES 3660 paid little attention to Afro-descendants' own ideas about socio-economic development, protection and usage of the environment, exploitation of the region's resources, and the role the region will play as part of the national context.

Afro-Colombian grassroots groups and community councils have raised their concerns – nationally and internationally - about advances of these policies without serious consideration of their needs, lack of real respect and recognition of their culture; and most importantly, to the Colombian Constitution and subsequent ethical laws.

Thus, within this context, attraction of foreign investment, promotion of monocrops (e.g. African Palm), investment in infrastructure to boosts commercialization and international economic competitiveness usually antagonize with recognition of ethno-cultural economic practices (traditional mining, fishing, and crops).

Moreover, CONPES 3491 and 3660 are generally very vague when dealing with key aspects of Law 70 of 1993 (e.g. territorial laws, land titling, protection of natural

resources and the environment, and mining resources), which is of capital importance to the Afro-Colombians' real advancement in the country. It also observed that on the issue of internal displacement, the government does recognize the promotion of its economic policies as one of the causes of displacement in the country.

CHAPTER 3

BUENAVENTURA: PROFILE OF POVERTY

The current socio-economic status of Afro-Colombians in Buenaventura, Colombia's main port since 1950, represents a clear example of how socio-economic historic dynamics in the region established during the colony have failed to integrate the dominant, usually white elites, with the majority Afro-descendant population in the Colombian Pacific region.

In this region, white elites coming from the city of Popayan, in the Nariño department, and later on, between the seventeen and eighteen centuries, from Buga, Cali and Cartago, monopolized the region's resources and economy -even once slavery was abolished - establishing a socio-economic pattern that would dominate the region for centuries.

This dynamic, deeply rooted in today's society and economy within the region, provides a context to understand the current conditions of marginalization and economic lag experienced by Afro-descendants in Buenaventura. (DANE and Cidse 2005). In fact, in the article "Buenaventura: demographic vulnerability and exclusion," the authors, Fernando Urrea Giraldo and Javier Andres Castro Heredia, argued that the marginalization conditions of this region (Cauca Valley and Buenaventura) can be understood throughout the particular dynamic established early on in the Cauca Valley: the economic relationship between elites and the region's population, which has not favored an economic integration process for the Afro majorities (Urrea Giraldo and

Castro Heredia 2007).

Most recently, economic policies promoted by the government to benefit the ports industry, have left the city of Buenaventura and the rural areas of this municipality out the port's economic development.

Additionally, relatively new factors in the region such as Colombia's violence as a result of the long lasting internal conflict have complicated and negatively impacted the population's historic social lag, especially in rural areas of Buenaventura.

In today's Buenaventura, confrontations for territorial control between guerrillas and paramilitaries, high levels of crime as a result of narco-trafficking operations and poverty, and displacement caused by violence and rapid proliferation of large economic projects have contributed to maintain – and many times worsen- Afro-Colombians' status quo.

The 2011 National Union School (ENS) report states that the city has the biggest socio-economic gaps in the country as well as the highest number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty in Colombia (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

According to Colombian government data, 80.6% of Buenaventura's population lives in poverty, 43.5% lives in extreme poverty, 29% are unemployed, 35% are underemployed, and 63% earned less than the country's minimum wage (CONPES 2007). These numbers are considerably below national standards, where 49.2% of the population lives in poverty, 14.7% in extreme poverty, and 14.3% are unemployed (CONPES 2007).

Brief History of the Municipality

The municipality of Buenaventura was founded in 1540 by *Pascual de Andagoya* who arrived at *Cascajal* Island on July 14 of that year, and was inhabited by an Indian tribe named “*Los Buscajes*.”

The municipality has an extension of 6,297 km², and a population of 328,794 people: 292,947 in the urban area and 35,847 in the rural area (DANE 2005). The city of Buenaventura is also the second largest city in the Valle del Cauca department.

From its beginnings, the municipality’s weather conditions and lack of fertile lands made Buenaventura unattractive for settlement. However, the abundance of minerals (e.g. gold) attracted new comers looking to benefit from mineral extraction. Thus, the municipality’s abundance of minerals made mining Buenaventura’s main economic activity.

In addition, the city’s geographical position – close to the ocean - made Buenaventura the place connecting the center of the country with the Pacific Ocean (Cidse 2009).

These geographical characteristics would shape the dynamics determining the relationship between Buenaventura and the rest of the country. Thus, since early on in the municipality’s history, Colombia saw Buenaventura as either the country’s connection with the Pacific Ocean or as a passing city to gain profit from mineral exploitation. Consequently, the municipality and its population never seem to have acquired significance due to its own potential or those of its population.

In 1719, the Spanish Crown named Buenaventura as a port; and later on in July

of 1827, it was declared a port for importing and exporting in the Pacific. People living in the port were given territorial rights. However, it was not until 1912 where the first projects for the port's infrastructure were initiated. In 1921, the first dock was built and with it Buenaventura secured its future place as Colombia's most important port.

In the 1950's, Buenaventura became Colombia's principal port; and in 1959 through law 54 of December of that year, the company Colombian Ports was created.

In 1975 this company became state owned, and by 1980, it was determined that the company was in charge of Colombia's ports, including Buenaventura's.

In 1991, the government based Colombia's economy upon internationalization, modernization, promotion of international investment, and export. Following this new economic policy, it was determined through Law 01 of 1991 the formation of state and private societies to manage Colombian ports, known as port societies.

In 1992, resolution 133 set the conditions to provide port societies with port concessions, and in 1993 the Buenaventura's Port Society was created. This organization was a mixed society between state and private investment. However, the majority of the investment, 70%, was private.

Finally, in February of 1994, the Colombian Ports Authority signed the Buenaventura's port concession for 20 years. In March of that year, the port's new management, Regional Port Society of Buenaventura (SPRBUN S.A.), started operations.

Under SPRBUN's control, the ports industry had considerably growth and modernized over the years. According to Buenaventura's Chamber of Commerce,

today the port is a competitive terminal with the best infrastructure for a multipurpose port. In addition, the Port has a Modernization Plan which seeks to transform the Port of Buenaventura into one of the most competitive Marine Terminals in Latin America.

As Colombia's main port, Buenaventura currently "manages the traffic of half of the country's national products, is connected with 300 worldwide ports and produces \$1 million dollars in tax revenue annually to Colombia" (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli, 2011, 4).

In addition to port related activities, commerce is an important economic activity in Buenaventura. This sector accounts for 49.7 % of the city's business (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

Socio-Economic and Socio-Demographic Indicators

Poverty is usually determined by analyzing socio-economic or socio-demographic indicators or a combination of both. Socio-economic indicators are usually determined by the number of basic needs or UBN Index (housing, basic services, overcrowding, truancy and income dependency) not met by a family. Under these criteria, a family is said to live in poverty when failing to meet one of these needs, and in extreme poverty when failing to meet two or more.

On the other hand, socio-demographic factors take into account demographic characteristics (dependency rates, rate of children per women of childbearing age, fertility rates and average household size, among others) to help determine population's characteristics and expose their vulnerability, if any.

According to these indicators, it is observed that the majority of Buenaventura's

population from rural and urban areas alike live in serious conditions of marginalization, exclusion and extreme poverty. Government data shows that in Buenaventura's urban area at least 50% of the population lives in poverty, and 30% in extreme poverty (CONPES, 2006). These numbers significantly increase in the rural areas, where more than 50% are living in poverty or extreme poverty. The majority of the population in these areas has no access to basic services (water and sewage system, and power) and lack adequate housing (CONPES 2006).

According to the Colombian National Department of Statistics (DANE), 35.9% of Buenaventura's population is found within the UBN index (DANE 2005). However, earlier government data collected by the Buenaventura Major's Office in 2003, indicates that poverty in Buenaventura by UBN index was at 62.7%. This number is almost three times higher than the number of people nationwide living in the same conditions (22.4%).

In addition, the same report states that poverty due to lack of sufficient income affects 80.6 % of Buenaventura's population. However, it is important to note that the percentage of people affected by this issue at the national level, while considerably lower than the number of people affected in Buenaventura by the same issue, it is still very high: 49.2% (CONPES 2006).

Socio economic indicators from the 2005 census by the Colombian National Department of Statistics (DANE) show Buenaventura as the most vulnerable municipality in the Cauca Valley (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia 2007), and one of the most vulnerable cities in the country.

Buenaventura ranks second worst in Colombia on the Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN index) with 37.9% of Afro-Colombians with UBN and 24.2% of the rest of its population compared to 33.3% for Afro-Colombians at the national level and 18.0% for the rest of the country's non-ethnic population. The municipality also ranks worst in the populations living index with 69.26 compared to 75.99 at the national level and 86.92 and 86.41 in cities such as Bogota and Cali respectively (DANE 2005; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

Socio-demographic indicators (basic dependency rates, rate of children per women of childbearing age, fertility rates and average household size) show that between the years of 1993 to 2005 population dependency ratios increased in Buenaventura, especially among youth, while in other areas, such as the rest of the Cauca Valley decreased. Youth dependency ratios in Buenaventura were 20 points higher than for the rest of the department. This factor is an indicator of additional economic pressure to already impoverished households, which slightly decreased in its average size going from 4.7 in 1993 to 4.5 in 2005 in the urban area of Buenaventura; and from 4.7 in 1993 to 4.0 in 2005 for the rest (rural) of the municipality.

According to authors Fernando Urrea Giraldo and Javier Andres Castro Heredia, the decrease in numbers is primarily the result of forced internal migration's impact (people displaced from rural to urban areas) due to exacerbation of violence in the region, especially during the past 12 years (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia, 2007). In other words, improvement in numbers – at least in this case - is not an indication of socio-demographic improvement in Buenaventura's population. Moreover, the authors

argued, this factor did not alter high youth dependency ratio among Buenaventura's population (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia 2007).

Additionally, Buenaventura's fertility rates in Afro-Colombian teenage women (15 to 19 years old) are the highest in the country (110.15 children per 1000 women) as well as the number of children under 5 years old for women in childbearing age (0,503) (DANE 2005; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

Other socio-demographic factors (women heads of households, infant mortality rates and life expectancy at birth in years) also indicate Buenaventura's socio-economic and demographic lag, especially impacting Afro-Colombians. For instance, 38.4% of Afro-Colombian households are headed by women, the second highest number in the country. In general, this factor is usually associated with families living in poverty or extreme poverty. In Colombia, high rates of women heads of households, especially in Buenaventura and the Pacific region has also been associated with forced displacement (Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

Mortality rates for Afro-Colombians in Buenaventura are also among the highest in the country (59.75). This number almost doubles the rate for non-ethnic population in the city (29.43) (DANE 2005; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

However, it is important to note that high mortality rates are a common factor affecting the Afro-Colombian population nationwide. Mortality rates in Afro-Colombian population (46.54 deaths per 1,000 children) doubles the national level (23.54).

In terms of life expectancy, Buenaventura's Afro-Colombian population is – once again- the second worse in the country with a life expectancy placed under 65

years old versus the non-ethnic population at the national level (74.85) (DANE 2005).

Other indicators such as access to quality health care, education, employment opportunities and labor conditions as well as adequate housing further provide the dramatic picture of poverty, marginalization and exclusion among Buenaventura's Afro-Colombian population. For instance, 29.9% of Buenaventura's population does not have basic meals and illiteracy in people older than 15 years old was at 9.2% (DANE 2005).

Health

Basic health conditions in Buenaventura are also precarious and below national standards. Health indicators such as infant and child mortality and malnutrition are worrisome in the municipality. For every 1000 children born in Buenaventura, 36.0 die within their first five years of life and 31.4 within their first year of life (CORPES 2006, 10). In addition, the vast majority of Buenaventura's children under 6 years old suffer from malnutrition. For instance, 75% have low levels of calcium, and 80% have low levels of iron (CONPES 2006).

According to Colombia's government statistics, 38% of Buenaventura's population does not have health insurance. In the municipality, health services are provided by two hospitals: the ESE Hospital San Agustín of Merizalde, and the ESE Hospital Departmental of Buenaventura. Moreover, only one hospital, the ESE Hospital Departmental of Buenaventura, offers basic specialties (internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, and OBYGN) to not only Buenaventura, but 11 more municipalities

in the Pacific region. The demand is beyond the hospitals' capacity and the lack of sufficient government funding has generated fiscal deficits. As a result, the only hospitals in Buenaventura and the region to deliver these services are unable to cover basic operational expenses (CONPES 2006; Cidse 2009). Adding to the crisis, overworked medical staff is usually insufficient to cover high services demanded (CONPES 2006). These conditions seriously impact the quality of health care available to Buenaventura's, and the region's population.

Buenaventura has the highest number of people going hungry in the country for both ethnic (21.5%) and non-ethnic (9.6%) population. The numbers are considerably high when compared to nation the national level in urban and rural areas for both ethnic (urban: 12.8%; rural 18.4%) and non-ethnic population (urban: 5.8%; rural 7.2%) (DANE 2005; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

Despite Buenaventura's lack of access to adequate health care – or health care at all - and general poor health conditions of its population, it is found that the main cause of mortality in the city is the direct consequence of Buenaventura's high levels of violence. Violent death caused by deadly fire weapon has been identified as Buenaventura's principal cause of death followed by cardiovascular and infectious diseases, and maternal and infant complications (CONPES 2006).

Education

School dropout or truancy has been identified as a major problem in Buenaventura. The causes for the issue vary; however, poverty and lack of easy access

to schools, especially in Buenaventura's rural areas, have been attributed as the primary reasons to explain high rates of school dropout.

The highest level of education in Buenaventura is elementary school with 86% of the population completing elementary school. In addition, 49% of the population has a High school diploma, 23% complete some other education, and 11% have access to higher education (CONPES 2006; DANE 2005).

Educational quality in the city is very low, as the majority of schools are considered low performing. According to students' scores on national standard education tests from 2004, only 81% of Buenaventura's schools obtained high level scores while 68.9% obtained low level scores, and 23% median score.

Also, it is found that 15% and 18% of students completing fifth grade (elementary school) did not reach minimum competency in Math and Language respectively. The numbers are higher for students completing ninth grade: 43% for Math, and 15% for language (CONPES 2006).

Illiteracy rates in Buenaventura are 12.5%¹ (the national standard is 9.6%) in the urban areas, and 33% for rural areas (DANE 2005; CONPES 2007). However, according to a 2009 Cidse study, the numbers are even higher 16.7% for urban areas and 38% for rural areas.

¹ According to the latest Colombian census (DANE 2010), the number is almost 10% for urban areas, and almost 20% in rural areas.

Housing

One of Buenaventura's biggest issues is the population's precarious housing conditions. According to CONPES 3410, housing conditions in Buenaventura are "precarious" as 50% of Buenaventura's urban homes don't meet minimum standards lacking quantitative (cohabiting households and households in not amenable dwellings) and qualitative conditions (basic services, overcrowding and precarious infrastructure).

Lack of qualitative conditions such as, basic services, especially water and sewage systems is the city's biggest housing issue affecting 30% of the households. These systems, access to potable water and proper treatment of wasted waters, are essential to the population's basic health as they help prevent exposure to deathly diseases, especially among children and pregnant women.

As of 2006 in the urban areas of Buenaventura, less than 50% of homes have sewage system (44.2%)². What's more, the limited system is found to be deficient. Sewage systems in the city usually fail to effectively collect waste waters; and as a result, most of this water ends up in little rivers that run across the city. Additionally, the city lacks treatment plants to properly handle Buenaventura's collected wasted waters (CONPES 2006).

In terms of a water system or aqueduct, for the same year, 71.8%³ of urban homes in Buenaventura have a water system. However, as with the sewage system,

² However, the most recent Colombian census (DANE 2010) shows improvement on this area as 59,6 % homes in Buenaventura presently have sewage system.

³ DANE 2010 also shows improvement on this area as 75,9 % of homes in Buenaventura currently have aqueduct.

water service is deficient as it does not provide uninterrupted 24 hours/ 7 days a week service.

Lack of aqueduct and sewage systems primarily affects the Afro population in Buenaventura as the numbers for this ethnic minority almost double for both (sewage system: 42.3%; aqueduct 25.2%) versus the non-ethnic population (sewage system: 21.3%; aqueduct 10.2%) (DANE 2005; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009).

The second biggest housing issue in Buenaventura is lack of households with quantitative standards. It is observed that 20% of homes are affected by this issue (CONPES 2006).

Labor Market Indicators

As a maritime and fishing port Buenaventura's productive activity is concentrated on the economic sectors characteristic of this kind of port. Thus, Buenaventura's economic productivity is found in fishing, transportation, and commerce (Urrea Giraldo and Correa Heredia, 2007). However, commerce represents the port's principal economic activity.

According to data from DANE 2010, almost half of Buenaventura's businesses deal with commerce (49.7%). The service sector is the second in importance (32%) in the port, and the industrial sector takes the third place (7.7%) (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

Employment

In terms of economic activities, work areas, and employment for Buenaventura's population, it is found that almost 50% of the population is self-employed. Furthermore, the majority of Buenaventura's employed population is concentrated in the second sector of Buenaventura's economy: the services sector (64.1%) (Correa Montoya et al. 2011). Moreover, 60% of the employment generated from this sector, which covers communal, social and personal services, is considered informal (Cidse 2009).

Other sectors employing significant numbers of Buenaventura's population are transportation, storage, and communications (12.8%); commerce, food industry (restaurants) and hotels (5.1%); and construction (5.1%) (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

In the rural area, agricultural activities, agro forestry activities and fishing (mainly artisanal) are the sectors where Buenaventura's rural work force is located. However, these activities are low in productivity; and as in the case of agro forestry activities, environmentally unsustainable (Cidse 2009).

Salaried employment predominates among Afro-Colombians in Buenaventura where 79.9% of the Afro population is considered a wage-earner. It is observed that the number of wage earners in Buenaventura is higher for Afro-Colombian women (81.2%) Buenaventura is the second city in Colombia with the biggest number of Afro-Colombian salaried employees (Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa 2009). However, employment in Buenaventura is considered precarious.

In regards to income, it is found that workers in Buenaventura are not fairly compensated for the job done. In other words, no matter the economic sector a person

works in, the payment receive by the employee in exchange for his job is not enough.

According to the ENS report, more than half of salaried employees in Buenaventura make less 1'000,000 pesos (around \$500 dollars) per month (64.1%), and 14.7% were reporting making less than the minimum wage. In addition, almost 40% of salaried employees state that their income does not cover basic needs.

Furthermore, it is found that 63% of Buenaventura's population makes less than the national minimum wage (Cidse 2009; Correa Montoya et al. 2011). This income usually supports a family of four people (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

In terms of labor contracts, the situation raises major concerns as a good number of employees do not receive the benefits stipulated by law: pension and severance pay (around 30%); and paid vacations (around 40%). (Correa Montoya et al. 2011). Additionally, 38.5% of women did not receive maternity leave. Even though, the vast majority of salaried employees have a contract, employers usually circumvent the law and do not comply with labor standards established by law (Correa Montoya et al. 2011).

In general, employment conditions in Buenaventura are considered precarious (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia, 2007; Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa, 2009; Correa Montoya et al. 2011) as shown by the employed population low income, lack of fair remuneration, benefits and contracts and the high predominance of informal employment. For instance, as of 2005, 43.65% of Buenaventura's population was self employed (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia 2007).

Precarious salaried employment conditions, strong presence of informal

employment and low wages are not the only challenges faced by Buenaventura's population. Unemployment is perhaps one of the biggest issues in Buenaventura followed by underemployment.

As of 2010, unemployment in Buenaventura reaches 33% (vs. 11% at the national level) and underemployment is at 60%. Unemployment mainly affects the youth; among young people the unemployment rate is 60% (Correa Montoya et al. 2011). However, official numbers from the 2005 census puts unemployment slightly down (28.8%) and underemployment at 34.7% (DANE 2005; Cidse 2009; Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia 2007).

However, it is important to note that precarious labor conditions and predominantly informal employment does not only affect Afro-Colombians in Buenaventura, but it also affects Afro-Colombian nationwide: "data on occupational status, health coverage and pensions reveal that salaried employment is dominant among black people, women and men, but the majority works in precarious employment, with (tendency to) strong informality, show by the gap between the salaried condition and the low wage rates contributory health coverage. Even in a city like Bogota this phenomenon is observed" (Viafara Lopez, Urrea Giraldo, and Correa, 2009, 39).

Buenaventura Port's Privatization

As stated in chapter two, in keeping to the world's neo-liberal policies, and the pressures of a globalized world, Colombia started to promote this economic model, which favored – among other practices - privatization of state owned companies.

In 1994, the Colombian Port Authority was privatized becoming the Regional Port Society of Buenaventura (SPRBUN S.A.). This move placed Colombia's most important port and one of the most important regional generator's of income and employment in private hands.

It is observed that the port's privatization had a negative effect on Buenaventura's population labor and living conditions. Even though, as argued by Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia, it is hard to quantify the port's privatization consequences on the population's living conditions, it is clear that "during the existence of this company (Colombian Port Authority) the relationship between the port's activity and the population was much more balanced and favorable than to the one given after with the Port Society" (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia, 2007, 12).

However, port's privatization negative impact on Buenaventura's population can be better measured by looking into how this change impacted former Colombian Ports' employees' labor conditions and income, and how these changes reverberated in the municipality's economy.

Once the Regional Port Society took over, it modified labor conditions that were not favorable for employees. According to authors Gimena Sanchez and Kelly Nicholls, the port's privatization "led to the general deterioration of labor conditions" (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011, 6) in Buenaventura.

As labor conditions deteriorate in Buenaventura, employees' living standards lower:

In going from the public to the private sector, the company changed working

conditions, as well as recruitment, affecting labor conditions at the port (as well as) at the municipal level. Considering that formal employment depended largely on this productive activity, along with the local government and the fishing industry, the privatization policy resulted in a deterioration of the living conditions of many of the inhabitants, who were linked directly or indirectly to the production dynamics of the port area. (Correa Montoya et al. 2011, 98)

Furthermore, the good remuneration that the employees had achieved through the State Company's union, which had served to stimulate the city's economy, generated a decrease in Buenaventura's per capita income: "Privatization of Ports of Colombia, would lead to a decline in per capita income and stimulate the proliferation of a wide range of forms of informal economy and social disadvantages that flow from it" (Correa Montoya et al. 2011, 98).

In addition to declining labor conditions and income, other national economic trends and the new demands imposed on Colombia's most important port contributed to drastically change Buenaventura's labor landscape and its economy and with these the socio-economic conditions of its population.

During the last twenty years, Colombia has quickly shifted its economic policies to international trade opening its doors to the economy of a globalized world. In this way, the country's focus on developing strategies to increase competitiveness and mass commercialization, both essential to Colombia's economic advancement.

Within this new national economic context, maritime transport rose to the center of Colombia's economy as it became a low cost transport vehicle to carry massive quantities of goods and supplies; and the need to develop new strategies to meet the port's commercialization demands called for its modernization. As a result,

Buenaventura's port underwent a rapid modernization and expansion process to assist the country's productivity goal.

The results of this economic maneuver have been optimal for Colombia's national economy. As for the year of 2005, 95.3% of Colombia's international trade was done through Buenaventura's port and had mobilized 44% of the total cargo handled by all regional port societies (Cidse 2009 citing Gerson Perez 2007).

However, the positive economic results obtained at the national level were totally the opposite at the regional level as the region's – already weak - economy deteriorated. Thus, the port's economic gains did not reach its population.

On one hand, the port's modernization resulted in less demand for actual man labor in Buenaventura. As a consequence, unemployment and informal employment rates increased.

In addition, the port's modernization and expansion plan foreseeing by the Colombian government failed to provide social investment (Urrea Giraldo and Castro Heredia 2007) to assist Buenaventura's – historically vulnerable population - to catch up with the country's economic changes and to successfully integrate the population to Colombia's main productive activity, especially as this activity was taking place and was being concentrated in the region.

On the other hand, changes in labor conditions created a major labor crisis undermining wages and workers basic rights. As recently as 2011, workers have accused the port's society of discouraging labor activity by firing workers affiliated with unions or forced them to resign if they want to be hired (Nicholls and Sanchez-

Garzoli 2011); and have denounced the proliferation of the associative labor cooperatives or CTA model (hiring workers through subcontractors: no contracts, no basic benefits, employer no required to provide worker with safety workplace standards)⁴.

Critics of the CTA model have argued that it suppresses workers' right collective bargain resulting in wages that are usually under the country's minimum: "the CTA model simply does not allow for collective bargaining. Most of the dockworkers perform physical labor under grueling conditions and receive very little pay. The salaries vary since they are not regulated by union contracts. A dockworker, if lucky, could earn between \$170 and \$226 every two weeks. Most earn about \$113, which does not meet the national minimal wage requirements." (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011, 6); and promoting company's behavior to ignore basic labor standards: "workers in CTAs have no collective-bargaining rights, and companies have no incentive to uphold basic labor standards" (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011, 6).

Most recently, the passage of the U.S-Colombia Free Trade Agreement has alarmed national and U.S. based advocacy groups as it is expected that the FTA will worsen and further deteriorate Buenaventura's population's conditions, especially the population's majority: Afro-Colombians. These advocate groups and policy organizations have argued that under Buenaventura's current circumstances additional modernization and expansion of the port to accommodate the needs for increased trade

⁴ These two issues echoed during the past 3 years in the U.S. Congress as Washington based policy advocates for Latin America, and U.S. based unions focused on the issues as part of the debate for the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which was finally passed in Congress in October of 2011 and it was implemented on May 15, 2012.

will negatively impact its population (historically excluded, and marginalized and facing one of the country's worse disparity).

CHAPTER 4

CONFLICT AND DRUG-TRAFFICKING IMPACT IN THE PACIFIC REGION AND BUENAVENTURA

In the 1990s the Pacific region started to become the center of the Colombian conflict with the arrival of paramilitary and guerillas to the territory and with the movement of illicit crops. These groups brought with them illicit crops; thus, coca crop rapidly proliferated in the region. For many scholars, this phenomenon (rapid proliferation of illicit crops – coca -) was linked to the presence of illegal armed groups in the region (Rodriguez 2008). However, they have argued, that purposely bringing conflict to the area was a strategy to take over a region that became very important for particular economic and political interests (Rodriguez 2008 citing Almario).

Furthermore, supporters of this latest theory have pointed out that the violence produced by the conflict was exacerbated once the state and other economic actors had identified the Pacific region as a strategic point for economic development (around the year 2000), and had invested in the region in large scale projects (Rodriguez 2008 citing Arocha).

In 2000, population from the Pacific region – Cauca and Cauca Valley - started to experience firsthand the effects of Colombia's armed conflict as paramilitary forces belonging to the United Self-Defenses of Colombia (AUC) from the *Calima* front entered to the Pacific region. A region traditionally controlled by the FARC guerrillas 30th front (CONPES 2006).

In 2001 alone, more than 46 massacres of peasants took place in the Pacific

region, including a particularly bloody one, known as the *Naya* massacre (CONPES 2006). The massacre occurred in April of that year during the traditional Colombian religious holiday known as the Holy Week (Easter). This massacre had the participation of more than 300 paramilitary men who entered the territory, savagely killed 110 peasants, and displaced 3,000 people, mainly Afro-Colombians and Indigenous communities from the district of *Alto Naya*, which is located on the border of the southwestern Colombian departments of Cauca and Valle (Craig-Best and Shingler, 2001).

According to authors Craig-Best and Shingler, the *Alto Naya* region was targeted for its coca-fields, and “strategic location on a river used by guerrillas for transporting troops and arms” (Craig-Best and Shingler, 2001). They also added that subsequent violence in the region was primarily motivated by multinational economic interests on large deposits of natural resources, such as gold and precious woods. Between the years of 1999 to 2006, the municipality of Buenaventura, now directly affected by the conflict, had its security situation worsen once confrontations between these two illegal armies for territorial control- mainly for narco-trafficking: coca cultivations and production - intensified.

According to the Observatory on Human Rights from the Colombian Vice presidency, during this period, population’s participation in armed activity went from 9.71% in 1999 to 40% in 2005 while the homicide rates almost double: from 268 reported homicides in the city in 2003 to 400 reported homicides for the year of 2006 (CONPES 2006). In 2008, paramilitary groups finally gained control over

Buenaventura's urban area pushing the FARC guerrillas, who had traditionally controlled the region, to the rural areas (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011).

These two illegal groups utilize the Pacific ocean, and especially the port of Buenaventura, as the region's strategic staging ground for shipping and commercialization of "products." The population's poverty, under and unemployment as well as lack of state control over the municipality was a favorable context for narco-trafficking and other illegal business (e.g. illegal extractions of minerals):

Geographical and regional conditions of Buenaventura is conducive for the development of non-legal activities: arms trafficking, mobilization of inputs for processing of illegal drugs, smuggling, illegal extraction of crude Pacific Pipeline and more recently the establishment of illicit crop production coca leaf. (Colombia National Planning Department 2006, 14)

In the case of narco-trafficking, the Pacific region unique characteristics have allowed illegal armed groups to secure land for coca cultivation in departments such as Chocó where coca crop cultivation are nine times larger today that what they were in 2004 (UNODC 2011); and open routes for drug's distribution and export (e.g. the Port of Buenaventura) while people's lack of employment has motivated their involvement in illegal activities (coca cultivation, and illegal extraction of natural resources) and criminality (trafficking drugs and arms) (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011).

The municipality of Buenaventura is a good example of incrementation of Population's involvement in illegal activities (drug business), as well as the boom of the illegal economy due to the Port's strategic location, the population's poverty, and the municipality's insecurity. In the municipality, narco-trafficking has become an

economic alternative for the region's impoverished population as coca cultivation provides families with subsistence income. Thus, rural population along the river basins engages in coca cultivation and illegal extraction of minerals, such as lumber and gold; while the city's population, especially the youth, who lack formal jobs and education, becomes involved in drug trafficking, arms trafficking and other contraband as alternative ways to produce income as legal opportunities are scarce and poorly paid (Nicholls and Sanchez-Garzoli 2011).

The complex socio-economic and politic dynamics in Buenaventura have resulted in a municipality where legal and illegal economy coexist and frequently overlap:

Ultimately the battle for Buenaventura is about control. The city of Buenaventura (population 325,000), home to one of Colombia's largest and most profitable seaports, is also close to the country's most productive coca fields. This strategic location accounts for the city's shadow economy of illegal cocaine exports and imported black market dollars, which flow along with regulated products like coffee and sugar cane. (Riano and Osseo-Asare n/d)

As a result, in Buenaventura the lines between legality and illegality – not only as part of economic activities - became blurred. A good example of this dynamic is the high grade of corruption found in the municipality's institutions, and the participation of elected officials in such activities, as well as they ties with paramilitary groups (in what is also known in Colombia as parapolitics) and drug lords.

For example, in 2011, Buenaventura's mayor Jose Felix Ocoro Minotta was detained as part of criminal investigation on charges of corruption. As part of the same investigation, former Buenaventura mayor Zaulo Quinones Garcia was apprehended.

And in 2009, former Valle del Cauca Senator Juan Carlos Martinez was detained due to alleged ties with Paramilitary groups of the *Calima* Front (the front operating in the Pacific). In 2011, the former Senator was sentenced to 7.5 years in jail for his links with this group. During this trial it was revealed that he received financial support from two well-known drug lords from the Pacific. In July of 2012, a separate investigation was launched against the Senator for allegedly receiving support for his 2002 campaign from drug-traffickers.

However, despite these complex dynamics in Buenaventura, and the Pacific region, it is important to note that Afro-Colombians population's participation in coca cultivation is also often done under coercion by illegal armed groups who take control over ethnic territories¹ (Sanchez-Garzoli 2012).

Furthermore, in the rural areas proliferation of illicit crops has affected Afro-Colombian communities' traditional socio-economic structures and has damaged the environment (e.g. permanent sub-soil damage after cultivation of African-Palm). Once territory has been forcibly taken by illegal armed groups from Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific, these communities lose control over collective territories threaten Afro-Colombian communities' governing structures (Sanchez and Garcia 2006).

Another important factor, aerial spraying of coca fields, as part of Plan Colombia's counter-narcotic polices, to eliminate illicit crops damages collective territories that are usually rich in minerals and biodiversity, destroys food crops and also

¹ Please refer to footnote number 4 in chapter 2.

contaminates water (Sanchez-Garzoli 2012; Sanchez and Garcia 2006).

Additionally, the spread of the conflict into the Pacific coast region and proliferation of illegal business in municipalities such as Buenaventura has increased levels of violence and human rights violations towards civilian population. The Port city of Buenaventura has felt the escalation of violence and armed conflict. In a 2007 Simon Romero of the New York Times, described the Port city almost as a war zone:

Visitors to this city can be forgiven for thinking no place is safe here. Gunfire often echoes through the slums surrounding its port, the country's most important on the Pacific coast. As larger cities have calmed, Buenaventura has emerged as the deadliest urban center in Colombia's long internal war," where "drug lords, rebels and resurgent paramilitary gangs all draw on Buenaventura's slum dwellers as their foot soldiers. (Romero 2007)

One way the violence has been revealed is via discovery of mass graves over the past decade with bodies of victims of extreme violence. In the municipality, "bodies are often thrown into the waterways and mangroves around Buenaventura" (Nicholls, Sanchez-Garzoli, 2011, 5). Paramilitary and Guerrillas groups are believed to be responsible for most of the disappearances.

However, concentration of conflict and proliferation of illegal crops are not the only factors affecting the rise of violence in the Pacific coastal region and its people's – already precarious - socio-economic status, among mostly Afro-Colombians. Colombia's adherence to neo-liberal policies focusing on the Pacific coastal region, oriented mainly to expand international trade and investment, have also exacerbated the conflict leading to a huge problem of internal displacement of low-income mostly Afro-Colombians.

Internal Displacement

For decades, internal displacement resulted from violence provoked by Colombia's long lasting internal armed conflict that started almost 50 years as a political struggle for power between Colombia's main parties, Liberals and Conservatives, who organized armed militias to fight each other.

Since its beginnings, the conflict's main stage was Colombia's countryside. As a result, Colombia's rural population has suffered the most violence by the armed conflict.

During the years of "*La Violencia*" (1948-1958), the period where Colombia's armed struggle originated, lack of public security, and state control over rural areas led to the first displacements of Colombian citizens. Over these years, millions of people, primary peasants, were forced to abandon their homes and lands in an attempt to escape the country's escalating violence.

However, it was not until 1995 when the Colombian Government started to recognize the need to address this issue of geographic displacement from armed conflict as a state responsibility to support these affected populations. As a result, in September of that year the country adopted the National Programme of Comprehensive Care for People Displaced by the Violence; and later on, in 1997 the Colombian Congress finally passed special legislation to address internal displacement (Law 387 of 1997). Furthermore, the Colombian government institutionalized practice of documentation to keep official records about displacement only began until 1997 (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* or CODHES).

Between 1980's and 2011, The Observatory on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), the leading Colombian NGO monitoring displacement documented the displacement of 5,445,406 people in the entire country. The official government records have registered 3,943, 509 displaced for a shorter period of time (1997 to 2011). These official numbers place Colombia in second place worldwide in terms of the size of internally displaced population (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs or OCHA Colombia 2011).

The majority of these displacements took place between the years 2000 and 2011. During this time, the Colombian government, under the Uribe Administration (2000-2010), aggressively implemented its policy of “democratic security”, which emphasized an overwhelming militarized approach to the country’s drug-related and insurgency’s issues.²

Under the Santos administration, which followed Uribe, the government has continued implementing this policy (International Displacement Monitoring Center or IDMC 2011) with mixed results. For example, security has improved in regions such as Montes de Maria (northern coast) and La Macarena (Meta) (IDMC 2011), yet over a half of the persons displaced during 2011 came from 86 municipalities where the

² According to the Uribe government, the purpose of the democratic security policy was to establish and reinstate the rule of law in Colombia and protect the population through the implementation of various strategies, not only military, to weaken the illegal ‘narco-terrorist’ groups. This policy merged the objectives of the U.S. war of drugs in Colombia and the governments’ counter-insurgency efforts. However, International Human Rights Organizations and Colombian NGOs have raised some concerns about the continued violation of human rights by both illegal and legal armed groups, the lack of social and economic policies, the lack of civil and State institutions, and the exacerbation of the conflict during the years of this policy’s implementation.

national plan of consolidation or PNC³ has been implemented.

Additionally, these policies have worked hand and glove with Plan Colombia: the U.S. – Colombia chief policy approach to combating illicit drug production, and drug trafficking in Colombia, the largest supplier of illicit drugs to the U.S., and a major supplier of cocaine in global markets.

Over the past decade, Colombia's dual counter-insurgency-counter narcotic strategy intensified the internal conflict in the Pacific with this predominantly militarized approach which has led to an average of 300,000 being displaced annually (CODHES 2012).

As displacement numbers have shown, during the years of implementation of Democratic Security and Plan Colombia the conflict has become worse in terms of displaced peoples. According to CODHES, 3'352,042 people, coming from 69% of Colombia's municipalities, have become displaced in the last 10 years due to increasing violence within the conflict. Furthermore, the displacement process has disproportionately impacted Afro-Colombians populations on the Pacific coastal region. There are differences and discrepancies in these numbers, Official figures estimate that about 10.5% Afro-Colombians are Internally Displaced Persons. However, CODHES places the number at 22.5% and the Organization of American States (OAS) uses the figure of 30% (Sanchez-Garzoli 2012).

³ According to the Uribe government, the national plan for territorial consolidation, a cornerstone of the democratic security plan, is designed to achieve the full recovery of the country's regions that were or are affected by the actions of illegal armed groups, which have high rates of social vulnerability.

During 2011 displacement increased in the Colombian Pacific coastal region in the departments of Antioquia, Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Córdoba and Chocó (CODHES 2012; IDMC 2011). For example, during the first half of 2011 “...between 36 and 50 mass displacement events, predominantly in those departments, together displaced between 13,000 and 18,000 people” (IDMC 2011, 6).

In this region, intensification of the conflict as well as disputes over territories contributed to forced displacements: “paramilitary actions against civilians, the fighting between guerrillas and government forces, the deployment of major army operations in territories against FARC guerrillas and the struggle for control of territories in the economy legal or outlawed, increased the humanitarian crisis and displacement, especially in the west part of the country (Pacific coastal region)” (CODHES 2012, 2).

From a total of 73 mass displacements in Colombia during 2011, 67 took place in the Pacific coastal region in the departments of Cauca (31), Córdoba (10), Nariño (10), Antioquia (6), Chocó (6), and Valle del Cauca (4). Moreover, 5 out of this six departments most affected by internal displacement contained a high percentage of Afro-Colombians: “forced exit is most noticeable in the municipalities of the Colombian Pacific, the epicenter of the expansion of the armed conflict in the last decade and the most affected communities are still Afro descendants and indigenous living in collective territories” (CODHES 2012, 11).

By 2011, actions of paramilitary groups, “*Los Rastrojos*” and “*Urabenos*,” accounted for the highest number of mass displacements (IDMC 2011).

Non-traditional extractive economies and large scale economic projects have

also impacted negatively on Afro-Colombians in the departments of Cauca, Chocó and Nariño as well as municipalities such as Buenaventura, which are mineral rich and where Afro-Colombian communities have benefited from artisanal mining. CODHES argues “it is becoming increasingly clear the relationship between areas of displacement and interests by mining and agribusiness, the large locomotive components of the development plan of the Santos administration” (CODHES 2012, 3). It is important to note that these projects are a continuation of Neo-Liberal economic policies that have been vigorously promoted in Colombia during the past fifteen years.

The Issue of Forced Displacement in Buenaventura

The increased violence by these illegal armed actors and other drug trafficking organizations in the Pacific coastal region and in municipalities such as Buenaventura and San Andres de Tumaco during the past decade has contributed to forced displacement in the region, particularly impacting rural areas and reducing its population. Typically displaced people in the Pacific coastal region flee to urban areas: primary the cities of Buenaventura, Tumaco, Cali, Medellin and Turbo.

In the municipality of Buenaventura, the city of Buenaventura receives a great number of internally displaced people from the region as well as from its rural communities. The Colombian government has estimated that, “some 70,000 displaced people have arrived in Buenaventura since the late 1990s, many of them subsistence farmers from Afro-Colombian communities escaping fighting between paramilitary and guerrilla groups in the rainforests of Colombia's Pacific coast” (Moloney 2010).

Massive displacement has added to the ranks of unemployed and job seekers in the port city and has left these populations in a precarious condition in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. If true for municipalities, Buenaventura not only receives internally displaced people, but also its rural areas continually generate the phenomena. The Colombian the Department for Prosperity (DPS), formerly known as the agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, have estimated 35,000 people in situation of internal displacement in the city of Buenaventura from its rural hinterland. The department reports that displaced people fleeing the Port city was coming from communities in the coastal Pacific departments of Chocó, Risaralda and Nariño (CONPES 2006). In 2005, Buenaventura received 35,151 internally displaced people; and at the same time, the municipality generated the displacement of another 31,004 people. Most of the internally displaced were between 18 and 40 of age and women were overrepresented (CONPES 2006).

During 2011 alone, the municipality of Buenaventura was the most affected municipality in the country among the designated CCAI zones. The forces described within the municipality displaced 18,233 people and 3 out of the 4 mass displacements from the department of Cauca Valley took place in Buenaventura. During that year, Buenaventura received 5,032 internally displaced people (CODHES 2012).

The 2012 UN Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Colombia reinforced this picture by reporting that deteriorating security conditions in Buenaventura have increased urban displacement, which is an issue that has gone generally unaccounted for in the country

as there are very few official figures reporting and monitoring this phenomena.

According to this report the phenomenon of Inter-urban displacement has greatly increased in Buenaventura in movement between neighborhoods in order to escape from drug turfs battles and crime resettling from confrontations between drug gangs and criminal groups fighting over control of drug distribution markets. These groups, usually linked to guerrillas or paramilitary groups, engaged in armed struggles to control the city's river banks, which are strategic locations for the storage and transport of cocaine for drug trafficking organizations (Moloney 2010).

According to UNHCR, "the violence has broken up generations of families and entire communities. Violence in the poor neighborhoods of Buenaventura is a leading cause of urban displacement," This type and degree of social violence is directly fueled by drug-trafficking as groups involved in narco-trafficking "tend to target poor neighborhoods built on the water edge because of their access to the sea." (Moloney 2010)

Socio-Economic Issues Affecting Displaced Afro-Colombians

Once displaced, IDPs face a great number of challenges due to lack of access to the most essential needs for survival and the lack of effective state security.

Many Colombian IDPs live in urban shanty towns in extreme poverty, with insufficient food, basic sanitation, electricity, or gainful employment. In addition, countless internally displaced people become vulnerable under the constant threat of harm, coercion, recruitment of their youth by illegal armed groups, and sexual abuse.

Statistics from the Colombian government show that 94% of internally displaced people are below the poverty line, 47% are in extreme poverty, and only 6% has an income. In addition, 35% of the internally displaced people live under overcrowded conditions and only 23% own their own home.

Indigenous and Afro Colombians have been disproportionately affected by these socio-economic conditions of displacement where “all the parties to the conflict have consistently targeted civilians for strategic ends” (IDCM 2009).

According to the 2008 report Observatory of Racial Discrimination (ODR), 12.3% of the Afro Colombian population in Colombia, a population that composes 22.5% of the total Colombian population, has been displaced, (Rodriguez Garavito et al. 2008).

In addition to the drama of being forcibly displaced, Afro-Colombians internally displaced face other challenges due to their historical socio-economic status within the country. As a population traditionally excluded, poor and marginalized Afro-Colombian’s internally displaced lack adequate state assistance. As a consequence, they become more vulnerable and face major security risks.

Public assistance available for Afro-Colombians internally displaced is lower than for other internally displaced people. For instance, the International Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) reports that only 4.5% of Afro-Colombian internally displaced live in housing meeting minimum standards (stability of ownership title, materials, services), compared to an already low 5.5% for the rest of the displaced population.

Additionally, Afro-Colombians status as internally displaced has increased their risk from vulnerable conditions especially among women and youth. This sector of the population constitutes the vast majority of internally displaced people as women account for almost 50% of internally displaced households and almost 40% are children under eighteen. Women and the youth are at a higher risk of sexual abuse, exploitation and forced recruitment by illegal armed groups.

However, in addition to the Colombia's internal armed conflict, the Colombian Constitutional Court identified other three factors as causes of forced displacement within Afro-Colombians communities: structural exclusion, agricultural and mining large projects operating in ancestral lands and lack of adequate judicial and institutional protection for Afro-Colombians' collective territory (Rodriguez Garavito et al. 2010).

Furthermore, the 2010 Report by the former United Nations Independent Expert on Minority Issues identified three other issues causing displacement within Afro-Colombian communities: narco-trafficking, aerial fumigation, and multinational economic interests.

Colombian Constitutional Court Order 005/2009

In 1995, the Colombian government adopted the National Programme of Comprehensive Care for People Displaced by the Violence. The Programme aims to address factors which can prevent displacement, concentrating on displaced persons whose well-being and safety are at risk, providing emergency humanitarian relief for displaced persons, medium-term social programmes, (largely administered by a state

agency: the Social Solidarity Network), and state land awards.

The lack of implementation by the Colombian government of the mandated protections prompted the Colombian Constitutional Court to declare in three occasions (2004, 2007, 2009) that the Colombian government was violating the constitution by neglecting its responsibility to protect internally displaced people in the country, whose vulnerability was extreme.

The Constitutional Court found that displacement primarily affecting Afro-Colombian Internally displaced was unconstitutional and they identified the group as one of the most vulnerable populations in the country. In addition, the Court concluded that the government lacked a public policy to address the disproportional impact that displacement had on Afro-Colombians; and therefore, it prompted the government to recognize the need to adopt policies to protect this minority (Rodriguez Garavito, Orduz Salinas, and Berrio 2010).

According to the Court, Afro-Colombian internally displaced were more at risk to increase further their precarious situation of discrimination and exclusion as an effect of displacement; these risks included the violation of their collective land rights to homeland territories, the destruction of their social and cultural fabric in society, and the weakening of representative organizations (Rodriguez Garavito, Orduz Salinas, and Berrio 2010).

Thus, through Ruling 005, the Colombian Constitutional Court mandated the Colombian Government formulate plans and specific measures for implementation by public institutions which have jurisdiction over internally displaced peoples'

protection (namely the Interior and Justice Ministry (MIJ) and “*Acción Social*” (AC) together with the affected communities; and ordered the responsible government agencies to present two annual reports with respect to the formulation and implementation of these policies. The court ruling mandated the government issue and implement six measures to prevent Afro-Colombian’s displacement and also to cover the socio-economic needs of Afro-Colombians’ internally displaced.

There were three phases or stages involved. First, the Constitutional Court ordered the MIJ to elaborate a detailed report on the status of Afro-Colombian territories. Second, it ordered *Accion Social* to implement its “ethnic route”⁴ plan as part of the agency’s project of land and patrimony protection. Third, it ordered *Accion Social’s* director to come up with a strategy to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Afro-Colombians confined within their own territories under control of illegal armed groups. Fourth, it also directed *Accion Social’s* director, in close collaboration with these communities and respecting their authorities, to design a plan to prevent, protect and assist Afro-Colombian population. Fifth, the court ordered a special protection plan for 62 Afro-Colombian territories designated “at-risk” with the displaced populations.

Sixth, it mandated the MIJ and the Defense Minister to implement the provisions ruled by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2003, 2004, 2005,2006) related to the situation faced by the Afro-Colombian communities of

⁴ According to the Court, this is “a special safeguard mechanism that contributes to the protection of land rights of Afro-Colombians in displacement or at risk to be displaced, or who have been violated or threatened due to violence or the construction or operation of large economic projects such as monoculture, mining, port or similar.”

Jiguamiando and *Curvarado* in the Colombian Uraba region (Northwest of Colombia, near the border with Panama).

However, as late as the end of 2010 the implementation of these laws has been inadequate as the targeted population has yet to benefit. The Observatory on Racial Discrimination (ODR) concluded that each of the provisions was in status of non-compliance (Rodriguez Garavito Rodriguez Garavito, Orduz Salinas, and Berrio 2010).

The study adds further:

The gravity of the violations of human rights of displaced persons and communities of African descent make it urgent that the Colombian State meets its obligations stated by the Constitutional Court. For this implementation to occur, it is essential that the Government takes its commitments without delay of any kind and be more diligent to initiate actions that effectively demonstrate the offering of solid answers to the orders issued by the Constitutional Court Order 005/2009. (Rodriguez Garavito, Orduz Salinas, and Berrio 2010, 49)

Plan Colombia

Over the last decade, the U.S. government sponsored Plan Colombia as the U.S.– Colombia chief policy strategy to combat illicit drug production, and drug trafficking in Colombia, which is considered the largest supplier of illicit drugs to the U.S., and one of the major suppliers of cocaine to the global market. Plan Colombia is “based on the assumption that a reduction in the illicit drug supply worldwide can be tackled by focusing on supply control measures” (Acevedo 2008).

The economic link found between illicit drugs and Colombia’s illegal armed groups, which have operated in the country for more than four decades, and its implications for Colombians’ security, and the security of the region soon shifted from a

counternarcotics strategy to an almost exclusively counter-insurgency military strategy not just directed to eradicate drug production, but to defeat on the battle field illegal armed groups, especially the Colombian guerrillas: *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and *Ejercito de Libertacion Nacional* (ELN):

The U.S.-Colombian partnership, initially focused on counternarcotics, shifted in 2002. Because narcotics trafficking and the guerrilla insurgency had become intertwined problems, the U.S. Congress granted the State Department and DOD flexibility to use U.S. counterdrug funds for a unified campaign to fight drug trafficking and terrorist groups. (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012, 12)

The U.S. government bankrolled Plan Colombia with \$8 billion, in U.S. between the years of 2000 and 2012 mostly for military purposes, yet today Colombia remains one of the major producers of cocaine in the world. For the FY 2013, the Obama Administration requested an additional \$332 million in State Department funding for Plan Colombia's continuation (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

Furthermore, the intensification of Colombia's internal conflict in certain areas of the country has created a serious humanitarian IDP crisis that has disproportionately impacted Colombian minorities: Afro-Colombians and Indigenous populations.

These facts show that Plan Colombia, has not only has failed to curb drug production, but a mainly military approach to Colombia's issues (narco- trafficking, illegal armed groups, and lack of state control over its territory), has intensified the conflict in some areas of the country affecting vulnerable population.

In its origins, Plan Colombia was an initiative developed by then Colombian President Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) to address Colombia's social and economic

issues, especially in the rural areas, to find a peaceful solution to the long internal armed conflict, and to eliminate drug trafficking.

The three year plan required an investment of \$7.5 billion, with Colombia as the major contributor, and some funding coming from the international community, mainly the U.S. and the EU. President Pastrana's Plan Colombia, as originally proposed, did not focus predominantly on military aid to address the internal armed conflict and fumigation as the primary policy for eradication of illicit drug crops. In fact, in the original version of the plan "there was hardly any mention of military strategies" (Acevedo 2008) or any emphasis on drug trafficking policies, but rather it was conceived as the Colombian version of the U.S. economic Marshal Plan.

In 1999, a revised version of Plan Colombia came out. This version was not available in Spanish until 2000. After meetings between the Pastrana administration and U.S. officials from the Clinton administration to secure funding for Plan Colombia, the Pastrana administration drafted a plan taking into consideration the U.S. concerns and interests in the region - drug trafficking and the guerrillas' advance-. Moreover, the Clinton administration emphasized the need to come up with "a plan with a large military and security component" (Isacson and Poe 2009).

Hence, Pastrana's initial Plan Colombia transformed to something he had not envisioned - a military strategy - to fight drug production by regaining state control over territories occupied by illegal armed groups. As a result, Pastrana's three year peace seeking plan focusing on social and economic development for the country transformed into a six year plan mainly focusing on military aid for the state to fight against drugs,

and economic aid as a minor component in overall budget.

Although the revised Plan Colombia included some funding for social and economic development as well as strategies to strengthen the judiciary system and the condition of the country's human's rights, among other social and economic strategies, the emphasis on increasing military involvement placed the issue of security as Plan Colombia's main interest.

In 2000, President Clinton signed into law, as part of the Military Construction Appropriations Act of 2001, \$1.3 billion funding for Colombia's counternarcotics efforts and neighboring countries (Beittel 2011). This appropriation bill signed into law directed \$860 million in new aid for Colombia mostly to fund the country's military and police. This aid was mainly directed to increase military operations and to implement spraying of illicit crops in the Putumayo department, which was a zone dominated by the FARC and the major producer of coca leaf at the time (Isacson, Poe, 2009). Although never formally authorized by the U.S. Congress, Plan Colombia funding has been operating for a decade.

On the other hand, initially requested funding for Plan Colombia by the Colombian government to the E.U., ultimate was rejected due to concerns for the human rights situation in the country, among other issues. However, some European countries have supported only certain aspects of the policy throughout the ten years of Plan Colombia.

In 2002, Plan Colombia for the first time combined counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics operations. Two events, one in Colombia - peace talks with guerrilla

groups broke down⁵, and one in the U.S. – the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 - became key contextual changes which profoundly shaped Plan Colombia. Thus, once President Pastrana's peace talks with guerrilla failed, the link between drug trafficking and illegal armed drugs became more visible; and as a consequence of the September 11th attacks in the U.S., three Colombian guerrilla groups, FARC, ELN, and EPL became included in the U.S. list of terrorist organizations.

These events combined to merge together Colombia's national security agenda and the U.S. war on drugs with counter-terrorism policies developing rapidly in the U.S.:

... the support of the U.S. to Plan Colombia became the justification for combining the anti-insurgency agenda with the war on drugs. Furthermore, the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 and the collapse of the peace talks in Colombia in February 2002 bolstered the position of those in the U.S. government arguing for a direct counter-insurgency role in Colombia. (Acevedo 2008)

At the same time, both Colombia and the U.S., the Uribe and the Bush administration respectively, were undergoing new governing administrations. These administrations, with conservative leaders, welcomed the idea of hard liner approached to drugs, narco-trafficking, and now terrorism.

In a freshly minted political discourse, President Uribe seized the opportunity to redefine the drug war as a war against terrorism. Thus, President Uribe requested U.S.

⁵ The FARC-Colombia's Government peace talks lasted two years (January of 1999 to February of 2002). The peace process, an initiative of the Pastrana Administration where held in an agreed demilitarized zone in the Colombian region of Caguan. No peace agreement was achieved. The government blamed the FARC for its failure to comply with the accords, including the continuation of its illegal activities, especially kidnappings, while engaging in the peace process.

funding to fight a war against ‘narco-terrorism.’ He argued that the major obstacle to the country’s economic and social development was the problem of violence generated by illegal armed groups, mainly guerrillas, whose financial resources for arms came from drug trafficking. Thus, the road to peace was an escalation of war against guerrillas and their drug trafficking allies and activities.

President Bush responded favorably to President Uribe’s policy focus and expeditiously secured generous funding for Plan Colombia. In FY 2002 (\$560.4) and FY 2003 (\$808.1), the U.S. doubled and tripled funding to Plan Colombia over previous years. This aid emphasized support to strengthen Colombia’s military.

Between the years of 2000 and 2007, 80.5% of Colombia’s U.S. aid through Plan Colombia went to modernize Colombia’s counter-insurgency military forces, essentially doubling size of the country’s military and police forces and tripling Colombia’s defense budget (Isacson and Poe 2009).

According to Beatriz Acevedo, author of “Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An analytic assessment,” during the last decade the distribution of resources to Plan Colombia have been directed to the support of the following programs: the fight against drugs and organized crime (57.5%), the strengthening of democratic institutions (26.6%), and economic and social revitalization (16%). This means that more than half of the U.S. funded Plan Colombia goes to the fight against drug trafficking activities, which represents the fight against “narco-terrorism” in President Uribe’s military strategy: Democratic Security.

In 2007, President Uribe modified and renamed Plan Colombia. Thus, Plan

Colombia became the National Consolidation Plan (NCP) and was aimed to consolidate state presence in zones traditionally affected by violence generated by illegal armed groups, illicit crops, and poverty. The NPC was a plan integrating security, eradication, interdiction, and development. This program is funded the U.S. program known as the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

In 2010, newly elected President Juan Manuel Santos re-launched the plan focusing on “fewer municipalities and to increase the integration of the newly consolidated areas into Colombia’s overall development plans” (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

Since the beginning, the results of Plan Colombia have been mixed. In terms of security and the fight against illegal armed groups, Colombia’s military offense against the FARC guerrillas has made a major military impact on the organization by killing their main leaders, reducing its size by half as well as greatly reducing kidnapping and extortion operations. However, the Colombian guerrillas continued operating in the country and have moved to other areas of Colombia, and sometimes returning to the same zones after military offences were over.

In addition, in 2005 President Uribe also reached an amnesty deal, the Justice and Peace Demobilization Process⁶, with the United Self Defenses of Colombia (AUC) paramilitaries formally dissolving and extraditing 18 of its leaders to the U.S. to face

⁶ In 2005, President Uribe introduced the Justice and Peace Law and Demobilization. The law granted conditional amnesties to illegal combatants. According to the 2010 CRS Report on Colombia, the fighters were required “to provide an account of their crimes and to forfeit illegally acquired assets in exchange for an alternative penalty of up to eight years' imprisonment”. In addition, paramilitary members were required to make reparations to victims using both their legally and illegally obtained assets. The process facilitated the demobilization of 31,000 paramilitary members.

drug-trafficking charges. However, this process was highly criticized due to questions about its effectiveness, the soft penalties imposed to demobilized paramilitaries for their crimes, the lack of accountability on issues such as victim's reparation, under-reporting of illegally obtained assets and continued illegal activities as well as paramilitary member's extraditions to the U.S. to be processed on drug trafficking charges opposed to remaining in Colombia to face charges for countless atrocities committed (Beittel 2008). Furthermore, more recently new generations of paramilitary groups have reconstituted themselves, and are actively operating in several areas in the country. It is estimated that these emerging paramilitary groups have between 4,000 to 9,000 men operating nationwide (Isacson and Poe 2009).

Counter narcotics operations have done very little to reduce coca crops. By 2008, coca cultivation had slightly decreased from 122,500 hectares in 1999 (a year before Plan Colombia) to 119,000 hectares in 2008 (Isacson and Poe 2009). Coca production moves around in Colombia and throughout the Andean region and continues to supply global demand.

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Plan Colombia did not meet the goal of reducing cultivation, processing and distribution of coca and cocaine to 50% over six years, and Colombia continues to be the largest producer of the cocaine seized in the U.S: "Colombia still produces more than 95% of the cocaine seized in the United States" (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

However, the report also states that although Colombia has been the largest producer of coca and cocaine in the world over the last decade "Colombia's portion of

the world's coca cultivation declined from about 74% in 2000 to 43% in 2009, and continued to decline in 2010" (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

In addition, drug eradication programs, mainly aerial fumigation, have been detrimental to Colombia's rural population ("*campesinos*" and minorities) as it has also been a caused of displacement (although not well-documented), and has damaged the environment contaminating water, destroying "*campesinos*" food crops, and negatively impacting their health. This program has also provoked dispersal of coca crops to other areas where aerial fumigation has not been implemented (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012; Isacson and Poe 2009).

But perhaps, the most affected by Plan Colombia have been Colombia's most vulnerable populations as increased violence, and fumigation efforts have victimized the country's minorities. According to CODHES, official government numbers recorded that in 2011 75,278 people were displaced from CCAI zones, which are part of the NCP (Colombia's new name for Plan Colombia).

Moreover, the CODHES states that this is an indication of a failing security policy as these zones, which only account for 7.67% of the municipalities in Colombia, produced more than half of the total of internally displaced in the country during 2011 (CODHES 2012). The top three CCAI municipalities hardly affected by displacement were Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca), San Andres of Tumaco (Nariño), and Anori (Antioquia). All of these municipalities located on the Colombian Pacific region.

Critics of Plan Colombia have also stated that this policy has not paid close attention to human rights or reduced illegal drugs available in the U.S. Furthermore,

lack of sustainable economic alternatives for farmers cultivating coca has failed to provide this affected population with meaningful tools to substitute coca crops for other legal crops (Ribando Seelke et al. 2012).

CONCLUSION

During the last ten years, the Colombian Pacific coastal region and its population, which are majority Afro-Colombians, have been negatively impacted by Colombia's economic, security and counter narcotic policies, which are backed by the U.S. government. At the same time, this region's population has been re-victimized by increased violence in the Colombian Pacific territory due to presence of illegal armed groups and drug lords engaging in Narco-trafficking.

Relatively recent concentration of Colombia's internal armed conflict in the Colombian Pacific coastal region, narco-trafficking operations, Colombia's adoption of neo-liberal policies, and U.S. backed security and counter-narcotic policies have worsened socio-economic conditions in this region. Furthermore, the combination of these factors has perpetuated Afro-Colombia's cycle of poverty and exposed this minority to disproportionate levels of violence, which is one of the causes of forced displacement.

Colombia's economic, security and counter insurgency and narcotic policies have been detrimental for the Pacific coastal region and its population. Buenaventura constitutes a good example of the negative consequences of rapid implementation of neo-liberal economic policies, heavily military security policies, and ineffective counter narcotic policies within a context of violence and socio-economic disparity, which is the result of the country's historical exclusion and marginalization of the region.

As observed in this work, during the last decade, the socio-economic conditions

of Buenaventura's population have remained virtually unchanged since slavery's abolition, while security conditions have dramatically deteriorated as a consequence of rising violence in the municipality, mainly due to fights over territorial control for drug's cultivation and commercialization.

Moreover, aggressive counter narcotic and insurgency operations, as part of Plan Colombia, in other parts of Colombia have resulted in concentration of drugs cultivation and production in the Pacific coastal region, and commercialization through the port of Buenaventura.

Poverty in the region, traditional exclusion and marginalization of its population by the Colombian government have proven to be the ideal conditions for drug business 'expansion. Thus, weak state control over the region's territory has favored the expansion of illicit crops in rural areas, and commercialization activities throughout the port. In the Pacific, the government's negligence has greatly served the interests of paramilitaries, guerrillas and drug lords while its population's poverty worsens and high levels of violence re-victimized Afro-Colombians.

In addition, the violence generated by illegal armed groups and drug lords has served to successfully advance both illegal economy (narco-trafficking) and legal economy (as large scale mining and agricultural projects) in the Pacific coastal region.

Furthermore, recent state promotion of economic neo-liberal policies in the region have furthered damaged the population and has contributed to the region's instability.

The country's economic policies have put the region's population in an even

more vulnerable situation. This is especially true for Afro-Colombians communities whose control over traditional lands, and resources have been jeopardized by the government's promotion of large infrastructure, mining and energy projects in creating favorable conditions for international trade.

However, the Colombian governments have remained committed to policies bringing infrastructure and capital for to the region's economic advancement and development while being oblivious to negatively impacting the region's population, especially Afro-Colombian communities.

The Colombian Pacific is a clear example of the risks to expose subsistence economy to market forces without the adequate social and economic investment. Economic state's polices have increased the region's population's socio-economic gap once implementation of neo-liberal policies has reduced population's economic security (port's privatization); and it has criminalized the population as they engage in the drug business to make a living.

Colombia's economic, security policies focusing on the Pacific coastal region, and U.S. backed anti-narcotic and anti-insurgency policies have contributed to perpetuate Afro-Colombians cycle of poverty, and have further exposed them to extreme violence.

Currently in Colombia exclusion and marginalization are still the terms defining the socio-economic conditions of Afro-Colombians, especially those on the Pacific coast. In addition, a new drama has unfolded for this minority as never experienced levels of violence are not only killing and displacing Afro-Colombians in the Pacific,

but violating their constitutional rights.

Moreover, deficient state institutions, and government policies have failed to protect the region's population- Afro-Colombians-, and their territories from implementation of the government's own economic policies, illegal and/or violent seizing of land, violence, displacement and illegal armed groups' activities.

The government has failed to effectively formulate and implement state policies to address Afro-Colombian's historic situation of exclusion, poverty and marginalization, to prevent Afro-Colombian's further exposure to violence, and to assist the region's internally displaced people.

The government should protect and guarantee Afro-Colombian's territorial rights as well as their basic rights as Colombian citizens by exerting effective control on the region's territory and substantially improving security conditions.

The government should create sustainable economic alternatives and strategies to integrate the region's population into the region's and the country's economic activities.

The government should focus on the creation of opportunities for the Pacific population, especially the youth, such as access to quality education.

Economic policies for the Pacific should be accompanied by heavy social investment and infrastructure that directly benefits the population. Due to the region's ethnic composition, policies should target Afro-Colombians.

It is imperative that the Colombian government formulates social, economic and security policies for Afro-Colombians and the Pacific with full participation of Afro-

Colombian communities.

The government should also fully implement the protections for Afro-Colombian communities and internally displaced mandated by the Colombian Constitutional Court without further delay.

Plan Colombia

Regarding Plan Colombia and the country's own security policies to address drug trafficking and the Colombian internal armed conflict (insurgency), it is important to recognize the risks of over simplifying the issues by merely focusing on the consequences rather than addressing the causes as it has happened in Colombia.

Taking this observation into account, it is important that the Colombian government as well as the U.S. government formulate and implement policies directed to address insurgency and narcotics structural causes. For instance, poverty, traditional structural exclusion -for minorities-, lack of opportunities, monopolization of political power, political instability, need of land reform, inequality, and social class divisions.

Thus, effective and beneficial security and counter narcotic polices should be based upon a deep understanding of structural causes for both drugs production and the country's internal armed conflict. In addition, when dealing with Afro-Colombians territories and communities, this understanding must include the particularities of this group.

Additionally, military and eradication strategies must be accompanied by investment in robust civil and government institutions, especially a strong judiciary system.

Furthermore, U.S. policy makers must understand the importance of a comprehensive “Plan Colombia” that includes equal or greater funding for social and economic development as well as heavy investment on strengthening democratic institutions.

Lastly, U.S. aid to Colombia should be strictly conditioned to significant improvement on the ground of human rights conditions, especially the situation of displacement disproportionately affecting the country’s ethnic minorities.

REFERENCE LIST

- Acevedo, Beatriz. 2008. Ten Years of Plan Colombia: An Analytic Assessment. *The Berkley Foundation Drug Policy Programee: Briefing Paper Sixteen*.
http://www.beckleyfoundation.org/pdf/BriefingPaper_16.pdf: (accessed June 22, 2010).
- Andrews, George Reid. 2004. *Afro-Latin America 1800-2000*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Armenta, Amira. 2011. Sustainable Security: Conflict, Poverty and Marginalization: The Case of Curvarado and Jiguamando (Uraba, Colombia).
<http://sustainablesecurity.org/article/conflict-poverty-and-marginalisation-case-curvarad%C3%B3-and-jiguamiand%C3%B3-urab%C3%A1-colombia>
(accessed August 9, 2012).
- Barbary, Olivier, and Fernando Urrea Giraldo. 2004. *Gente Negra en Colombia: dinámicas sociopolíticas en Cali y el Pacífico*. Medellín: Editorial Lealon.
- Beittel, June S. 2011. Colombia: Issues for Congress, April 23, 2010. *Congressional Research Service*. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32250.pdf> (accessed May 1, 2012).
- Caballero Velasco, Antonio Jose. 2011. Buenaventura y Tumaco: los Puertos del Olvido. *El Tiempo*, September 28, Colombia Occidente section, El Tiempo Casa Editorial.
- Centro de Investigaciones y Documentación Socioeconómica (Cidse), Universidad del Valle. 2009. *Un análisis particular de Buenaventura a la luz de las hipótesis planteadas en el proyecto: Diseño de una Política de desarrollo productivo y generación de ingresos para la población afrocolombiana, palenquera y raizal*. Cali. [English Translation: Center for Socio-Economic Investigation and Documentation (Cidse), Universidad del Valle. 2009. *A specific analysis for Buenaventura according to Project hypotheses: Design of Strategic Policy Initiatives for the Productive Development and Associated Income Generation for Afrocolombian, Palenquera y Raizal Communities in Colombia*. Cali]
- Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES). 2012. Desplazamiento creciente y crisis humanitaria invisibilizada. *Boletín 79*. Bogotá. D.C., Quito. [English Translation: The Observatory on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES). 2012. Growing Displacement and Invisible Humanitarian Crisis. *Newsletter 79*. Bogotá. D.C., Quito]

Correa Montoya, Guillermo, Alexander Pérez Álvarez, Víctor Hugo Viveros Bermúdez, María Edith Morales, and Jorge Hernán Flórez Acosta. 2011. *Déficit de Trabajo Decente en la Población Afro-Colombiana de Cartagena, Buenaventura, Cali y Medellín 2009-2010*. Medellín: Escuela Nacional Sindical. [English Translation: *Insufficient Decent Jobs for the Afro-Colombian Population of Cartagena, Buenaventura, Cali y Medellín 2009-2010*. Medellín: National Union School]

Craig-Best, Liam, and Rowan Shingler. 2001. The Alto Naya Massacre: Another Paramilitary Outrage. <http://colombiajournal.org/colombia64.htm> (accessed September 24, 2012).

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), and Centro de Investigaciones y Documentación Socioeconómica (Cidse). 2010. *Análisis regional de los principales indicadores sociodemográficos de la comunidad Afrocolombiana e Indígena a partir de la información del censo general 2005*. Bogotá, D.C. [English Translation: Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), and Center Socioeconomic Research and Documentation (CIDSE). 2010. *Regional analysis of key demographic indicators of Afro-Colombian and Indigenous community after the 2005 general census information*. Bogotá, D.C.]

Departamento Nacional de Planeación Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social. 2007. *CONPES 3491: Políticas de Estado para el Pacífico Colombiano*. Bogotá, D.C. [English Translation: Colombian National Planning Department, National Council for Social and Economic Policies. 2007. *CONPES 3491: State Policies for the Colombian Pacific*. Bogotá, D.C.]

_____. 2010. *CONPES 3660: Política para Promover la Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Población Negra, Afro Colombiana, Palenquera y Raizal*. Bogotá, D.C. [English Translation: *CONPES 3660: Policy to Promote Equality Opportunities for Black, Afro Colombian and Raizal Palenquera*. Bogotá, D.C.]

_____. 2006. *CONPES 3410: Política de Estado para mejorar las Condiciones de Vida de la Población de Buenaventura*. Bogotá, D.C. [English Translation: *CONPES 3410: State Policy to Improve Living Conditions for the Buenaventura Population*. Bogotá, D.C.]

Friedemann, Nina. 1993. *La Saga del Negro*. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

González Sevillano, Pedro Hernando. 1999. *Marginalidad y Exclusión en el Pacífico Colombiano. Una Visión Histórica*. Cali: Editorial Universidad Santiago de Cali. [English Translation: *Marginalization and Exclusion in the Colombian*

Pacific. A Historic Vision. Cali: Editorial Universidad Santiago de Cali]

- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). 2011. *Colombia: Property restitution in sight but integration still distant. A Profile of Internal Displacement*. Geneva.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). 2010. *Country Profile: Colombia* www.internal-displacement.org (accessed 30 April 2010)
- Isacson, Adam, and Abigail Poe. 2009. *After Plan Colombia: Evaluating "Integrated Action, the new phase of U.S. assistance"*. Washington: Center for International Policy.
- Leal, Claudia. 2008. Disputas por Tagua y Minas: Recursos Naturales y Propiedad Territorial en el Pacífico Colombiano, 1870-1930. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 44 (2) (Julio-Diciembre): 513: 409. [English Translation: Conflicts over Mines and Vegetable Ivory: Natural resources and territorial property rights in the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia, 1870-1930. *Colombian Journal of Anthropology* 44 (2) (July-December): 513: 409]
- MacFarlane, Anthony. 1993. *Colombia Before Independence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Moloney, Anastasia. Drugs drive hidden displacement in Colombia's city slums. <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/drugs-drive-hidden-displacement-in-colombias-city-slums/> (accessed September 11, 2012).
- Nicholls, Kelly, and Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli. 2011. Buenaventura, Colombia: Where Free Trade Meets Mass Graves. *NACLA Report on the Americas* (July-August) 044 Issue 4: 44: 4.
- Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito (UNODC). 2011. *Colombia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2010*. Bogotá, D.C. [English Translation: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). 2011. *Colombia: 2010 Coca Monitoring*. Bogotá, D.C.]
- Riano, Quilian, and DK Osseo-Asar. A City in Search of Good Fortune. <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/a-city-in-search-of-good-fortune/11847/> (accessed September 25, 2012)
- Rodriguez Garavito, Cesar, Natalia Orduz Salinas, and Julián M. Berrio. 2010. *El Desplazamiento Forzado de los Afro-Colombianos. Evaluación del Cumplimiento del Gobierno Colombiano del Auto 005 de la Corte*

Constitucional. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes. [English Translation: *Afro-Colombians Forced Displacement. Compliance Assessment of the Colombian Government Order 005 from the Constitutional Court*. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes]

Rodriguez Garavito, Cesar, Tatiana Alfonso Sierra, and Isabel Cavelier Adarve. 2008. *Racial Discrimination and Human Rights in Colombia: A Report on the Situation of the Rights of Afro-Colombians*. Bogotá. D.C: Universidad de los Andes.

Rodriguez, Stella. 2008. Fronteras Fijas, Valor de Cambio y Cultivos Ilícitos en el Pacífico Caucaño Colombiano. *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 44 (1) (enero-junio): 237: 41. [English Translation: Fixed frontiers, exchange value and illicit crops in the Colombian Pacific Coast. *Colombian Journal of Anthropology* 44 (1) (January-June): 237: 41]

Romero, Simon. 2007. Cocaine Wars Make Port Colombia's Deadliest City. *New York Times*, May 22, World Americas section.

Ribando Seelke, Clare, Liana Sun Wyler, June S. Beittel, and Mark Sullivan. 2012. Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs. *Congressional Research Service*, <http://www.crs.gov/Products/R/PDF/R41215.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2012)

Sanchez, Enrique, and Paola Garcia. 2006. *Los Afrocolombianos*. Washington. D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and The World Bank.

Sanchez-Garzoli, Gimena. 2012. *Stopping irreparable harm: acting on Colombia's Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities protection crisis*. Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center (NOREF).

Urrea Giraldo, Fernando, and Javier Andrés Castro Heredia. 2007. Buenaventura: vulnerabilidad demográfica y exclusión. *Revista Posiciones* 1 (1): 67-75. [English Translation: Buenaventura: Demographic Vulnerability and Exclusion. *Posiciones Magazine* 1 (1): 67-75]

United Nations Office for the Coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2011. *Colombia Humanitarian Situation*. Colombia.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2012. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia. <http://daccess-dds->

ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/103/06/PDF/G1210306.pdf?OpenElement
(accessed August 1, 2012)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2011. *The Afro-Colombians facing the Millennium Development Goal*. Bogotá, D.C.

Wade, Peter. 1993. *Blackness and Race Mixtures: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Viafara Lopez, Carlos Augusto, Fernando Urrea Giraldo, and Juan Byron Correa. 2009. Desigualdad de oportunidades en la adquisición de capacidades anterior a la participación en el mercado laboral y trato diferencial en este último por condición étnico-racial y género que enfrenta la población afrocolombiana. Informe, Contrato No. Adam-Ard-Tep-346-MIDAS-T-01148-08-C Ard Colombia and Universidad del Valle. Diciembre 1. [English Translation: Unequal Opportunities in training for Afro-Colombians prior to their participation in the labor market, and differential treatment for Afro-Colombians due to race, ethnicity, and gender. Report, Contract No. Adam-Ard-Tep-346-MIDAS-T-01148-08-C Ard Colombia and Universidad del Valle. December 1]