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THE COLOMBIAN COCA INDUSTRY AND THE INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

MEDIATING THE EFFECTS OF FUMIGATION, DISPLACEMENT, AND
VIOLENCE

by

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A thesis submitted to
the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
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Abstract

This thesis assesses the effects of the coca industry on the Colombian indigenous movement and argues that the deleterious conditions created by the industry, and the Colombian State's inability to adequately address these conditions, have acted as a catalyst for a shift in both the discourse and strategies of the Colombian indigenous resistance. The by-products of the coca industry – fumigation-induced environmental degradation and health problems, displacement, and violence – have had their biggest impact since the implementation of Plan Colombia in 2000, despite the constitutional protections afforded indigenous Colombians in 1991. The sum of these conditions have contributed to cultural fragmentation among indigenous communities and led them to adopt a discourse that stresses the threat of extinction. The reshaping of indigenous identity as one that is under threat has been coupled with distinct forms of resistance in an effort to raise awareness by targeting both national and international audiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

For more than two decades, the production and trafficking of cocaine has been an integral part of virtually every facet of Colombian life – economics, politics, family, and social life. Indigenous Colombians have been particularly affected by the coca industry since their territories provide the ideal geographic and environmental conditions for producing and distributing coca and its derivatives. Narcotraffickers, armed groups, and non-indigenous coca farmers have encroached upon indigenous territories to expand coca cultivation, and have attracted counter-narcotics measures that are deleterious to the environment and health. These actions have violated indigenous rights to territory, and have made it impossible to ensure a safe and healthy environment. The indigenous movement in Colombia is struggling to have these rights enforced and bring peace and prosperity to indigenous communities affected by the coca industry. Their resistance is a reflection of their determination, strength, and ability to mediate adverse conditions.

This thesis assesses the impact of the coca industry on the Colombian indigenous movement. I argue that the deleterious conditions created by the coca industry and the Colombian State's inability to mediate these conditions have been a catalyst for a shift in both the discourse and strategies of the Colombian indigenous movement. To create the conditions for positive change, indigenous Colombians have developed a broader strategic framework that includes the articulation of new forms of resistance, new modes of communications, and a new message to international bodies of influence by adopting a discourse that stresses the threat of cultural fragmentation and physical extinction.

Through the construction of networks with neighbouring communities and international

organizations, the indigenous people of Colombia have attempted to reclaim agency in their struggle for cultural and territorial security – elements that have been consistently jeopardized by the coca industry, and not redressed by the State.

Throughout Colombia, the coca industry has produced an array of deleterious effects on indigenous communities, each contributing to cultural fragmentation. Environmental degradation and health problems have occurred as a result of U.S.-sponsored forced eradication through aerial fumigation of crops. Indigenous Colombians have also shared a disproportionate amount of the displacement due to their proximity to armed groups and areas of fumigation. The coca industry has also become intertwined with violence from illegal armed groups. Armed groups are responsible for the majority of the violence in Colombia, and their continuing territorial expansion into indigenous territories has resulted in increased confrontations and deaths. Homicides of indigenous Colombians have increased to the point where there is a veritable threat of extinction among certain communities. These conditions have been exacerbated by the weakness of the Colombian State in respect to resolving the armed conflict, implementing sustainable coca eradication policies, providing assistance to displaced persons, and building State presence in the more remote areas of Colombia, where much of the violence and coca thrives.

Colombia has had in place since 1991 one of the most advanced Constitutions in the world. It is wide in scope and includes an extensive set of articles favourable to indigenous Colombians and other minorities. This Constitution was hailed as a great achievement for indigenous rights to territory, culture, and autonomy, but the implementation of its mandates has been highly problematic and has failed to protect

indigenous Colombians from violence, fumigation, or displacement. Conditions have worsened since 2000 with the implementation of Plan Colombia and the continuation of a similar policy and plan of action through the U.S. Andean Regional Initiative. Originally intended as a plan for peace and to strengthen the State, Plan Colombia became a highly militarized plan through U.S. funding that worsened conditions for indigenous Colombians. The deterioration of conditions and the perception that the State is unable or unwilling to address indigenous concerns have compelled indigenous Colombians to take advantage of the availability of new modes of communication - and a favourable reception in international forums - to voice their concerns and request assistance for the imminent dangers facing their communities.

A Brief History of Coca and Cocaine in Colombia

Archaeological evidence suggests that coca chewing has been a practice of indigenous people in the Andes since 3000 BCE. Coca chewing was banned by Spanish conquistadors in the 1500s but the prohibition was quickly terminated upon discovery of its properties: Coca was a stimulant and appetite suppressant, and slaves were more efficient workers when they chewed the leaf. Coca leaf did not gain popularity in North America until cocaine was isolated from the plant in the 1860s. The drug enjoyed several decades of popularity until the U.S. Harrison Narcotic Act effectively banned cocaine in 1914. It would take more than three decades for the Colombian government to pass similar legislation.

In 1947, the government of Colombia issued Decree No. 896, stipulating that the cultivation of the coca bush and the production and distribution of its leaf were prohibited

throughout the country. In the 1950s, the Colombian government began investigating the prevalence of coca in each Colombian department but few reported the presence of coca cultivation. At this stage in the Colombian drug policy, the goal was not to reduce the trafficking of coca but to reduce coca leaf addiction among indigenous peoples since it was believed that coca chewing had “a demonstrably adverse effect on physical and mental health” (Bejarano 1961) and that it was a “social evil” that needed to be suppressed (Wolff 1952).

In the 1960s, the cultivation of coca was overshadowed by the growing marijuana industry in Colombia. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Colombia supplanted Mexico as the primary supplier of marijuana to the United States since Mexican authorities had increased border inspections and tightened domestic drug policies. Cocaine was gradually gaining popularity in U.S. markets and by the early 1980s, had become the drug of choice for producers and traffickers for its profitability and the ease with which it could be smuggled. Drug cartels flourished on the revenues of both marijuana and cocaine, but Colombia remained only a centre for the processing of coca paste into cocaine, and not for the cultivation of coca leaf. It was the successful U.S.-sponsored eradication campaigns in Bolivia and Peru in the late 1980s that shifted the cultivation to Colombia. Another contributor in the positive reception of coca cultivation in Colombia was the recent collapse of the International Coffee Agreement of 1989 which saw coffee prices plummet, leaving farmers eager to compensate lost income with a profitable crop. Many farmers migrated to more remote areas of the Andean mountains, forests, and jungle – areas already populated by indigenous Colombians and guerrilla groups.

By the 1990s, Colombia was not only the world's largest processor and distributor of cocaine, but the world's largest cultivator of coca leaf as well. From 1992 to 2001, the cultivation of coca increased by 286% in Colombia, from 37,500 hectares to 144,807 hectares (Diaz and Sanchez 2004: 4). Colombia currently produces approximately 80% of the world's cocaine supply (United States Department of State 2003b: 19), and the industry has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise with yearly revenues estimated at approximately U.S. \$1.5 billion, or 2% of the gross domestic product of Colombia (Steiner 1998: 1027). Despite countermeasures from both the U.S. and Colombian governments, the industry is thriving and has created an underground economy that has become intertwined with the legal economy. For example, many infrastructure projects have been funded with profits from the coca industry, such as the schools, roads, and hospitals that Pablo Escobar, then-leader of the Medellín cartel, funded in the poorest regions of Medellín.

Profits from the coca industry have also served to bribe and corrupt government officials, and politicians with known ties to drug traffickers - or traffickers themselves - have been elected to public office: Pablo Escobar was elected to Congress in 1982, and current president Alvaro Uribe was mayor and city council member in Medellín in the early 1980s and senator from 1986-1994 – the years in which he was suspected of having close ties to Pablo Escobar and business dealings with the Medellín cartel, according to a recently declassified document from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (NSA 2004). Even with the dissolution of the major cartels in the mid 1990s, the coca industry has gained such strength and momentum that it impacts all social, economic, and political spheres in Colombia today.

In terms of coca cultivation on indigenous territories, estimates have ranged from as little as 4.6% (UNODC 2004) to as much as 11% of the total Colombian crop (Clark 2003; IACHR 1999: paras 50-51) but there is no additional data that specifies the proportion of crops that belong to indigenous and non-indigenous Colombians.¹ Figures vary regularly since farmers often relocate after fumigation raids, or to avoid detection of their coca crops. Much of the land that was originally allocated to indigenous Colombians was not rich agricultural or grazing land but it has been well suited to the cultivation of coca - a resilient plant that prospers in moist tropical regions at high altitudes. Regardless of the percentage of coca grown on indigenous territories, many indigenous Colombians would prefer *not* to grow it since the coca industry brings violence and insecurity (Isacson 2001), but are left with no choice in the matter since they are coerced by armed groups (Fletcher 2003: 22). For others, the lack of social and economic investments in remote regions renders coca cultivation an efficient means of survival (Richardson 2003: 20).

The Indigenous People of Colombia

For indigenous Colombians, the pervasive coca industry poses a serious challenge to both cultural cohesion and survival. The population of Colombia now stands at 44 million, of which 800,000 (or 2%) consider themselves indigenous Colombians. There are 84 distinct ethnolinguistic indigenous groups in Colombia and they are usually identified by their *cabildo* (indigenous council) or the department in which they live. Indigenous communities are found in 27 of the 32 departments of Colombia, and many

¹ Many non-indigenous Colombians legally own land on *resguardos* but can only sell their property to the indigenous communities holding the *resguardo* title. See Footnote 3 for more information on *resguardos*.

are concentrated in certain regions: the Andean Mountain Range, the Pacific Coast Lowlands, the Amazonas department, and the Guajira peninsula.² Throughout the country, 17 reserves and approximately 567 *resguardos*³ have been established, covering 25% of the total Colombian territory, and in which 80% of the indigenous population lives (ONIC, CRIC, IESALC - UNESCO 2004: 13).

The indigenous groups discussed in this thesis are located in those areas along the Andean Mountain Range, from the southern border with Ecuador to the northern border of Colombia along the Caribbean sea. Much of the coca cultivation takes place in these regions,⁴ especially in the Putumayo, Caqueta, Cauca, and Nariño departments in southern Colombia, as well as in the northern departments of Córdoba, Antioquia, Bolivar, and Norte de Santander. The Nasa (also known as Páez) number more than 150,000 and inhabit the Cauca department in the Central Andes Range near Popayán. They have a long history of resistance and struggles for land that began in modern times with Quintín Lame at the beginning of the 20th century (discussed in Chapter 2). The Guambiano people also inhabit the Central Andes Range in the department of Cauca and number 12,000-15,000.

Two groups discussed in this thesis live in the southwestern departments of Colombia: the Cofan, who number approximately 600 and inhabit the Putumayo department along the Colombia-Ecuador border, and the Inga, who number 12,000 and live in the Putumayo and Nariño departments. The three remaining groups discussed in

² See Appendix A for a shaded relief map of Colombia and its departments.

³ *Resguardos* are owned collectively by indigenous Colombians through a legal title. Reserves (or *reservas*) are only provisionally assigned to indigenous communities and the State retains the title to the land and the rights to the subsoil.

⁴ See Appendix B for a map of coca cultivation in Colombia in 2003.

this thesis are found in the more northern regions of Colombia: The Embera-Katio, a group of 15,000-20,000 living along the Upper Sinú river in the northern part of the Córdoba department, who have consistently opposed hydroelectric projects on their territory; the U'wa, a community of 5,000 indigenous Colombians living in northeastern Colombia near the Venezuelan border, who have strongly opposed oil exploration on their lands since the early 1990s; and the Wayúu, a group of 135,000 who live on the Guajira peninsula on the northern Caribbean coast.

Methodology

In this thesis I define the Colombian indigenous movement as the conglomeration of local, regional, and national organizations that work together to represent the interests of all indigenous Colombians. The movement is comprised of both formal and less formal elements. Indigenous regional organizations such as the CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca), CRIA (Regional Indigenous Council of Arauca) and ACIN (Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca) tend to address particular issues that affect their communities or departments, but they also work in conjunction with the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) which claims to represent all indigenous groups in Colombia.

The Colombian indigenous movement also incorporates indigenous Colombians that speak out independently of any regional or national organization, even though they may consider themselves part of these organizations. Their discourse tends to be more reactive. That is, it is often in the context of a particular assault or affront to a particular indigenous community. Their words, often gathered through interviews and published in

print or electronic formats, are no less important than the official message of the more formal organizations. Their contributions allow for a more balanced view of the indigenous movement since they often reflect less political issues and more concrete conditions experienced by indigenous communities. Many indigenous Colombians have recounted their personal experiences with fumigation raids, massacres, displacement, resistance, and experiences with government – accounts that lose their *puissance* once adopted by the regional and national organizations. As such, the voices of indigenous individuals are crucial to gain a better understanding of the effects of the coca industry on the indigenous resistance.

There are several other actors in the Colombian social and political landscape that need to be defined. One term that is used throughout the thesis is “armed groups”. This term is employed to designate all armed groups that the State has deemed illegal.⁵ These groups have formed political and ideological doctrines but also routinely commit unprovoked violent acts upon Colombian individuals and communities. This thesis makes reference to the three largest illegal armed groups in Colombia: the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC, left-leaning guerrillas), the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia* (ELN, left-leaning guerrillas), and the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC, right-leaning paramilitaries). Generally speaking, the first two groups both stand in opposition to the third but there are ideological and geographical distinctions between them (discussed in Chapter 2). Although guerrilla and paramilitary groups have separate bases of operations, they often follow one another to various

⁵ With the exception of the police and military, all armed groups in Colombia are illegal. In the 1960s, several “self-defence” paramilitary groups emerged to assist the government in combating the guerrilla insurgency. These groups were only made illegal in 1989 but many continued their counterinsurgency under the United Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC).

locations in an effort to kill as many members of the opposite group as possible. In such events, many community members are accused of siding with opposing groups and are killed as well. Some indigenous community members often cannot distinguish between the groups since they all wear military-type uniforms. As such, the violence becomes non-attributable and becomes a phenomenon that permeates community life.

The last term that needs to be defined is “narcotraffickers”. It is a term that is now widely interchangeable with “narcoterrorists” in order to account for the growing role of guerrilla and paramilitary groups in the narcotics trade. Although “narcoguerrilla” has been a widely used term, it has no equivalent to describe paramilitary groups involved in the narcotics trade (that is, “narcoparamilitaries” is rarely employed). There are narcotics traffickers who are not members of either guerrilla or paramilitary groups but they often consort with them to facilitate the processing and shipping of cocaine. The now-disbanded large drug cartels of the 1980s and 1990s were defined as narcotraffickers. They were armed and controlled large portions of Colombian territory and trade, but as an entity, their political and ideological doctrines were limited to the narcotics industry or divided along Liberal-Conservative lines.

The research for this thesis was conducted through print and electronic resources. To assess the impact of the coca industry on the Colombian indigenous movement, it was necessary to locate the movement in the context of its emergence in the 1970s, its participation in the constitutional revision of 1991, the interaction between indigenous Colombians and armed groups, and their experiences with the coca industry, especially in the context of Plan Colombia. It was also important to assess the relationship of the Colombian indigenous movement with national and international structures, such as the

Colombian court system and international organizations. To accomplish this, I relied on documents⁶ from the governments of Colombia and the United States, as well as official texts from, but not limited to, international bodies such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. I also accessed texts – both print and electronic – from various indigenous organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Colombia, and texts from Colombians who have used the Internet as a means of communication.

The coca industry and the policies⁷ implemented to annihilate it have created particular environmental, social, political, and economic conditions in indigenous Colombian communities today that have only recently become evident. As such, most of the material pertaining to indigenous reactions to these conditions has been collected from the Internet since it is a source of information that provides accounts of recent events and shifts in the indigenous resistance that would not be available in print for some time. The Internet is arguably also a safer means of communication since it allows for individuals to publish materials under conditions of relative anonymity. Many indigenous Colombians have brought attention to their cause through this medium. Indigenous Colombians have increasingly sought recourse to technological devices as a means to voice their concerns to a wider, more global audience, either directly or through local indigenous organizations or non-governmental organizations. As with any source of

⁶ These include archival material, journal articles, manuscripts, electronic texts, and audio-visual material. The majority of these documents were first hand data collected by scholars, government representatives, indigenous leaders, and other individuals.

⁷ These are Plan Colombia, the Andean Regional Initiative, and the indirect effects of the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001.

information, efforts were made to crosscheck electronic sources in order to increase the validity of the data.

Due to my limited abilities with the Spanish language, the majority of the reference material for this thesis was written in English, or initially written in Spanish and translated by various authors. This is a limitation, but many indigenous organizations and communities have used English when dealing with the United States and international organizations, have published declarations and statements in both Spanish and English, and have appreciated the effectiveness of reaching a more global audience by publishing information in English on the Internet. That being said, it is important to recognize that research conducted solely in the English language excludes a significant body of literature on Colombia written in Spanish. As such, this thesis is presented as a partial understanding of events in Colombia largely based on material from the Internet, and recognizes that access to a multi-lingual body of literature – electronic or in print – could have led to different conclusions.

My research was conducted between May 2003 and September 2004 and was updated until March 2005 to provide the most recent information. With the exception of historical and background information, my topic is centred on four distinct phases in indigenous Colombian history: the emergence of the modern indigenous movement in the 1970s; the constitutional and political gains achieved by indigenous Colombians in 1991; the U.S. and Colombian drug policies implemented in 2000; and the indigenous resistance that exists today as a result of the deleterious effects of the coca industry. In order to grasp the several dimensions of the Colombian indigenous resistance and its relationship with the coca industry, research was conducted in many areas. The many

facets of cocaine – its history, its health and environmental effects, its contribution to violence, and the political context in which it operates – have been widely covered in both textual and electronic media. In fact, an Internet search of the term “cocaine” results in approximately six million hits, each of which engage the topic in various contexts and directions. Print media has also categorized the cocaine industry in terms of its history, health, and environmental effects (Mortimer 1901; Musto 1999; Streatfeild 2001), and its legal and political elements in relation to U.S. and Colombian policy (Crandall 2002b; Buscaglia and Ratliff 2001; Bowden 2001; Scott and Marshall 1998; Drexler 1997). Print media has also examined the social and political conflict in Colombia in a historical perspective (Safford and Palacios 2002; Rojas 2002) and relayed personal accounts of the violence by Colombians (Kirk 2003; Galvis 2002). Finally, some scholars have approached the topic of historical and contemporary indigenous resistance in Colombia (Ramirez 2002; Jackson 2002; Liffman 1998; Candial 1995; Findji 1992), which is further elaborated upon in Chapter 2.

There are lacunae in the literature as to those individuals who are, for the most part, not directly involved in the production and trafficking of cocaine (for example, indigenous Colombians), but greatly affected by its effects by virtue of their geographic location. There is also a gap in the existing research as to the interrelation of violence, fumigation, and displacement as phenomena that affect the indigenous resistance in Colombia. This thesis is an effort to provide a more extensive account of the effects of the coca industry on the indigenous resistance of Colombian communities and organizations. It also seeks to assess the direction in which the resistance is headed based

on the conglomeration of internal variables and opportunities at local, national, and international levels.

Framework

Chapter one examines new social movement theory and resource mobilization theory as complementary approaches through which to understand the emergence of, and shifts within, the Colombian indigenous movement. Efforts are made to provide a definition of social movements, and to gauge whether a discussion about their success is of any value. To understand the indigenous movement in Colombia today, this chapter explores the conditions that lead to the emergence of a social movement, and both the internal and external conditions that enable actors to organize and bring attention to their demands. Also addressed are the ways in which identities are formed and reformed through mobilization by examining the concepts of positioning and articulation.

Chapter two examines the political context in which indigenous legislation was implemented in late 19th and early 20th century Colombia. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of the political violence of the mid 20th century that impacted not only indigenous groups but the entire Colombian society. The emergence of the indigenous movement is presented in this context, and leads up to a discussion of the 1991 Constitution as the document that offers indigenous Colombians an extensive set of rights to territory, culture, political representation, and autonomy. The chapter concludes with the current directions of the indigenous movement post-1991.

Chapter three begins with an overview of Plan Colombia – a plan that greatly expanded the fumigation program in Colombia in 2000. The chapter continues with an

assessment of fumigation and its effects on the environment, health, and displacement of indigenous Colombians. These conditions have led to cultural fragmentation among indigenous communities, and this initially prompted indigenous communities to submit claims to Colombian and U.S. courts to seek reparations for damages caused by fumigation. Claims based on fumigation had limited success but provided the basis upon which to build a broader resistance, as discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter four begins with an overview of the violence of the 1980s and 1990s. The chapter assesses the intensification of violence, its integration with the coca industry, and the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (from this point forward referred to as 9/11) as elements that created adverse conditions for indigenous communities. These conditions have acted as a catalyst for the adoption of a new discourse centred on the threat of extinction. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the strategies employed by indigenous Colombians on an international level to convey their message.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter presents a theoretical framework for understanding how the indigenous movement operates in Colombia today. As mentioned above, this thesis argues that certain conditions have precipitated a shift in the indigenous resistance through the adoption of distinct strategies deployed to specific audiences. To examine this issue, this chapter seeks to understand how people mediate the conditions they are faced with, how they use the internal and external resources available to them to effect change, and the processes under which identities are shaped and reshaped. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first examines the theoretical approaches that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in reaction to Latin American social movements. The second section attempts to define social movements, and whether it is possible to gauge their success. The third section examines the conditions that are necessary for a social movement to emerge, organize, and raise awareness among targeted audiences. The last section looks at the processes of identity formation through positioning and articulation, especially when both local and international elements are present.

Theoretical Approaches to Social Movements

Both new social movement theory (NSM) and resource mobilization theory (RMT) are useful theoretical frameworks to conceptualize the indigenous movement in Colombia today. In the 1970s, indigenous peoples emerged as political actors in both national and international spaces, and there developed an understanding that new approaches were

needed to explain mobilizations in Latin America, both in terms of how actors utilized resources, and how they defined themselves in the process.

NSM emerged to explain the emergence of women's rights movements and student mobilizations in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a challenge to class and economic reductionism within Marxist theory that did not account for the role of collective identity as a drive behind emerging forms of mobilization. NSM focuses on reactions to domination by the system and looks at the processes that produce autonomy rather than ones that produce power. The focus is less on material resources and more on identity formation within the State structure, and the symbolic and cultural components of social movements (Swain 2004).

In contrast, RMT emerged in reaction to American consumer and public interest group mobilizations in the 1960s (Kumar 2000: 4) and focused more on outcomes of social movements and their reliance on the availability of resources. RMT concentrates on the interaction between actors and organizations outside the movement, recognizing the value of operating within organizational and institutional structures of society, and making use of available opportunities within the social and political environments (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1216-1217; Swain 2004). Also crucial in RMT is how leadership, communication networks, resources, technologies, access to the media, and group organization work together with the State and third parties (Swain 2004; Reimer 2003: 855).

Both approaches are similar yet quite distinct. RMT focuses more on the mechanics of a social movement - resources, opportunities, and outcomes - while NSM focuses on identity and symbolism (Kumar 2000: 2). The sum of both approaches serves

as a good framework within which to examine the indigenous movement in Colombia, but central to my thesis are the conditions leading to, and the processes involved in, the formation and operation of the Colombian indigenous movement. As such, this thesis relies more heavily on the approaches developed within RMT than it does with those of NSM theory.

Defining “Successful” Social Movements

Before undertaking an examination of how social movements emerge, it is important to consider how they are defined. Tarrow (1994: 4) defines social movements as “collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities”, and believes that contentious collective action is at the base of social movements. A collective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who do not have regular access to resources, challenge existing norms, or propose claims that are not yet accepted (Tarrow 1994: 2). This serves to contextualize social movements since they are defined according to the conditions in a given time and place. The contentious part of collective action also implies the construction of identity since there is the delineation of a common goal, and of an “other” to challenge or resist.

A discussion of the motivations and outcomes of social movements must include the notion of success, and whether it is even possible to measure it. Candial (1995) has highlighted how evaluations of the success of mobilizations are problematic. In certain instances, changes in the political structure will be an indicator of success (Munck 1990: 37, in Candial 1995), and in others, mere survival will be the marker (Lowi 1971, in

Candial 1995). Both are problematic. Changes in the political structure are never guaranteed to remain in place since political systems are dynamic, if not often volatile. A favourable reaction by one government can quickly change to a more negative reaction with the following administration. On the other hand, using survival (of the movement) as an indicator goes against the very definition of a social movement itself. If a movement persists, can we not assume it has yet to accomplish the sum of its goals?

If we take survival to mean that of a particular group or community, the meaning changes and is readily applicable to indigenous groups that fear extinction due to violence. But at which point in time can success be claimed? Using group survival - or the avoidance of extinction - as an indicator attempts to measure success through an event that needs to *not* happen, which is inevitably harder than measuring success through tangible results. In sum, measures of success are highly subjective and perhaps best left to the protagonists of a movement to determine for themselves.

Internal and External Conditions for the Emergence of Social Movements

Social movements must be contextualized in order for them to be understood. That is, a set of particular conditions will be present prior to the emergence of any social movement. Van Cott (1996: 31) has understood the emergence of mobilization through a set of variables: temporal, internal, contextual, and external. This section attempts to understand how social movements emerge through an interplay of these elements.

Temporal variables are events that are time-specific such as population growth, the expansion of communications or transportation, or the start of resource exploration projects – they cause major changes or create conditions that were not present before

(Van Cott 1996: 31). One problem with temporal variables is that changes in conditions do not necessarily lead to mobilizations. There needs to be a framework for understanding what types of conditions incite change. In the context of an analysis of contemporary India, Veena Das (1995: 6) examines how certain “critical events” have served as catalysts for new forms of action. Das (1995: 18) highlights the Bhopal industrial gas-leak disaster of 1985 that killed 4,000 people and injured another 200,000 (Browning 1993: 5), noting that “[t]he most important among these actors are those who search for a voice because they have been inflicted with sudden and inexplicable suffering”. Victims’ struggles to gain reparations and restitution after the Bhopal disaster have lasted until this day, and involved battles with corporations as well as criminal and civil suits. Despite the human tragedy and the loss of lives, the efforts of those who survived led to substantial changes in the legislation of both the Indian and U.S.⁸ governments. This implies that the intensity of a reaction is proportionate to the magnitude of the initial event.

Critical events can illustrate how certain temporal variables can act as a catalyst to action, but how do actors call attention to a particular event? What must be in place locally, politically, and internationally for actors to convey their message? Van Cott’s (1996: 31) internal and contextual variables come into play at this point. Internal variables are associated with cultural values, practices, and identity, while contextual variables are historical elements such as repression, domination, or politics of exclusion.

⁸ The plant in Bhopal, India was owned and operated by Union Carbide India Limited, a subsidiary of the U.S. Union Carbide Corporation, therefore involving the U.S. government.

Internal and contextual variables require actors to perceive that options are available and that limitations can be transcended.

Critical events evoke only momentary visibility since powerful messages that demand action and restitution cannot be sustained for very long or they will risk losing their *puissance*. As such, a discourse must be strategically created and deployed to maximize the “marketability” of an event and keep audiences interested. This is where innovation, as an internal variable, becomes important as a means to create and deploy an appropriate discourse. Tarrow (1994: 10) stresses the importance of innovation in organizing a successful social action. Innovation is considered a significant component for change that can be accomplished through new technologies or ideas to reshape social conditions, government, and more immediate local conditions. Innovation can take the form of forging new networks, integrating new strategies, or deploying a new discourse. Brysk (2000: 2) has noted how some “conventionally powerless people have used global symbolic appeals and normative reconstructions of international forces to transform their own lives and to pioneer new forms of politics”. With limited access to State power structures, indigenous movements must find alternative ways to access and influence the global community. The Internet is a good example of how, as a partial strategy, many indigenous groups have bypassed traditional power structures and accessed a wider audience.

Tarrow (1994: 114) has also argued that contextual variables need to be taken into account. Actors need to tap into their repertoires of meaning and shared histories of struggle to devise a strategy that reflects historical and contemporary conditions. Actors are much more likely to take part in a mobilization if they understand the risks and

potential for violence. McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1233) have highlighted the importance of shared histories as well, noting that "a history of accomplishment is an important asset", and that a movement's "longevity provides an edge in the attainment of legitimacy". Indigenous resistance in Latin America has a lengthy history, and recognizing past struggles affords actors a certain degree of predictability, but also provides a repertoire of knowledge that can be built upon and utilized in different ways.

External conditions are the last variable in Van Cott's (1996: 31) understanding of mobilization, and refer to political systems within (or under) which mobilizations operate. Tarrow (1994: 18) argues that political opportunity structures and incentives are a prerequisite for change in any social movement as these opportunities "translate the potential for movement into mobilization". These elements can be either constraining or facilitating, such as means of communication, political freedoms, the availability of resources, and the degree of repression by State authorities (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1225). These structures can be defined as "dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action" (Tarrow 1994: 18).

Political opportunity structures have shaped the trajectory of Latin American indigenous struggles. For instance, indigenous issues had much more global appeal in the 1990s with the declaration by the United Nations that 1993 would be the year of indigenous people and 1995-2004 their decade. The 1990s were symbolic of a greater acceptance of the dynamism and autonomy of indigenous peoples by national and international organizations. Indigenous peoples could now be understood as adaptive, and fully capable of integrating "the very signs and techniques of global society as a way to promote resource claims, political rights and traditional culture" (Perreault 2001: 384).

Three decades earlier, the movement was struggling to gain attention on an international level. Ideological changes in both national and international audiences were necessary to open and maintain channels of communication, and create a new political dynamic that allowed indigenous mobilizations to take shape, and strengthen (Brysk 2000: 21).

The Shaping and Reshaping of Identities Through Mobilization

This last section looks at the ways in which identities are shaped and reshaped through a social movement by looking at the concepts of positioning and articulation. First, it is important to recognize that identity and mobilization are intimately linked and continuously undergoing processes of reformulation. William Connolly (1991: 64) has highlighted the link between identity formation and social movements: “An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized.... Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty” (Connolly 1991: 64). Taylor and Whittier (1992:109-110) have similarly pointed out that “collective political actors do not exist *de facto* by virtue of individuals sharing a common structural location; they are created in the course of social movement activity”. As such, identities are seen as dynamic entities that can change, and be changed by, the processes of mobilization, but always in opposition to an “other”. This requires an assessment of available internal resources such as solidarity, leadership, and organizational structure (Tarrow 1989: 74, in Candial 1995), but also in relation to external elements like political, social, and economic conditions, which act as constraints.

Tarrow (1994: 17) has argued that the components of a sustainable social action revolve around the potential for mobilization and consensus within the group through shared meaning and inspiration. Through collective efforts based on shared meaning and a common direction, “movements enunciate demands in terms of frames of meaning that are comprehensible to a wider society [and] they use forms of collective actions drawn from an existing repertoire” (Tarrow 1994: 25-26). In this context, a movement is limited by its past experiences but the appropriation of a global discourse⁹ necessarily demands a reassessment of existing values and promotes the development of new strategies that appeal to a wider audience.

Li (2000: 151) interprets the reassessment of local values into a global context as an act of positioning – a term she borrows from Stuart Hall (1990). It is considered a strategic, arbitrary act based on the conditions in a particular place, and possible due to existing political opportunities. Indigeneity is then neither innate nor invented, but “a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle” (Li 2000: 151). Li (2000: 157) further notes that if certain groups seek to claim the indigenous or “tribal slot” they must be willing and able to articulate their identity in a way that is recognized by governmental, non-governmental, and media groups. As such, the positioning of indigenous identity involves the interplay of internal and external conditions, and through social actions, actors become “focal points that transform external opportunities, conventions and resources into movements” (Tarrow 1994: 23). Identities are therefore shaped by a recognition and appreciation of historical practices,

⁹ A discourse that incorporates - but is not limited to - local, national, and international dialogue by groups sharing certain common experiences or ideologies, regardless of location.

an understanding of the conditions that led to the struggle, and the experience of the struggle itself.

The process of positioning works in conjunction with articulation. Hall (1996: 141-142) sees articulation as the means by which a collective identity is made explicit in a process that is “not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time...The so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’”. Therefore, the goal is not to define or delimit the boundaries of indigeneity, but to understand the particular conditions that shape, and are shaped by it.

Hall further defines articulation as not only an utterance to convey meaning, but as an element which can, or cannot, be united with another element to form a whole, such as an articulated truck or tractor-trailer where the cab and trailer can be linked or remain separated. An articulation is the potential unity between distinct elements, and these are linkages that can be formed and reformed according to various spatial and temporal conditions. Hall (1966: 141-142) notes that a theory of articulation attempts to determine how “elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse [and] how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects”. Therefore, a study of the articulations that make up a particular social movement entails an analysis of social networks and agendas, and the processes under which these are merged. It also involves an assessment of how the sum of these elements and responses to mobilizations redefine identities.

Karlsson (2003: 406) has argued that the indigenous discourse “enables certain articulations and, at the same time, excludes or suppresses others.” Karlsson’s main

concern lies in those elements – or communities – that are being silenced by a legally-oriented, rights-based discourse. The difficulties in mobilization within international spheres lies in the positioning of a collective identity. Typically, movements arise out of the confluence of many communities, groups, and individuals. Efforts to dismiss the diversity in such movements for the benefit of an international audience can result in silenced voices, a loss of difference, and the alienation of certain community or group members. Speed (2002: 221) describes the impact of appropriating a global discourse and its negative and positive impact on local identities:

Thus, on one hand, there is a process akin to cultural homogenization, in the sense that local people are tending to adopt and frame their struggles in terms of one globalized discourse. Yet, on the other hand...as local peoples actively appropriate and redeploy these discourses, their own understandings and definitions of self and community are reshaped. That is, there is a process of local reinterpretation of identity— and thus the reassertion of cultural identities—in the context of the adoption of global discourses of cultural rights.

Indigenous communities also face a homogenizing discourse in the context of territory. James Clifford (2001: 482) has noted that articulation theory has difficulty with the continuity of territory since it “signifies the past in the future, a continuous, changing base of political and cultural operations”. Territory seems to be one of the most distinguishing features of indigenous identity, but it is important to understand that territory is also an articulation that can be connected, or not, to other elements within an indigenous discourse. Territory can be a significant component of indigenous identity but it should not be seen as an essential one for this could deny certain communities the choice to emphasize or de-emphasize the concept. The use of indigenous discourse as a strategic, political, or legal tool either in local or global contexts has demonstrated how

territory can become less of a constant, and less of a defining feature of indigenous identity.

In sum, the conditions for a “successful” indigenous movement (at least in terms of its emergence and internal organization) will make use of all possible elements at a group’s disposal. Local conditions provide incentive to act while innovation and an appreciation of past struggles provide the means to do so. Political opportunities are also crucial elements in social movements, and the positioning of identity and the articulation of potentially disparate elements into a strategic resistance are only possible in the context of these opportunities.

The following chapter examines the historical elements that have shaped the Colombian indigenous movement. This allows for an appreciation of the contextual and internal variables that have enabled the Colombian indigenous movement to adapt to the conditions of the coca industry. The subsequent two chapters will examine the temporal and external variables that have influenced the direction of the Colombian indigenous movement, including the changes in conditions that were created with the implementation of Plan Colombia, and the role of armed groups in generating violence in indigenous communities. Lastly, the positioning of indigenous identity and articulation of distinct elements in the resistance of indigenous Colombians against the coca industry will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

THE COLOMBIAN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

This chapter provides a more historical and contextual account of the diversity that exists in the Colombian indigenous movement today. To start, a brief examination of the political and legislative history of Colombia is presented. The chapter proceeds with an examination of the political violence that gripped the country in the mid 20th century, and that witnessed the emergence of Colombia's guerrilla groups. The discussion continues with an assessment of the historical and contemporary indigenous resistance in Colombia, and takes a more concrete look at the constitutional and legislative policies that mediate indigenous rights and recognitions in Colombia today.

Late 19th Century Politics

In the early 18th century, the Viceroyalty of New Granada (present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, and Ecuador) was established with Bogotá as its capital. Even before New Granada gained its independence from Spain in 1819, elites were divided on whether the nation should adopt a federalist structure similar to what was achieved during the North American Revolution of the late 18th century, or a centralist government based in Bogotá – already politically important in the 16th century and a centre of power in the 18th century (Safford and Palacios 2002: 89). These two opposing camps had already gained control of the political arena and excluded any other competing group. The ideological divisions between these two camps were solidified in 1850 with the establishment of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party – the same groups that

dominate politics today. Many Liberals were small landowners, merchants, artisans, and manufacturers, seeking to remove State monopolies and abolish slavery. On the other end of the spectrum, Conservatives sought to retain slavery, install a centralist, authoritarian government, and retain strong ties between Church and State. In the last quarter of the 19th century, intraparty factionalism was rampant in both Liberal and Conservative parties, and divisions between both parties remained conflictual.

In 1880, Rafael Núñez, a dissident Liberal, was elected to the presidency and quickly formed bipartisan alliances with the Conservative Party by electing many Conservatives to important positions (Safford and Palacios 2002: 245). A detailed analysis of the political developments surrounding this event is outside the scope of this thesis but some elaboration is necessary. The path towards conservatism led by Núñez contributed to an increase in Radical Liberal revolts in various regions of Colombia. When Núñez was elected for a second term in 1884, revolts intensified and culminated in a civil war in 1885. Upon defeating the Radical Liberals, Núñez called for a new Constitution¹⁰ that would transform Colombia from a federalist to a centralist state.

Indigenous Colombians and Late 19th and Early 20th Century Legislation

Colombia officially formed as the Republic of Colombia in 1886 with the drafting of a Constitution that would remain in effect until 1991. Under this 1886 Constitution, to which indigenous Colombians were subject, God was declared the supreme source of authority, and the Roman Catholic Church was to be the religion of the nation, to be respected as the essential element of social order, and responsible for all aspects of

¹⁰ The existing Constitution had only been in place since 1863.

education [Arts. 38, 41]. The imposition of Catholic education on indigenous Colombians contributed to a loss of identity, and “the gradual destruction of their values and of their cultures in general, making Indians ashamed of themselves” (Zornosa 1984).

Within four years, Law 89 of 1890 was enacted as a protectionist measure for indigenous Colombians, and officially recognized *resguardos* as communally-held land, and *cabildos* as authoritative indigenous councils within these territories. It was not intended to grant indigenous Colombians autonomy or self-determination. It did partially release them from Colombia’s legal and political system, affording them a distinct identity and place within Colombia, but the legislation did not effectively translate into practice and large landowners continued to appropriate *resguardo* lands. Under this law, indigenous Colombians were considered minors under the protection of the State, ensuring a certain degree of control by the State over indigenous territories and political and cultural affairs. This view of indigenous Colombians was designed to assert dominance and to isolate them, but it would later be turned against the government by indigenous Colombians to recover *resguardo* lands (Avirama and Márquez 1994: 92). It followed that since their status as minors prohibited them from selling, leasing, or giving away their lands under Law 89 of 1890, those lands that had been appropriated, or that would be appropriated throughout the course of the following seven decades, would legally have to be returned to them by virtue of the illegality of those transfers.

As Safford and Palacios (2002: 184) note, “elites believed the solution to the ‘Indian problem’ lay in homogenizing the indigenes with the Hispanic population – economically, culturally, and genetically”. This is evident in policies that mandated the opening up of indigenous communal lands to white and *mestizo* farmers in an effort to

forcibly integrate the indigenous population socially and economically into the mainstream society. This integration of indigenous communities with the Spanish, mainstream society (a process referred to as *mestizaje*¹¹) resulted in the rapid loss of identity for many groups (Thoumi 2002: 20). For this reason, instances of organized indigenous resistance were few in the early 20th century, but one significant struggle emerged among the Nasa in 1910. A farmer by the name of Manuel Quintín Lame stepped forward to demand that the *resguardo* lands appropriated by large landowners be returned to indigenous Colombians. Lame was the first to lead a rebellion to regain control of Nasa ancestral lands in several southwestern departments and to strengthen *cabildos*. His efforts left a lasting impact on indigenous organizing: In the 1970s, a regional organization was established to continue his struggle, and in the 1980s, an illegal armed indigenous group that bore his name was established. But in the time period between Lame's struggle and the emergence of indigenous organizations in the 1970s, Colombia became involved in a prolonged civil conflict, disrupting the otherwise burgeoning indigenous movement.

La Violencia (1948-1957)

As mentioned above, Colombia's bipartisan political system had long created divisions and animosity between Conservatives and Liberals. In 1946, popular Liberal candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán lost the presidential elections to one of two Conservative candidates that had been presented. The divided votes gave the Conservatives a minority win, prompting some Liberals to react violently. The event that would spark significant

¹¹ This term was used to denote a mixture of peoples or "races".

violence and a decade-long civil conflict called *La Violencia* was Gaitán's assassination in 1948. Gaitán had been a strong campaigner for union and workers' rights and had the support of the poor and working class. His assassination initially prompted riots in the streets of Bogotá in which 2,000 people died, and led to confrontations between peasant groups and wealthy landowners in more rural areas (Safford and Palacios 2002: 323). The conflict would claim over 200,000 lives, and would be sustained by a bipartisan political system in which political groups were repressed, leading to the boycotting of elections by the Liberal party and the resignations of some of its party members.

With the Conservatives standing unopposed and the rural violence intensifying, radical Conservative Laureano Gómez became repressive, spurring a coup d'état by moderate Conservative General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. Initially, Pinilla was well received with his populist measures but within a year, his inability to effect meaningful changes cost him support for his regime and renewed the rural violence. As Gómez had done before him, Pinilla became repressive in the face of the violence, prompting an unusual alliance between the Liberals and Conservatives, and a power-sharing system – the National Front – that would appease the existing violence, but foster apathy and a sense of exclusion that would engender a different type of violence.

El Frente Nacional (1958-1974)

In 1957, the National Front (*El Frente Nacional*) agreement of the Liberals and Conservatives was presented to the public and amended to the Constitution of 1886. This agreement stipulated that for a period of 16 years, Liberals and Conservatives would take

turns at the presidency every four years. The National Front attenuated the bipartisan violence since both the Liberal and Conservative parties had gained equal representation in Congress, and would each be guaranteed two terms in office for the next sixteen years. Violence continued, but was directed at the left-wing insurgency that was growing in rural areas (Adie and D'Amato 2000). The National Front framework proved to be problematic in its own right. Within each of the two parties, divisions and factionalism arose. Outside these two parties, resentment from excluded groups simmered. Many citizens felt powerless and apathetic since voting only served to elect a party leader who would ultimately become president. Not surprisingly, some politicians found a way around the National Front by officially changing party affiliations and running in the party elections of their rival party. This process rendered the original intention of the National Front somewhat meaningless, and voter apathy increased. In 1964, only 30% of eligible voters voted, rising slightly to 40% in the 1968 party elections.

It would be in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, in this period of exclusion and disillusionment, that Colombia's major guerilla groups would emerge. The *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL) and the *Movimiento 19 de Abril* emerged in 1972, and were significant groups until agreeing to demobilize in 1990 in order to participate in the National Constitutional Assembly. Two guerrilla groups - the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia* (FARC) - remain strong guerrilla forces in Colombia today and are discussed below.

In 1964, the ELN was formed as a *foquista*-based movement by students inspired by the Cuban Revolution (and rejecting the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Colombia) who created an imagined "existence of a supposed tradition of rebellion among the

Colombian peasantry” (Safford and Palacios 2002: 357-358). Based on Che Guevara’s doctrines, the movement established an urban front and a rural *foco*, or camp (Safford and Palacios 2002: 358). The movement gained popularity when a Roman Catholic Priest joined their ranks in 1966 but was killed by the government shortly after. The ELN today boasts only 5,000 members, but agreed in 2000 to respect the autonomy and self-determination of indigenous Colombians, making them much less of a threat to indigenous communities throughout Colombia (Edeli and Hurwitz 2003a: 15).

The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia* (FARC) officially formed as an agrarian-communist offensive guerrilla unit in response to a government-sponsored military offensive. In the context of the Cold War in 1964, Conservative President Guillermo Leon Valencia ordered a military offensive against farmers (allied with the *Partido Comunista de Colombia*, PCC) in the Andean town of Marquetalia who had been forming small independent republics (Safford and Palacios 2002: 356; Varela 2004). Small guerrilla groups mobilized for land and labour rights in the 1920s, but they were more defensive than offensive, and their attempts to organize more efficiently in the 1940s were met with effective countermeasures by the government, impeding their efforts. The attacks of 1964 provided the incentive for a successful transformation of otherwise small peasant self-defence groups into an organized revolutionary guerrilla force standing principally against an oligarchical state.

Initially, the FARC had formed as the military arm of the PCC but separated from the party in the 1980s, branching out with their own political and military doctrines, seeking to become an official national political movement (Ortiz 2002: 133-134). This separation and loss of financial support from the PCC was easily replaced by the ever-

increasing revenues from the coca industry, and through kidnappings for ransom of wealthy individuals - often Colombian drug traffickers or their family members. Gaining strength throughout the 1980s and 1990s, they now number 12,000, down from 18,000 in 2003-2004 due to successful government military combat operations in FARC territory (Toro 2005). Throughout their forty year history, the FARC have transformed their original antioligarchic discourse to a general critique of state legitimacy (Ortiz 2002: 130). With their increasing involvement in the coca industry and its associated violence, their critique of state legitimacy has lost much support among the peasantry.

Desmonte, the Easement Out of the Frente Nacional

By the early 1970s, the political violence that had created *La Violencia* had been subdued but guerrilla organizations were strengthening, and poor socioeconomic conditions and political scandals were keeping the population agitated and dissatisfied with government. Pinilla returned in 1970 with an anti-National Front platform and a populist discourse reminiscent of Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, but the National Front contrived a “thinly disguised last-minute fraud” (Hylton 2003) and awarded the presidency to his runner-up Misael Pastrana with a 65,000 vote margin (Rudqvist 2002: 7). By the end of the National Front in 1974, there was a renewed sense of hope for legitimate political competition but party affiliations had been weakened, a gap was growing between the political elites and the masses, and there was a general distrust of the government. At the end of the National Front, Liberals and Conservatives could no longer block out the opposition, and dissatisfaction with government was increasing due to tax hikes, bigger deficits, austerity measures, and a decline in coffee prices. There were periods of

economic prosperity but a booming population countered the benefits and unemployment remained unchanged. Workers and peasants increasingly rebelled, many joining existing guerrilla groups.

The Emergence of the Colombian Indigenous Movement

As mentioned above, contemporary indigenous resistance began with Quintín Lame, but was subdued during the prolonged conflict of the 1940s. It would take several decades for an organized indigenous movement to emerge. In the late 1960s, within the context of a peasant movement against land reform,¹² several indigenous community groups from the southwestern department of Cauca¹³ came out into the public eye to demand that *resguardo* lands be given back to indigenous communities. The movement was seeking to compel the government to comply with Law 89 of 1890 and, more importantly, Law 135 of 1961, which called for the expansion of indigenous *resguardos* (Van Cott 1996; Jackson 2002: 109). The discourse of this particular movement was not ethnic or indigenous – they were representing themselves as a “Caucan” force (Findji 1992: 118). In this region, the *haciendas* had long been units of domination where workers – many indigenous – became debt labourers. They were given plots of land to cultivate and required to pay their terrajes (rent dues) by providing their labour to the *hacienda* for a certain number of days per month (Rojas 2002: 126). In the 1960s, harsh working conditions on *haciendas* led community members to demand their rights (such

¹² To relieve land pressures in highly populated regions and to boost agricultural production, the government instituted land reform in certain areas considered “empty” (but inhabited by indigenous people) without consideration of indigenous Colombians’ potential rights to the land (Colchester et al 2001).

¹³ Forty percent of the total indigenous Colombian population lives in the Southern Andean Highlands, where the Cauca Valley is situated (Liffman 1998: 31).

as rights to better living conditions and land), but these rights were interpreted by the national society as demands for ancestral lands only (Findji 1992: 116). The lands they eventually recovered were included in existing *resguardos* under the jurisdiction of *cabildos*, and this helped to strengthen both community ties and *cabildos* since both physical and social spaces had been conquered (Findji 1992: 119).

In this region, the resistance formally organized under the Regional Indigenous Organization of Cauca (CRIC) in 1971. Its mandate was to protect indigenous lands, human rights, culture, and education (Chernela 1987), and to continue the struggle that had been started by a now deceased Quintín Lame.¹⁴ The CRIC began as a regional indigenous movement based in the department of Cauca but its intention was to shape the indigenous resistance outside the region through alliances with government. Its struggle was also partially class-based and resisting State oppression since it had arisen in the *haciendas* of the Cauca (Candial 1995) and allied itself with the non-indigenous peasant movements. The CRIC's initial concerns were eventually expanded to focus on policy-making, consensus-building, and active participation in the political process (Avirama and Márquez 1994: 84), which led to its political representation in the National Constitutional Assembly in 1990.

From the beginning, there were divisions within the CRIC that revolved around the degree to which the movement should ally itself with government. As a result, some separated from the CRIC and formed the Indigenous Authorities of Colombia (AICO) in 1977. AICO was a more horizontally organized, and less institutional movement than the CRIC. For AICO, there was a clear distinction between the indigenous and non-

¹⁴ The continuation of Lame's struggle has been quite successful since 60,000 hectares of land has been recovered by CRIC thus far (Hristov 2005: 99).

indigenous sectors of society. The community was seen as an alternative to the citizen – it was not a movement of the popular masses organized under a single leadership but of indigenous authorities (Findji 1992: 130).¹⁵ Its goal was to unify all indigenous communities while retaining diversity, and its struggle became linked with identity more than land recovery, as had been the case in Cauca (Findji 1992: 130). AICO also eventually participated in the electoral process (Avirama and Márquez 1994: 87) and contributed to the revision of the 1991 Constitution.

The divisions within the indigenous movement became clearer with the creation of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) in 1982 at the first National Indigenous Congress, attended by a variety of local and regional groups. From its inception, ONIC has struggled for autonomy, territory, and solidarity with other sectors. It has also stood against capitalistic development on indigenous territories (especially in terms of natural resource exploitation), the imposition of State policies that harmed indigenous cultural values and territorial rights, and the violence and death at the hands of armed groups. ONIC seeks to maintain unity between indigenous communities, and through this unity, mount a sustained resistance based on cultural principles (ONIC 2005). ONIC has a formal organizational structure that includes separate branches to address distinct issues (for example, health, human rights, culture, education, etc.), manage finances, interact with the media, and lead the national movement in a direction that is presumed to reflect the needs of all indigenous communities.

¹⁵ The horizontal structure of the movement reflected that every community within the Indigenous Authorities Movement was an authority and not subject to governing or coordinating bodies as was the case with the CRIC. Within the AICO, all groups were leaders because all groups were equal, yet different (Findji 1992: 126).

ONIC was seeking to build the indigenous movement into one that would reflect a “core” indigenous identity – a practice that would draw criticism for its attempts at transforming indigeneity into a rigid category. The government was already recognizing indigenous identity as a structured legal entity by virtue of it being intimately tied to territory, or more specifically, *resguardos* (Rappaport 1990b, in Ramirez 2002). ONIC, as a national movement, had strategically institutionalized itself and created ties with government, but this created resentment in some communities who did not share their political views. A distinction has also been, and is still being, made between the more “progressive”, development-oriented indigenous organizations and the more “traditional” communities who seek less integration with the national society (Candial 1995). Ramirez (2002: 157) has highlighted how the indigenous elite are defining indigenous identity in dialogue with the government while excluding local groups. Some indigenous Colombians also participate in national politics and help shape policy that may not reflect the interests of every group (as is the case with politics in general). Working with and within State institutions can be useful as a partial strategy (Tarrow 1994: 146; McCarthy and Zald 1977) but in Colombia, the indigenous elite (that is, structured organizations like ONIC) are forming vertical, government-like structures with centralized decision-making and ties to government while claiming to represent all communities. This can have the effect of silencing or marginalizing certain groups who do not share ONIC’s ideologies but are included *de facto* in the resistance.

From its beginnings as a struggle for land, the indigenous movement would shift directions throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. As mentioned above, what was initially considered a struggle for land was in reality a struggle for rights. In the 1970s,

Nasa indigenous communities were seeking to “remember” the rights they held in pre-colonial times, and archival research provided information as to ancestral land boundaries and landmarks. These discoveries promoted the belief that “territory” (as a geopolitical unit) was a more appropriate term than “land” (Findji 1992: 121). With the indigenous movement now fully integrated into politics, the struggles for land had shifted to ones for territory, and as a political entity, rights to territory included notions of identity and autonomy (Liffman 1998: 30). This is also evident through the methods with which indigenous Colombians recovered their lands. For the Páez, this was done by working the land, and specifically in the town of Jambaló, by dismantling the house of the hacienda owner piece by piece without destroying it, and informing the occupants to take what they had brought with them (Findji 1992: 118-119). Recovering land in this way was a symbolic act to affirm the retaking of their authority. Restoring indigenous *cabildos* on indigenous lands was the restoration of power as much as it was the restoration of ancestral lands.

Claiming rights to territory quickly became a dangerous endeavour in those regions controlled by armed groups. Strong indigenous identity and cultural cohesion were, and still are, a threat to the Colombian elite, multinational corporations, and to armed groups who suspect communities of having allegiances with rival groups. The *Formación del Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame* (MAQL) – their name taken from the indigenous leader who had begun the struggle for indigenous rights seventy years before – was the first indigenous armed group,¹⁶ and formed in 1984 to protect *resguardos* from

¹⁶ During the civil conflict, some Nasa mounted an armed resistance to Conservative-backed militia groups that were attacking indigenous communities but they abandoned the armed struggle once peace was restored through the National Front in the 1960s (Weinberg 2003).

guerrilla and paramilitary incursions (Rosengren 2002: 13). The MAQL disbanded in order to participate in the National Constitutional Assembly, and it was through their efforts that the 1991 Constitution included a provision for the election of indigenous representatives in the Senate (Safford and Palacios 2002: 359).

The 1991 Constitution of Colombia

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, in the context of the easement out of the National Front, popular mobilizations were simmering and guerrillas were not yet a significant force (Safford and Palacios 2002: 334). The government was involved in peace efforts with guerrillas, and the military and police were able to keep mobilizations under control. A political crisis emerged in the late 1980s when narcotraffickers¹⁷ began a rash of terrorist attacks against political figures, including the assassination of the popular Liberal presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galán in 1989 and hundreds of other political figures. This crisis was emblematic of the failure of the State, and was a principal factor in its desire to draft a Constitution that would “legitimate the state through a system that was more participative and decentralized, more oriented to social justice, more transparent, and less corrupt” (Safford and Palacios 2002: 336). The creation of a new Constitution was an idea that had been proposed by the Lopez government in the mid-1970s, but support from the Gaviria administration (1990-1994) and the social conditions mentioned above were the elements that provided the necessary incentives for the Constitutional Assembly to be convened. The diversity of the 70-member body of the Constitutional Assembly reflected the government’s willingness to incorporate

¹⁷ At this stage, narcotraffickers were organized into large, powerful cartels based in Medellín and Cali, and headed by Pablo Escobar and Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, respectively.

individuals from non-traditional political parties and groups. As such, representatives from demobilized guerrilla groups, indigenous Colombians, and other figures that had never had formal access to political structures participated in the formation of a document that would symbolize the re-birth of Colombia.

For indigenous peoples, the assembly was significant since three of the 70 delegates were indigenous representatives from various groups, a disproportionate amount considering that the actual percentage of indigenous peoples nationally stood at less than 2% at the time (DANE 2004). According to Murillo (1996), the disproportionate amount of indigenous peoples was attributed to their “tremendous capacity to mobilize people in defense of their rights, whether in the form of mass protests, land-recuperation programs, or armed insurrection”. *Ciro Tique*, a former member of the MAQL remarked: “There were three *companeros* against 70 others who were not at all interested in the indigenous question. But these three representatives gave the government and the entire Constitutional Assembly legitimacy” (quoted in Murillo 1996). Marginalized groups had now been given the opportunity to participate in an event to reshape the country, and there was much enthusiasm and hope for the potential changes that could be effected through the Constitution and subsequent laws. The main objective of the General Assembly was to end a system of clientelism, exclusion, and political bipartisan authoritarianism, but the participation by indigenous representatives led to several provisions specifically tailored to ameliorate indigenous peoples’ cultural, social, political, and territorial rights. As a result, the new Constitution became one of the world’s most progressive and extensive constitutions for the rights of indigenous peoples.

First and foremost, the 1991 Constitution (Presidencia de la República de Colombia 1991) recognizes Colombia as a pluralistic nation, protecting the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the nation [Arts. 1, 7, 8, and 10], thereby affording indigenous peoples a distinct cultural identity within the context of full citizenship. As for specific indigenous constitutional rights, these can be divided into two major areas: the recognition of *resguardos* as inalienable legal entities, and rights to culture. The Constitution affirms indigenous peoples' rights to Indigenous Territorial Entities (ETIs, territories with increased control over legal, political and administrative matters than *resguardos*) and affirms their inalienable collective rights to land, and their entitlement to self-government within these territories, including the authority to devise and implement social, political, and economic policies within these territories [Arts. 63, 96, 246, 286, 287, 329, 330]. Furthermore, indigenous Colombians have been granted the right to be consulted and to participate in any decision or project that could affect them and/or their territories – a provision which should be read in conjunction with the articles that establish their right to a healthy environment and for the environmentally sustainable use of resources [Arts. 79, 80, 330]. The cultural rights of indigenous peoples in the Constitution centre around language [art. 10] which is deemed official on *resguardos*, rights to cultural heritage [art. 72], and the right to maintain contact with other indigenous peoples outside the borders of Colombia [art. 96]. The Constitution also guarantees indigenous participation in the Senate [art. 171] and the Chamber of Representatives [art. 176].

Since constitutional provisions have little effect until complementary legislation enforces them, many of the laws mandated by the Constitution have yet to be enacted. In

fact, as Murillo (1996) notes, indigenous activism has often been addressed through “negotiations and agreements on paper that are ultimately ignored once the dust has settled”. The decentralization process was formalized with the Constitution, and much of the responsibility of ETIs was delegated to indigenous communities as a result. This afforded indigenous communities more control over administrative matters, but it simultaneously diminished the State’s responsibility in protecting indigenous peoples from guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, and large landowners all vying for control of resource-rich indigenous territories. Furthermore, this delegation of tasks was not accompanied by corresponding funds, and departments have found themselves with limited autonomy with respect to the use of resources (Acosta and Bird 2003: 16).

ETIs have yet to be fully implemented due to delays in enacting corresponding legislation, failures in negotiations between the government and indigenous communities, and resistance from non-indigenous landowners who currently inhabit areas within ETIs (Jackson 2002: 114; Van Cott 2000). As Francisco Rojas Birry, one of three indigenous representatives present at the Constitutional Assembly noted: “Therein lies the greatest problem. There is no political will on the part of the members of the Congress or the administration to make the ETIs a reality” (Murillo 1996). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has further suggested that “[g]overnment officials are, on the whole, ignorant of the laws that protect the rights and territories of indigenous groups” (IACHR 1993: 8). The lack of political will, and the ignorance of relevant legislation pertaining to indigenous peoples, has reduced the value of the advancements made in the Constitution.

Furthermore, the election of indigenous representatives to public office has been considered a milestone for indigenous political involvement, but those holding public office have realized that their limited representation in Congress or the Senate is preventing meaningful change in policies. Avirama and Márquez (1994: 95) have argued that the State has created conditions that purport to meet the needs of indigenous Colombians (that is, constitutional and political inclusion), but that have served more as a display to indigenous groups, and national and international organizations, failing to resolve the core problems.

One particular problem that arose after the 1991 Constitution was that of indigenous political participation. The Constitution of 1991 mandated the direct participation of marginalized groups such as indigenous Colombians in the political system. Only two Senate seats out of 102 were reserved for indigenous Colombians,¹⁸ and although this number is proportionate to the percentage of indigenous Colombians in relation to the rest of the population, very little can be accomplished with such small numbers in the Senate. In certain committees of the Senate, each bill must be approved by half of a committee that comprises more than a dozen members. Armando Valbuena, president of ONIC, argues that indigenous representation is rendered meaningless in this context, asking “What can one trivial Indian do within this economic structure of the state and this disrespect for the constitution?” (Edeli and Hurwitz 2003a: 16).

¹⁸ Article 176 of the 1991 Constitution created a system of Special Electoral Districting (CEE) that reserved two seats for Indigenous candidates. Under this system, indigenous communities elect two representatives to the Senate in a competition that is independent of the Senate races for the remainder of the seats. Indigenous representatives may also attempt to gain support from non-indigenous communities and win seats under equal conditions (Copera and Gutierrez 1994).

Political inclusion for indigenous Colombians was a great victory but the reality of political participation has been a disappointment, and insufficient to effect meaningful change. In the mid 1990s, one problem was that regional indigenous organizations were supporting the political campaigns of their members without question, failing to appreciate the distinction between their members' political motives and the organization's own political aims (Capera and Gutierrez 1994). The uncertain relationship between politics and indigenous organizations led some groups like ONIC to occasionally withdraw from political participation by refusing to submit or support candidates (Murillo 1996). There have also been disagreements within the indigenous movement as to the best methods or approaches to effecting sustainable political change – some understand the value of negotiating with the government but others are suspicious of government concessions and use the courts as a pressure tactic (Uprimny Yepes and Garcia-Villegas 2004). In addition, the election of indigenous individuals to government positions has had the (un)intended effect of attenuating indigenous political mobilization insofar as indigenous individuals holding public office must now concern themselves with a host of administrative and bureaucratic matters (Ramos 1999: 9).

The Direction of the Indigenous Movement Post-Constitution

The collective identity of indigenous peoples is intimately linked with certain rights, such as the right to culture, language, territory, self-determination, and autonomy. Recognition of these rights through the 1991 Constitution was an acknowledgment of the history of indigenous Colombians prior to colonization, a shift away from assimilationist policies, an acceptance of their current cultural values, beliefs, and traditions, and a

recognition of their inherent right to modify these ideologies and practices. As such, the Colombian Constitution has become a defining moment in the history of indigenous Colombians for its implied denunciation of past policies, and its proclamation of a new perspective on diversity. At the very least, this document has served as a basis upon which to build and strengthen indigenous rights, facilitate their enforcement, and in the process, allow disparate indigenous communities to develop a strong sense of collective identity.

It is also clear that efforts to pursue the recognition and protection of rights have been on the one hand fraught with difficulties, yet on the other an issue around which indigenous communities have rallied - whether in the context of protecting indigenous territories from armed groups, foreign land developers, or oil companies. Subsequent to the 1991 Constitution's recognition of rights and autonomy, the Colombian indigenous movement shifted toward "more strategic notions of indigenous identity, development and collective representation within the state" (Liffman 1998: 34). In the Andes (including the Cauca region), the emphasis was still on *resguardos* but in the Amazon and Pacific Coast regions, the struggle against natural resource exploitation was becoming more significant. Large corporations were increasingly implementing projects that negatively impacted the environment under the guise of development (Avirama 1994: 87, in Liffman 1998: 35). This had the effect of redefining the political struggles of the indigenous communities involved.

There are three communities that faced particular difficulties in their resistance to natural resource exploitation. The Cofan struggled against oil exploration on their territories but were pressured by ONIC to change their demands to reflect the views of

the national indigenous movement. Since the Constitution, the indigenous movement has continued to lobby for the codification of the redrawing of territorial units and the delegation of responsibilities as specified in the Constitution (Rappaport 2003: 39). Therefore, at a meeting with oil representatives, ONIC asked the Cofan representatives to consider the expansion of *resguardos* as a priority over the more local demands the Cofan were making of the oil company (such as bargaining for guaranteed employment from the oil company, schools, and training) (Ramirez 2002: 147, 151).

The Constitutional Court has also hindered indigenous resistance to resource exploitation, as the U'wa discovered. Decree¹⁹ 1397 of 1996 aimed to further protect indigenous Colombians from natural resource exploitation by stipulating that both consultations and agreements with indigenous peoples had to be achieved prior to the implementation of any project on their territories. A Constitutional Court decision in 1997 involving the U'wa and their fight against oil exploration on their territories has served to undermine this decree. In this decision, the Court supported the decree insofar as it declared that consultations with indigenous communities were necessary prior to any project. The problem is that "consultation" was not defined, making it unclear whether an agreement between the corporations and indigenous communities was necessary. Furthermore, the Court stipulated that the government had the right to allow the project to commence after thirty days from the beginning of the consultations - with or without the consent of the community (Amazon Alliance 1997).

¹⁹ In Colombia, the President issues decrees, which are legal instruments of an administrative or regulatory nature that have the force of law. These are sometimes deemed unconstitutional, or conversely, interpreted widely by the Constitutional Court.

As a further affront to indigenous Colombians' environmental struggle, Decree 1320 was issued in 1998 to modify existing requirements for issuing licenses to companies seeking to exploit natural resources on indigenous territories.²⁰ Pursuant to this decree, consultations with indigenous communities would only be required in those communities that were inhabited on a regular and permanent basis, in effect, a statement of non-recognition of indigenous territories. This decree has been described as violating the constitutional rights of indigenous peoples since many of them engage in seasonal migration patterns (Mondragon 2000), and as with previous consultation schemes, the government has retained the right to reach its own decision if an agreement is not met after consultation. In the context of their resistance to the construction of the Urrá²¹ hydroelectric dam, the Embera-Katío peoples had to appeal to the Constitutional Court which subsequently declared this decree inapplicable to them, but only temporarily halted the filling of the reservoir. Plans to continue with the second phase of the dam were still anticipated at that point (Panesso 2002), but the government expanded the Embera-Katío *resguardo* in 2002 and barred the construction of the dam's second phase. The Embera-Katío were granted a favourable decision by the Court (that is, to terminate the project and have Urrá representatives repair and rebuild the land) but the government has not acknowledged any responsibility in making reparations and rebuilding the land, and accordingly, has failed to take any action. Since mid-December 2004, more than 400 Embera-Katío and their supporters have camped out and marched in Bogotá to demand that the government resume talks about compensation (Henderson 2005).

²⁰ Under the 1991 Constitution, most rights to the subsoil remain under national jurisdiction. As a result, resource extraction is permitted so long as communities are consulted.

²¹ Built by Empresa Multiproposito Urrá S. A., a consortium of the Colombian government and corporations from Sweden, Russia, and Canada.

As mentioned above, environmental struggles were localized in the 1990s, and other communities were faced with different struggles relating to identity and their place in the national indigenous movement and in the Colombian society. The Nasa have taken a more “traditional” approach to reinventing their identity, choosing to focus more on local issues like the recovery of Nasa culture in schools, homes, and the marketplace (Gow 1997: 277, in Liffman 1998: 39). Many do not speak their ancestral language anymore, but the importance they place on historical traditions and territory has led them to continue to identify themselves as Nasa (Rappaport 1990: 183-184, in Liffman 1998: 33).

The Guambianos have taken a similar approach in defining themselves as Guambianos, and not as indigenous or “non-peasants” (Findji 1992: 123). Along with cultural continuity, these efforts to remain distinct have served as both cultural and political capital since they have clarified their position vis-à-vis the State (Jackson 2002: 111). The Guambianos have little room for territorial expansion due to their proximity to existing communities or land owned by large landowners. Therefore, their identity is less place-based and more directed towards other ways to reproduce their culture (Liffman 1998: 38). In 1997, the Guambianos developed a *Plan de Vida* (Life Plan), a model of community that seeks the inclusion of all groups in various development projects (Gow 1997: 253, in Liffman 1998: 37), and works under the direction of the National Planning Department of Colombia (Izquierdo 2002).

Ramirez (2002: 154) has highlighted intragroup divisions as well. Some Cofan have sought to portray a more “traditional” indigenous identity but others have voiced concerns that this might come at the expense of their relationships with the State and

other non-indigenous citizens in the region. Development projects by multinational corporations have been both praised for their potential economic benefits and opposed for their potential environmental degradation.

The indigenous struggle has shifted considerably since the late 1960s. Demands for land were transformed into territorial claims, and rights to territory served as the basis for the shaping of indigenous identity as much as they served as the basis of environmental claims. This illustrates that conditions will dictate, in part, the trajectory of both the national movement and the local communities. In the 21st century, the Colombian indigenous movement has shifted in response to the coca industry and its related violence, fumigation, and displacement. The following chapter will reveal the ways in which Plan Colombia has created deleterious conditions for indigenous Colombians through its focus on fumigation, and the resulting environmental degradation, adverse health effects, and displacement. The chapter will discuss these elements' contribution to cultural fragmentation and the initial steps that were taken to have indigenous rights enforced, but will stand in contrast to the discussion of the coca-related violence in Chapter 4 which has acted as a catalyst for a further shift in the indigenous resistance.

CHAPTER 3

FUMIGATION AND DISPLACEMENT AS AGENTS OF CULTURAL FRAGMENTATION

This chapter discusses the conditions that have been created by measures to eradicate the coca industry, and that have led to the cultural fragmentation of indigenous communities. The chapter begins with an overview of Plan Colombia, an initiative developed by the U.S. and Colombian governments to combat coca cultivation mainly through fumigation. The chapter progresses with a discussion of fumigation and its effects on the environment, health, and displacement of indigenous Colombians, and the ways in which these conditions have contributed to cultural fragmentation among many communities. The last section of this chapter discusses some of the methods with which indigenous Colombians have tried to mediate the deleterious effects of fumigation on their communities.

Plan Colombia

In 1998, Colombian president Andres Pastrana Arango drafted a comprehensive development strategy²² to resolve social and economic problems, and the widespread and longstanding violence from illegal armed groups. This plan was to be submitted to the international community in an effort to gain financial support.²³ Once presented to the

²² It was entitled *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1998-2002, Cambio para construir la paz*.

²³ In 2001, the European Parliament voted 474 to 1 against Plan Colombia on the grounds that it was too militaristic and not devised through dialogue among the various sectors of society. The European Union ultimately awarded far less than the Colombian government had hoped – approximately EUR 330 million, and only to peace initiatives.

United States, the plan underwent an overhaul by the Clinton administration before approval in 2000, where a focus on drug interdiction and eradication through increased military and police funding became the predominant objective of this new “Plan Colombia”. Neither version of the plans outlined specific initiatives for indigenous Colombians but Pastrana’s original version focused on those regions where violence and coca cultivation were expanding, considering these problems infringements on the cultural and territorial rights of indigenous Colombians. Under the rubric of social insecurity, Pastrana’s version addressed the social ramifications of the coca industry and as such, there was no mention of efforts to stop the production of narcotics through a comprehensive plan or military intervention. Pastrana’s version also recognized the inequalities, poverty, and politics of exclusion that fostered violence and sought to include indigenous leaders and other stakeholders (including armed groups) in the implementation of the plan (Presidencia de la República de Colombia 1999).

The reasons for the dismissal of this plan in favour of the United States’ version was never made officially clear, but it is likely that the Colombian government was in no position to refuse the funding, despite its many strings. The new U.S. version of Plan Colombia came with a funding package of U.S. \$860.3 million specifically allocated to Colombia, in addition to the \$330 million already planned for 2000-2001 (Isacson 2000). The elements of the new, official plan pointed to a very different orientation in terms of policies, priorities, and goals. Narcotics were now identified as the core of Colombia’s social and economic problems (Crandall 2002: 163), and 80% of the funds were allocated to the Colombian military and police forces to curb illicit drug cultivation and trafficking (USGAO 2000: 8). In this new plan, the majority of the social and economic problems

highlighted by Pastrana were left out, allocating a mere 8% of the total funding to the development of alternatives to coca cultivation. This plan was submitted to the Colombian people as a Colombian plan²⁴ but many Colombians knew very little about the content and funding details of Plan Colombia. As a “Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State”, there was no indication from its title or general description that it would result in the aggravation of the armed conflict, intense aerial fumigation, and forced displacement. Quite to the contrary, Plan Colombia referred to the nation as being under threat, and implied that the implementation of this plan would transform Colombia into “a better, more secure country” (Government of Colombia 1999). As mentioned above, this plan did not directly address indigenous issues²⁵ but it is an initiative that has had an overwhelming impact on indigenous communities throughout Colombia by contributing to environmental degradation and displacement.

Fumigation

The environmental destruction in Colombia cannot solely be attributed to the coca industry but there are significant linkages between the two. Every stage of the coca industry, from production to destruction, has deleterious effects on the environment. Some farmers incorporate small plots of coca into their existing crops, but quite often large tracts of jungle are cleared for planting coca, and these crops are subsequently often shifted to new locations to avoid detection, or to resume cultivation after a crop has been

²⁴ Plan Colombia is officially authored by the government of Colombia but the final version was first produced in English months before a Spanish version was available, further indicating the role of the United States in its creation (Vaicus and Isacson 2000; Nagle 2001: 10).

²⁵ In the entire text of the official version of *Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State*, there are only three instances of the word “indigenous”, or “indígena” in the Spanish version.

fumigated. The use of common household pesticides and herbicides is also quite common on coca fields to create optimum growing conditions, but the harshest chemicals are used during the processing stage of cocaine production. Kerosene, sulfuric acid, ammonia, and dozens more toxic chemicals are used to refine the product from coca leaf to cocaine, and subsequently disposed of on the ground or in nearby streams, contaminating the soil and water supply.

Deforestation and the careless discarding of toxic byproducts create significant environmental damage but the most controversial component of the coca industry is aerial fumigation. There is little scientific research that establishes a clear relationship between aerial fumigation and adverse effects to the environment, animal populations, and human health in Colombia. Conversely, there is an array of textual and visual accounts depicting the negative impact of chemicals on crops, livestock, humans, and their contribution to displacement.

The increase in environmental degradation, health problems, and displacement in the years since the implementation of Plan Colombia is even more disheartening considering that there has been little progress in the overall eradication of coca. In 1991, only 2,300 hectares of coca were fumigated, representing 6% of the total Colombian crop of 37,500 hectares (CIDAD 2001: 24). In 2001, 94,153 hectares were fumigated, representing 65% of the total Colombian crop of 144,807 hectares (UNODC 2004: 5, 8). This indicates that both coca cultivation and coca fumigation have been steadily increasing in the last decade. There has been no change in the supply and cost of cocaine on U.S. markets nor has the price of coca paste increased in Colombia (Isacson 2004). This indicates that coca is either being replanted in neighbouring areas or salvaged by

workers who wash the herbicide from the leaves immediately after a fumigation raid (Cederstav 2003).

In 2003, the U.S. government enthusiastically reported a decrease in the cultivation of Colombian coca by about 50,000 hectares (U.S. Department of State 2004) but failed to take into account a sizeable increase in the Bolivian crop. Furthermore, the latest data from the United States' Office of National Drug Control Policy (2005) indicates that the fumigation raids of 2004 had little effect on Colombian coca crops. Despite meager results, fumigation remains the preferred method of coca eradication because it is simple. A brown, wilted coca crop is an immediate and visible result of fumigation and provides proponents of fumigation a sense of accomplishment.

There are several controversial issues related to aerial fumigation, the primary one being that the Colombian and U.S. governments continue to support fumigation while coca farmers and peasants in surrounding regions claim serious deleterious effects to the environment and health, and increasingly cite fumigation as a cause of displacement.

Roundup SL is the product sprayed on coca crops in Colombia, and is produced by the Monsanto Corporation. What differentiates the Roundup SL used on Colombian coca fields from the product commonly used by gardeners is the concentration of the product, and the addition of surfactants and adjuvants to increase product efficiency. Additives have rendered the product more potent, and have enabled it to better adhere to coca leaves for increased saturation. The main active ingredient in Roundup SL is glyphosate. Its composition has been publicized by the Monsanto Corporation but the composition of some of the additives, such as the surfactant Cosmoflux, has not been revealed by the manufacturer as it is considered proprietary information. As such, it has

been difficult to ascertain the safety of the product. The Monsanto Corporation's website offers a slew of studies attesting to the safety of glyphosate and Roundup²⁶ but these studies have analyzed the effects of the product in virtually all conditions but the ones present in Colombia. None of the studies upon which the U.S. and Colombian governments rely to downplay the link between coca fumigation and adverse health effects can be considered accurate for similar reasons.

Two studies of particular importance were commissioned by the United States and performed by the Clinica Uribe Cualla in Colombia. One study was conducted with individuals exposed to the fumigation of poppy fields (Uribe 2001) but poppy fumigation requires a much weaker formulation of herbicide. A second study was conducted on coca fields but data was collected five months after fumigation had taken place, leading to inconclusive results (Uribe Cualla Toxicology Clinic 2001). There have been no toxicity studies done to date on the impact of the particular Colombian product on human, animal, and plant populations with the specific formulation used in Colombia, and taking into account the particular conditions under which the product is sprayed (Stanton et al 2002).

Some authors (Faber 1993: 217; Leech 2002c) have argued that the herbicide used to fumigate crops is either sprayed incorrectly at much higher altitudes than recommended, or used in higher concentrations than claimed. The Colombian anti-narcotics police has estimated that Roundup SL is routinely sprayed at altitudes of 25-30 feet (10 metres) above the top of the tallest plants, yet the manufacturer recommends the

²⁶ For example, see the following websites:

http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/content/products/productivity/roundup/gly_bestsources_bkg.pdf
http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/content/products/productivity/roundup/glyphosate_human_risk_back_grounder.pdf

product not be sprayed at a height of more than 10 feet above the tallest plants (Earthjustice 2002). Spraying at such high altitudes allows the product to drift up to 800 metres from the source onto neighbouring fields and waterways, and can remain in some food crops for up to a year (Cox 1995). Many other factors such as product concentration, the presence of additives, and climactic conditions can influence the toxicity of Roundup SL.

Environmental and Health Effects of Fumigation

Six governors from southern Colombia as well as the Ombudsman's office have demanded fumigation be halted due to its apparent devastating effects (Amatangelo 2001), and have provided video footage of dead animals, destroyed food crops, and skin ailments to support their charges (De Young 2001). Complaints of environmental degradation have highlighted the contamination of surface water, dead or diseased fish, damage to wilderness areas, and deforestation (CSD 2002). The Guambianos had implemented a trout farming program after manually eradicating illicit crops²⁷ but aerial fumigation contaminated the water, killed most of the fish, and deterred potential consumers from purchasing the remaining fish (Leech 2002c). Other complaints have highlighted the destruction of food and cash crops, such as yucca, corn, plantains, tomatoes, sugar cane, fruit trees, grazing fields, and the death of livestock. Unlike food crops in the United States, food crops in Colombia have not been genetically modified to be resistant to glyphosate (Leech 2002c) and as such, are vulnerable when exposed to the product either directly or through drift. The National Human Rights Ombudsman's office

²⁷ In this case, the illicit crop was opium poppy, not coca.

in Colombia has noted that the Cofan have experienced the spraying of food crops, medicinal plants, fish ponds, and grazing fields (Cooper 2001). The fumigation of food crops and pastures has decreased the fertility of the land and left indigenous Colombians with no means to feed their families, and has often forced them to relocate or join the ranks of the guerrillas and paramilitaries to compensate for lost income.

Roundup SL was used even before the expanded fumigation program of Plan Colombia. In 1999, the Yanacona, an indigenous community living in the region of Macizo Colombiano in the Department of Cauca, had their licit crops sprayed with Roundup SL and many children became sick with lung diseases, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and fever (WRM 2000). Despite this early evidence of deleterious effects, the fumigation program was expanded under Plan Colombia and thousands of indigenous and non-indigenous Colombians have reported health problems since then: gastrointestinal disorders, testicular inflammation, high fevers, respiratory problems, rashes, and eye irritation (Sherret 2002: 448; Earthjustice 2002; Transnational Institute 2001: 4). In the Inga territory in the department of Nariño, fumigation for 10 successive days resulted in 80% of the children suffering from fever, gastrointestinal problems, and skin and eye problems (Clark 2003). The major fumigation campaigns - especially the ones implemented since Plan Colombia - have been cited as reasons for evacuation by many indigenous Colombians due to ailments that arise after sprayings and the immediate and long-term effects on crops and soil. The leader of an Inga-Santiago community in the Valley of Sibundoy revealed the following to Nataly Fletcher (2003a: 38) under conditions of anonymity:

The aerial spray has affected the entire area of upper Putumayo. Our tomatoes, beans, and banana plants died, and our traditional medicine plant sources ran out completely...Also, we...started noticing strange diseases, and didn't know what they were caused by. We noticed common symptoms among the members of the community such as headaches, fevers, and lesions all over our bodies. We tried using our traditional herbal baths, but they just didn't work to cure these ailments.

Formal complaints have met with little success. Out of the 4,000 complaints of sprayed legitimate crops, the U.S. Department of State has only addressed half, and only 5 of these were deemed to have merit and compensated (U.S. Department of State 2004). It is difficult to believe that only 2% of the reviewed complaints were considered valid, but it should not be surprising since these determinations were made by the same department that claimed that glyphosate was "less harmful than aspirin and table salt" (TNI 2001: 5).

Manual Eradication as a Secondary Approach

The small percentage of funding allocated to alternatives to fumigation in Plan Colombia has also been controversial.²⁸ Furthermore, the United States' response to manual eradication programs has not been particularly positive. In addition to providing inadequate funds for alternative programs, the U.S. has threatened to cut off aid to Colombia should aerial eradication be suspended (Leech 2001b). The U.S. funds manual eradication programs through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID),

²⁸ Less than 8% of the \$860.3 million allocated to Colombia under Plan Colombia was allocated to alternative development programs (including manual eradication programs). Almost 80% was directed to military, police, and law enforcement – the Colombian entities responsible for fumigation and providing security related to those efforts (CIP 2001).

with goals of providing financial and logistical help to coca farmers to develop legal crops or other income-producing endeavours once coca plants are uprooted.

On average, a coca farmer can expect to earn approximately U.S. \$1,000 *per year* from the cultivation of a few acres of coca (Leech 2001a) because it offers three crops per year and grows in poor soil conditions. Funding from the manual eradication programs of Plan Colombia offered farmers a lump sum of approximately U.S. \$950 (mainly in the form of products) for making the transition from coca to a legal alternative. Cultivating coca is more profitable than any other crop,²⁹ but the risk and violence associated with coca cultivation are enough incentive for some farmers to switch to legal crops if alternatives are presented. Many indigenous leaders have promoted the use of alternatives, and many communities have voluntarily uprooted coca plants in favour of licit crops. Some indigenous communities are participating in programs such as Raíz por Raíz (Root by Root), a project involving 7,000 indigenous families in the Putumayo region which offers technical and financial assistance for legal crops in exchange for the manual eradication of coca (Richardson 2003: 20).

The U.S. government claims that close to 35,000 indigenous and non-indigenous families have benefited from these opportunities (U.S. Department of State 2003), but many indigenous communities have complained that the funding awarded to families is either not enough, not received at all, or mismanaged by the various NGOs responsible for program implementation and follow-up (Fletcher 2003b: 22-24). In fact, after 14 months from the start of the program, only 4.8% of the families had received aid (Vargas

²⁹ Coca seeds and fertilizer are usually provided to farmers, and the cultivated coca or coca paste is picked up and paid for on site by traffickers. For all other crops, farmers must transport the product to distant markets on badly maintained roads, and the sale of, and profit from, the product are never guaranteed.

2003: 15). In some instances, farmers who had not received the promised funds to cultivate legal crops shifted back to coca cultivation, leading U.S. officials to claim that manual eradication pacts were inferior to aerial fumigation without addressing the problems with the distribution of funds (De La Garza and Adams 2001). In fact, the programs' difficulties have led the U.S. government to justify the use of fumigation as the only viable solution (USGAO 2002: 16).

President Uribe initially had a vision of regional development but it has not materialized, and manual eradication programs are still based on a transactional model (Vargas 2003: 24) where funds are only disbursed once coca plants have already been manually eradicated. This is a short-term approach that invites farmers to resume cultivation once the funds have been depleted. In some cases, regions that were more developed often received the bulk of the funding (Contraloría General de la República 2001: 19), but much of the financial responsibility for these programs rests with local and regional governments, thereby further increasing the economic strain on already impoverished regions (Vargas 2003).

Displacement

Both violence and fumigation have become the principal reasons for the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia and refugees in neighbouring countries. The forced displacement in Colombia is one of the largest and most sustained in the world, with almost 3 million indigenous and non-indigenous individuals having been displaced since the mid 1980s. Numbers oscillate due to IDP

registration,³⁰ the location of sprayings, and the shifting patterns of armed groups, but it is estimated that between 5-7% of the displaced are indigenous Colombians (Fagen et al 2003: 3). As mentioned above, indigenous Colombians represent only 2% of the national population. Almost all of Colombia's indigenous groups have been displaced at some point, with 12,649 indigenous Colombians displaced in 2002 alone (CDHD 2003: 4). ONIC and the Colombian Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) both report that forced displacement of indigenous groups is increasing, and that 9,350 were displaced in the first 6 months of 2004 alone, often encountering armed groups as they moved (Global IDP Project 2004).

Aerial fumigation is increasingly being considered an agent of displacement but both the Colombian and U.S. governments have been reticent in recognizing its contribution. Prior to the end of 2002, the RSS (Red de Solidaridad Social, the government agency coordinating the National System of Comprehensive Assistance to IDPs) only registered and provided assistance to persons displaced from violence (Fagen et al 2003: 6). Violence remains the most often cited cause of displacement by IDPs and refugees. For example, out of 258 indigenous Colombian families displaced to Sucumbios, Ecuador in May 2001, 234 left Colombia because of violence, fear of armed groups, forced relocation, or the homicide of a family member. Only 24 families left due to fumigation and other unspecified reasons (Programa de Ayuda y Protección a los Refugiados 2003: 59). The impact of violence on indigenous communities is discussed in greater depth in chapter 4, but it is important to highlight its role as an agent of displacement in the present section. Colombia's General Accounting Office estimates

³⁰ Many have not registered out of fear of reprisals from armed groups, and because displaced persons in Colombia are perceived as being part of the conflict and stigmatized (Rawlings 2002: 43).

that more than four million hectares of land are controlled by drug traffickers (including illegal armed groups), representing 48% of the most productive agricultural and resource-rich land of Colombia (Colombia Human Rights Network 2003). These regions often overlap with indigenous *resguardos*, and are the locations where the majority of displacements occur (Fagen et al 2003: 5; European Commission, Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) 2002:16). The ongoing expansion of *resguardos* has had little effect on armed groups since most do not respect indigenous autonomy or territoriality (Edeli and Hurwitz 2003a: 15), and the state is ill-equipped to remove them from *resguardos*.

In 2002, it was estimated that paramilitary groups were responsible for 30% of the displacement of indigenous Colombians while guerrilla groups were responsible for 14%, and the State's armed forces 1% (Norwegian Refugee Council 2004: 35). The conflict between both groups, and the increasing counterinsurgency measures from the State's military and police are also creating a volatile situation and contributing to forced displacement. Furthermore, armed groups have relocated non-indigenous coca farmers to indigenous *resguardos* to resume coca cultivation after fumigation raids, forcibly displacing indigenous communities (Norwegian Refugee Council 2004: 49). Lastly, it is important to recognize that along with homicides, forced displacement is a strategy used by armed groups to expel existing inhabitants and gain control of land and resources; it is not simply an unintended consequence of violence.

Plan Colombia's lack of measures to address social and economic problems is not surprising in view of the comments made by U.S. Department of State's William Brownsfield in the context of a discussion on U.S. policy toward Colombia: "We're a

simple people in the United States. We like simple formulas” (Ungerma and Brohy 2003). With the majority of the funding allocated to military and police forces for the expansion of fumigation programs, Plan Colombia was indeed a simple plan but the results of this formula have been anything but simple. A decade prior to Plan Colombia, indigenous Colombians had hailed the new Constitution as a significant achievement for indigenous rights under the assumption that the document itself and the apparent good intentions of the government would translate into better social, cultural, and economic conditions. A decade later, Plan Colombia has precipitated a decline in conditions, especially in terms of human rights violations (Witness for Peace 2003). The conditions created by the coca industry - along with the current initiatives to eradicate it – have created a state of crisis in Colombia that has been equated with a “generalized cancer” (European Commission 2001: 8). The loss of livelihoods and territory has contributed to cultural fragmentation and a sense of disillusionment with the Constitution as a supposed document to protect the rights of indigenous Colombians.

Fumigation, Displacement, and Cultural Fragmentation

The fumigation programs of Plan Colombia implemented in 2000 can be conceptualized through Das’ (1995) interpretation of the Bhopal disaster as a “critical event”. The fumigation program began quickly, it was intense, and it affected many communities, some more than others. Many indigenous families even failed to receive advance warning of upcoming fumigations (Walcott 2003: 30). As such, aerial fumigation removes a major source of food and income for indigenous families from one day to the next, and forces a rapid displacement from the area. In doing so, fumigation

and its resulting displacement have caused long term effects such as the loss of livelihoods, territory, social and family ties, and autonomy.

Through fumigation and displacement, indigenous Colombians have become dependent on the State and other communities for food, shelter, and other resources. Colombia has one of the most advanced legislation in the world for IDPs but the implementation of programs to assist them has been problematic due to a lack of staff and funding, and disorganizations within programs (Norwegian Refugee Council 2004; Fletcher 2003b; Fagen et al 2003: 16). There seems to be a significant discrepancy between the intentions of State authorities and what they are willing and able to provide. Indigenous Colombians tend to migrate *en masse* to other indigenous communities, and not to urban centres (U.S. Department of State 2001), but there is a lack of assistance to rural communities receiving IDPs. The leader of an Inga-Santiago community in the Valley of Sibundoy relayed the following to Nataly Fletcher (2003a: 38) under conditions of anonymity:

We are also experiencing terrible problems in the Valley of Sibundoy, because many displaced indigenous families come to our community, and we have no way at all of helping them...Speaking from my family's experience alone, we have had 25 families arrive seeking shelter, many with small children. This is what I am working for, to try to give them even half of a hectare so that they can have a place to live.

Due to inadequate resources in some communities, displaced families are also faced with a continuing migration from one community to the next in hopes of finding a community with the means to provide assistance. This prolonged state of displacement disrupts the education of young indigenous Colombians as well as child rearing and other bonds between family and community.

The Norwegian Refugee Council's (2004) report on indigenous displacement in Colombia has highlighted the effects of forced displacement on indigenous territoriality and culture. The loss of indigenous territory either due to violence or fumigation has contributed to cultural fragmentation due to the disintegration of familial and community ties, and has undermined indigenous autonomy and jurisdiction, guaranteed under the 1991 Constitution. Rawlings (2002: 43) has also reported other consequences of displacement such as the loss of personal assets, employment, and State services, along with a loss of political and social influence.

The displaced have often moved to areas where they are stigmatized because they are considered part of the conflict. They are also seen as a blight on society, and assumed to be responsible for the majority of the crime, environmental degradation, and a lowering of living standards in the communities to which they migrate (Fagen 2003: 7). A report from the World Bank (2002: 46) on poverty in Colombia in the past two decades indicates that recent migrants (most likely IDPs and refugees to other countries) have above-average poverty rates compared to the general population.

There are increasing instances of neglect of social, economic, and cultural rights of the displaced population - especially indigenous Colombians - because of ambiguous policies, limited budgets, and miscommunications between public entities and those organizations working with displaced persons (United Nations 2004a: 28). The government has implemented a program to return land to displaced families, but only 5,600 hectares of 200,000 available hectares seized from drug traffickers have been returned so far (Colombia Human Rights Network 2003; Ferrer 2004). Furthermore, many indigenous families have returned to their land to find armed groups still occupying

the region, or a lack of basic necessities such as drinking water and shelter (Norwegian Refugee Council 2004: 161). Fumigation has had immediate effects on crops but also on the ability of soil to be utilized after fumigation. In this sense, the loss of livelihoods is not an isolated event but one that has long term consequences.

The identity of Colombian indigenous people has always had some tie to the land and their struggles since the early 20th century have been centred on its recognition, recuperation, and expansion. Indigenous Colombians are in a unique situation in that their rights to land have been fully recognized through the Constitution, they have recuperated much of their ancestral lands on that basis, and *resguardo* titles continue to be expanded. But the continuing territorial invasions from armed groups and coca farmers, as well as from multinational corporations and large landowners, and the environmental degradation that continues to occur through counter-narcotics measure have meant an inability to safely inhabit these regions. As such, there is a recognition that territorial recovery is only meaningful if the deleterious effects of the coca industry are addressed. This has reoriented the concerns of indigenous Colombians from territorial rights towards resolving the sum of the effects of the coca industry.

Lastly, fumigation has deprived coca farmers of the opportunity to uproot coca themselves and is a method that is forced upon the population, giving the appearance that the Colombian government is more concerned with the interests of the United States than it is with the interests of its own people. Vargas (2003: 5) notes that President Uribe's administration has attempted to establish "an authority that emphasises the use of force over true consensus-building" (Vargas 2003: 5), and overlooks the economic, social, and human rights problems in those areas affected by the coca industry.

An anonymous indigenous leader in Putumayo relayed to Richardson (2003: 18) that “[c]ulturally speaking, communities are beginning to break up.... They cannot maintain their integrity in the face of individuals who bring disorder.” Another community leader revealed similar sentiments regarding cultural fragmentation and the perception of the State as an entity that has no genuine interest in the well-being of indigenous Colombians:

We realized that we have no dignity, that we're losing our autonomy and our identity. As human beings, we were simply treated worse than animals. Because of this, we organized ourselves strongly, speaking out, setting out, without stepping on anyone--simply proposing our own ideology: autonomy, dignity, culture, everything that has to do with a community and a society (Edeli and Hurwitz 2003b: 27).

In this sense, the critical events of Plan Colombia have produced positive results by motivating indigenous communities to organize and raise awareness of the adverse conditions faced by indigenous Colombians. Das (1995: 204) has noted, in reference to the victims' adaptation to the Bhopal disaster, that

the ability of the victims to organize themselves, both to understand what had happened to them and to secure justice for themselves, propelled them into a new configuration of the local and the global which made it necessary for victims to learn about the legal system of the United States, the bureaucracy, the medical profession as certifiers of disease, and also of collective social action, its possibilities and its betrayals.

Indigenous Colombians affected by the fumigation have been faced with scientific reports certifying the supposed safety of glyphosate, governments disallowing their claims for compensation, and as discussed below, judges and government officials that have been reluctant to stop fumigation on indigenous territories.

Resistance Through the Court System

The Colombian indigenous movement has achieved both political and legal gains unsurpassed by any other Latin American indigenous movement (Gros 1994: 118), but the conditions currently facing indigenous Colombians has demonstrated that enforcement of rights has been problematic. In theory, a Constitution will include provisions for the creation of effective mechanisms to address violations of rights. There was never an expectation that the 1991 Constitution would be a panacea but it was anticipated as a major step towards the recognition of indigenous rights and autonomy. The normal course of action when rights are violated is to appeal for the enforcement of rights through those independent judicial structures established by the State, but as shown below, these measures have failed to create improved conditions for indigenous Colombians.

In July 2001, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC), with support from the Colombian Human Rights Ombudsman's Office, filed a motion in a Bogotá court claiming that indigenous Colombians had a constitutional right to be consulted in decisions that affect their persons or territories (Walcott 2003: 33). Judge Gilberto Reyes suspended aerial eradication on and around indigenous lands after hearing the complaints from indigenous communities, but when pressed by the Colombian government for clarification of his ruling, the judge amended the injunction to only include those areas populated by the communities who had brought the complaint - an area very small in size (De Young 2001). Due to its narrow scope, the revised ruling had a much lesser impact on the environmental and health effects of fumigation. More importantly, there have been reports that fumigation has continued despite the ruling (De

Young 2001), fueling further distrust of the government and instilling a sense of powerlessness.

In May 2003, a Constitutional Court ordered that the government consult with indigenous Colombians before fumigating on indigenous lands, and in June 2003, a Superior Administrative Court in Cundinamarca ordered a halt to fumigation on all Colombian territory until studies could confirm the safety of the herbicide. Unfortunately, the Colombian government announced that it disagreed with the courts' decisions, and decided to proceed with the fumigation (Colombia Update 2003). Such disregard for court decisions demonstrates the limitations of the judiciary, but these rulings have at least set important legal precedents and practically speaking, have empowered any indigenous community affected by fumigation to seek similar injunctions in the future. Their success would depend on the next administration's decision to follow a similar path as the current administration, or recognize the decision of the courts.

Uprimny Yepes and Garcia-Villegas (2004) have assessed the Constitution as a "legal document [that] tended towards projecting a model of the society to be built", rather than reflecting current conditions and the ability of the State to enter into processes of change. Certain mechanisms were implemented to enforce constitutional rights³¹ but the bureaucracy and slow pace at which policy usually takes its course has worked against the spirit of the Constitution, especially in the case of indigenous Colombians who face imminent threats. According to the Colombian Ombudsman's Human Rights Office, fumigation violates several constitutional principles such as the right to a healthy

³¹ For example, the National Human Rights Commission for Indigenous Peoples was established in 1996, and is subject to monitoring by independent organizations like the ILO and UN Human Rights Commission. The *Defensoria*, established in 1991, is also charged with monitoring human rights violations but its resolutions are not binding.

environment, the duty of the State to harmonize its policies (which, in this context, would require the State to provide a safe environment and to combat crime, but not to do the latter at the expense of the former), the promotion of equality, and the consideration of measures that would favour marginalized groups like indigenous Colombians who are disproportionately affected by the fumigation (Stanton et al 2002). The courts have a duty to uphold the rights granted indigenous Colombians under the Constitution, but their reluctance to do this indicates that the Constitution was devised primarily to give the appearance of rights rather than with the intention of enforcing rights.

Leaders from indigenous organizations in Colombia have denounced the Constitution as a meaningless document for indigenous rights, intended more to appease indigenous organizing than resolving any core issues. Jesus Rey Avirama, former president of the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (CRIC), has noted that

[w]hat happened with the 1991 Constitution was an acceptance of the reality of the indigenous presence in this country... But what's happening in practice is the continuation of a policy of unawareness, the continuation of a policy of oppression against the indigenous communities. So the problem of discrimination continues in Colombia (Murillo 1996).

Justin Podur interviewed Manuel Santos, a member of the government of Cauca and of the Northern Cauca indigenous movement, who revealed similar sentiments in regards to the Constitution:

It really changed the whole landscape. Before 1991, the indigenous were in a state of rebellion against the government ... When we became a part of the system in 1991, we accepted the system, in exchange for its recognition of us, and we weren't in rebellion any more ... Essentially the spirit of 1991, in which our rights were recognized, is already dead. People speak of the "ex-constitution of 1991"... I believe that we have to recognize that we have won far more through struggle, through facts, than through laws.

Rebellion was better ... The government shows a nice constitution to the world, but the facts no longer match it (Santos, in Podur 2004a).

Others have commented on their disillusionment with government, and the need to expand the resistance to include institutions and organizations that are responsive to indigenous needs, and can influence the Colombian government in implementing and enforcing policies. José Soria of the Indigenous Organization of the Putumayo Zone (OZIP) has stated: "Our government doesn't listen to us, despite the fact that our rights are recognized in the Colombian Constitution ... For this reason we have to appeal to other sources so that our message can be heard on the international level and pressure can be placed on the Colombian government" (Marsh 2003: 36).

Indigenous Colombians have traveled to the United States to garner support from congressional lawmakers (Fletcher 2003a: 44) and to file claims in U.S. courts. The International Labor Rights Fund filed a suit in a U.S. Federal Court in September 2001 on behalf of Amazonian indigenous peoples from Ecuador and Colombia, charging Dyncorp, the U.S. defense contractor responsible for fumigation, under the Alien Tort Claims Act with indiscriminate torture, wrongful death, and infanticide. This suit sought billions of dollars in damages and reached the U.S. Supreme Court. It was ultimately dismissed, but having their case heard by the highest court in the United States was considered a significant achievement in and of itself (Walcott 2003: 33).

It is through these experiences of defeat and opposition from State (and U.S.) authorities subsequent to Plan Colombia that indigenous identities have been reshaped. As mentioned above, Connolly (1991) and Taylor and Whittier (1992) have noted how identities are shaped and reshaped through struggle, and always in opposition to an

“other”. Both the courts and President Uribe’s dismissal of claims related to fumigation has led indigenous Colombians to feel ignored, oppressed, that laws are useless, that the government lacks awareness of indigenous issues, and that constitutional rights for indigenous Colombians were a only a ploy to appease rebellion. Through the actions of State authorities, indigenous groups have become further alienated from the State. The existing gulf between both parties has enlarged, and this has jeopardized the prospect of finding common ground and resolving issues domestically.

This chapter examined the critical events that created a set of adverse conditions for indigenous Colombians. Plan Colombia and its focus on fumigation created adverse effects to the environment and health of indigenous Colombians, and contributed to their displacement to neighbouring communities. These agents of cultural fragmentation enticed many to seek redress through Colombian and U.S. courts, but there has been a gradual realization that asking the courts to stop fumigation has limited chances of success. The number of hectares fumigated in 2004 attests to this.³² What can be witnessed today is the adoption of innovative forms of resistance that move away from a single issue, and seek to draw on an array of elements in the formulation of both discourse and strategies, including the very real threat of extinction by coca-related violence, as discussed in the next chapter.

³² More than 135,000 hectares of coca were fumigated in Colombia in 2004, slightly more than half of the total Colombian crop (ONDCP 2005), and approximately 45,000 hectares more than in 2001.

CHAPTER 4

VIOLENCE AS AN AGENT OF PHYSICAL EXTINCTION

This chapter discusses the intensification of the violence as a result of its intertwining with the coca industry, and as a result of the shift in policies under the Bush and Uribe administrations. These conditions have intensified the difficulties faced by indigenous Colombians and have prompted them to adopt a discourse centred on the threat of extinction. The chapter begins with an overview of the modern violence in Colombia and the involvement of armed groups in the coca industry. The chapter continues with an overview of the effects of 9/11 on indigenous communities, and proceeds with a discussion of the ways in which indigenous Colombians have positioned themselves as communities under threat, and articulated various strategies to convey the threat of extinction to national and international audiences.

Armed Groups, Violence, and Territorial Insecurity

There have been certain events in the last forty years that have amplified and transformed the violence throughout Colombia. The coca industry is one such event, and it is intimately tied to the emergence of paramilitary groups. Guerrilla groups and ranchers were already in control of much of Colombia's indigenous territory in the 1960s. In the early 1980s, drug traffickers began to purchase millions of acres of land in rural areas. Guerrilla groups seized this opportunity and began kidnapping wealthy or high-profile individuals for ransom, leading drug traffickers to retaliate by forming death squads. *Muerte a Secuestradores* (MAS), or "death to kidnappers", was the first such

group, but it would be the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) - a national umbrella organization started by Carlos Castaño in the early 1990s - that would present a veritable challenge to Colombian peace efforts. With virtually unlimited funding from the coca industry, and powerful alliances with the State's military and police, the AUC have grown into a 15,000 member organization whose goals revolve around protecting the interests of the elite, supporting right-wing candidates, and ridding Colombia of guerrillas and their supporters. Castaño's umbrella organization has since been disbanded but many of the blocs remain and are a strong, violent force, deeply involved in all facets of the coca industry - taxing the production, running cocaine refinement labs, protecting trafficking routes, and trafficking drugs (Amatangelo 2001). The United Nations' Drug Control Program in Colombia has reported that paramilitary groups play a very significant role in the drug industry – even more significant than guerrilla groups (WOLA 2002).

In the 1990s, the large cartels were dismantled through the arrest, extradition, or assassination of cartel leaders, creating an environment in which smaller drug trafficking groups could prosper (European Commission 2001). Guerrilla and paramilitary groups were hired to provide protection for drug-traffickers, leading to a de-emphasis of kidnappings and extortion as a means to acquire funding. The more direct involvement of guerrillas and paramilitaries in the coca industry through protection, coca taxes, production, and trafficking has grown to where guerrilla and paramilitary groups now control more than 70% of the distribution, and 40% of the production of drugs (Buscaglia and Ratliffe 2001: 5). Both guerrillas and paramilitaries have resorted to such tactics as intimidation, random and indiscriminate violence, bribery, kidnappings, random killings,

and the assassinations of citizens and political figures (politicians, indigenous community leaders, military and police personnel, judges, journalists, human rights workers, and union leaders). Guerrilla and paramilitary groups also target those who assist IDPs or victims of violence in order to intimidate and control, especially in indigenous territory. For example, members of a FARC front killed two North Americans who were collaborating with the U'wa in El Arauca in March 1999, and members of a paramilitary group killed a Spanish volunteer and a Colombian priest a few months later while they were helping displaced indigenous Colombians in the Chocó region in 1999 (Mondragon 2000). Through these actions aimed at citizens, indigenous Colombians, government officials, and foreigners, Colombia's armed groups have attempted to paralyze the government and "establish themselves as an untouchable entity above the state" (Manwaring 2001:34-35), becoming in effect, a state structure within Colombia.

The convergence of guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, ranchers, and the State's military and police – each with their own motives for territorial expansion – has produced a very volatile situation for indigenous Colombians who inhabit these regions. Colombia's homicide rate remained relatively stable from the early 1960s until the late 1970s at about 20 homicides per 100,000 people. The rate rose to 30 per 100,000 in the early 1980s, rising sharply to 75 per 100,000 in 1991, and settling back at 50 per 100,000 in 2004, or 22,199 homicides in total (Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses 2004). The coca industry is not solely responsible for the violence in Colombia but it is a significant contributing factor, as evidenced by the spike in homicides from the 1980s to the 1990s. The indigenous people of Colombia are over-represented in these statistics since more than half of the FARC's fronts are in indigenous territory (Clark

2003), and through their presence, luring paramilitary groups, the police and military, and additional conflict. Furthermore, it is estimated that over 90% of the homicides go with impunity in Colombia (De La Bohorquez 2004: 28), attesting to the position of armed groups vis-à-vis the State. The most important structural element to address is therefore the strengthening of the State, but this is dependent upon gaining access to, and controlling, all Colombian territory (Thoumi 2002).

Sanchez and Nuñez (2000, in World Bank 2002: 32) assessed a wide range of socioeconomic variables that can have an impact on Colombia's crime rate, like poverty, lack of education, political exclusion, and inequality, but their conclusion was that almost 90% of the homicides are explained by the interaction between armed groups and the illegal drug trade. Armed groups have been increasingly relying on the profits from the coca industry as stable sources of funding. To maintain or increase this funding, it has been necessary to augment territorial control, and increase the cultivation of coca and the production of cocaine (Diaz and Sanchez 2004:57). In turn, the profits from the coca industry have enabled the purchase of weapons and other resources and facilitated territorial expansion. Thus, the violence and the coca industry have entered into a symbiotic relationship.

Diaz and Sanchez (2004) offer empirical evidence of a strong spatial relationship between armed groups (both guerrillas and paramilitaries) and coca crops, concluding that the municipalities with coca cultivation have the largest number of illegal armed groups. These groups seek to expand their territorial control at the same time that more and more hectares of land are being allocated to indigenous Colombians as *resguardos*. The increase in *resguardos* has provoked more assaults on indigenous Colombians from

armed groups as many of their bases of operation are on indigenous territory. Armed groups do not respect *resguardo* borders and this reduces indigenous territoriality to an ideal. Territorial expansion of armed groups into indigenous territories has increased contact, confrontations, and conflict among them. Furthermore, fumigation has increasingly forced indigenous Colombians into more remote areas of the jungle, and inevitably into areas controlled by armed groups.

Indigenous Colombians have been disproportionately affected by the violence from the conflict and the coca industry. LeGrand (2001) believes that the most violent places are the ones in which coca is grown, especially the southern regions of Guaviare, Putumayo, and the Atlantic coast. These locations have a history of weak State presence and are inhabited mostly by indigenous Colombians. The recruitment of indigenous teenagers is rising (Cooper 2001: 15) and both guerrilla and paramilitary groups practice forced or voluntary recruitment. Clark (2003) has reported that in the southeastern departments of Colombia from 1997 to 2000, indigenous communities complained that the FARC were forcing each family to provide two recruits. The FARC's objective was to recruit 3,000 indigenous Colombians familiar with the jungle and terrain of the region. More than 1,500 indigenous Colombians were forced into their ranks through this strategy according to the Latin American Association for Human Rights (Clark 2003). Armed groups have also entered some communities and compelled indigenous Colombians to serve as guides and informers, forcing them to choose sides (Jackson 2003) and risk retribution from opposing groups. They have also forced some indigenous communities to build roadways and clear jungles for the cultivation of coca (Richardson 2003: 18), and have forced them to cultivate coca as well (Lakshmanan 2004).

Violence from both guerrilla and paramilitary groups has occurred in the context of resource exploitation as well. In addition to targeting indigenous Colombians in the context of coca cultivation, guerrilla groups have taken a stance against foreign development, and against the government's preferential treatment of the corporate elite. They have retaliated or attempted to prevent development by bombing oil pipelines or facilities; over 50% of Colombia's oil reserves lie disproportionately on indigenous territory (Mondragon 2000). In contrast, paramilitary groups tend to support multinational interests in Colombia, and have killed indigenous Colombians who have tried to delay resource exploration. Leaders of the Embera-Katio community have been assassinated for resisting the construction of the Urrá hydroelectric dam (Ross 2003: 31; Colombia Labor Monitor 2001). Through invasions, recruitment, forced labour, random killings, the assassinations of community leaders, and massacres, the illegal armed groups are attempting to secure land by removing the indigenous "threat". In some places, this strategy has had the effect of weakening indigenous organizations and cultural cohesion. The number of young indigenous Colombians who commit suicide or attempt to do so is on the rise, where in two northwest communities, there have been 17 incidents in one year, attributed to violence from armed groups and displacement due to violence (United Nations 2004b).

Some indigenous Colombians are joining the ranks of the armed groups voluntarily for protection, and the promise of a stable income, food, and clothing (Macdonald and Edeli 2003: 12). The homicide rate of indigenous Colombians explains in part the appeal of joining an armed group for protection. In 2001, guerrillas and paramilitaries were responsible for the death of 300 indigenous Colombians (Leech

2002b: 56) and from January to September of 2002, another 150 members of indigenous communities were murdered (Jackson 2003). In the first half of 2003, the UNHCR (2004) reported 50 homicides of indigenous people while the Embassy of Colombia in Canada (2004) reported as many as 106. In total, and although there may be overlap with the previous figures, more than 500 indigenous leaders have been assassinated in Colombia for political motives since the 1970s (IACHR 1999: para 36), 300 of which have occurred since the 1991 Constitution (Mondragon 2000).

The demobilization of armed groups has been a goal of the State for many years as it is considered the best path towards strengthening the State. The State has been successful in reducing their numbers by a few thousands but in the case of paramilitaries, their collusion with State military forces remains an imminent threat to State legitimacy. It is well known that paramilitary groups, especially the AUC, have collaborated with the State's military and police forces. In some cases, the military would turn a blind eye to paramilitary killings, either vacating the areas when paramilitaries arrived, or simply allowing them passage, and arriving on scene moments later to record and remove the bodies (Kirk 2003: 193). In other cases, paramilitaries were in control of towns and hamlets, and operating only a few miles away from major military bases (Crandall 2002b: 159).

The Colombian military and police forces have also been directly responsible for human rights abuses and homicides of indigenous Colombians (Leech 2002b: 56). Such acts weaken credibility, hinder efforts at legitimizing State forces, and instill fear in those populations that witness atrocities by uniformed troops, legal or illegal. Retired Colombian Army Colonel Carlos Alfonso Velasquez (Ungerma and Brohy 2003) has

commented that the army is more concerned with destroying the guerrillas and all leftist opposition than in protecting the population - clear evidence of a narrow focus and lack of respect for the Colombian people.

The Consequences of 9/11 for Indigenous Colombians

Towards the end of Pastrana's presidency, U.S. President George W. Bush renewed support for Plan Colombia under a more expansive Andean Regional Initiative. This initiative sought to continue financial support for Colombia, but also to expand aid to Colombia's neighbouring countries in an effort to prevent the drug industry from resuming in those countries as a consequence of stifled production in Colombia. At first, the criticism for this initiative was similar to that of Plan Colombia in that it failed to address the set of social, economic and political factors contributing to the crisis in Andean nations (Tate 2001: 2).

The attacks of 9/11 precipitated a shift in policy and funding that would alter the dynamics of the conflict in Colombia. Prior to 9/11, there had been suspicion ever since Plan Colombia of connections between drug and insurgency initiatives (Godoy 2003: 11; Rabasa and Chalk 2001: 1). The U.S. was vehemently denying that any funding intended for counterdrug measures would be used for counterinsurgency initiatives. In 2000, Brian Sheridan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, stated the following in an official statement: "I know that many are concerned that this aid package represents a step 'over the line,' an encroachment into the realm of counterinsurgency in the name of counterdrug. It is not. The Department has not, and will not, cross that line" (U.S. Department of State 2000).

Subsequent to 9/11, the United States revealed that the Colombian drug industry and terrorism were “inextricably linked” (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs 2005; Casteel 2003) and any past or future funding was now available for use to dismantle terrorist organizations³³ in Colombia (CIP 2003). In addition, more than \$100 million in new funding was given to further train and equip the Colombian armed forces (United States House of Representatives 2002). Through increased funding of the Colombian armed forces, the conflict in Colombia has intensified despite a recent decrease in armed group membership (Toro 2005).

The interdependency of the Colombian armed conflict and coca industry is much more significant in a post-9/11 context since indigenous Colombians – whether coca growers or not – are in constant contact with illegal armed groups, and often forced to offer shelter, provisions, or labour. Illegal armed groups continue to encroach upon indigenous territories to grow coca and recruit indigenous Colombians into their ranks. Therefore, military incursions on indigenous territories are now justified, as is the inevitable displacement that might occur in the context of a war on narcoterrorism.

Post-9/11 policy on terrorism, and the inclusion of the drug industry into such a policy, also has the potential for creating problems with indigenous claims that fumigation violates constitutional principles such as the right to a healthy environment and the right to prior consultation. Fumigation can now be seen both as a measure to eradicate coca and a measure to remove funding from armed groups. In this context, any

³³ The U.S. “2001 Report on Foreign Terrorist Organizations” from October 5, 2001 lists the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) – the three largest illegal armed groups of Colombia.

resistance to fumigation by indigenous Colombians risks being interpreted as complicity with armed groups.

It is necessary to highlight another consequence of 9/11. Those events have been a catalyst for a significant policy shift not only in the U.S. government, but in the current Colombian administration as well. President Uribe has taken a similar stance on terrorism as U.S. President G. W. Bush, and as such, popular movements and organizations are now regarded with suspicion. Indigenous groups have consistently claimed neutrality in the Colombian conflict, and have even made demands of armed groups to obey ceasefires and respect their autonomy. However, the “war on terror” has had an impact on indigenous organizing, leading ONIC to declare:

And yet, despite the clarity of what we had pronounced, the media want to continue to present us as flying the flag of civilian counterinsurgency ... The propaganda is not just false, it's criminal. It has brought us into conflict with armed bands, it has made us military targets, it has misrepresented our true position on territorial autonomy, and worst of all it makes invisible the democratic potential of our action (ONIC 2002).

Furthermore, anti-terrorism legislation passed in 2003 will allow the military increased powers to hold and interrogate detainees without a lawyer present for up to 36 hours and search homes without a warrant (Hristov 2005: 91; Leech 200b). This lack of transparency, coupled with a heightened suspicion of indigenous groups, could lead to many abuses and further obstacles for the indigenous movement.

The Positioning of Indigenous Identity as Under Threat of Extinction

The coca industry, the methods to eradicate it, the intertwined violence, and reformulation of policies post-9/11 have created an array of deleterious consequences for

indigenous Colombians. If the fumigation raids of Plan Colombia are akin to Van Cott's (1996) temporal events or Das' (1995) critical events, then the long-standing violence and repressive policies (before and after 9/11) have acted as contextual variables. The positioning of indigenous identity as one that is under threat and the articulation of distinct forms of resistance have involved an interplay of internal and external variables.

As previously mentioned, environmental degradation and violence have existed in Colombia for quite some time. The noticeable difference today is the convergence of these elements in time and space. It is this convergence of disparate elements that has allowed for the development of a virtually unified discourse among indigenous communities. President of ONIC Armando Valbuena has stated that the resistance of indigenous Colombians has become "a resistance against everyone, because everyone covets [their] territory" (Edeli and Hurwitz 2003a: 16). This indicates how pervasive the coca industry has become with its connections to violence, and how an environment of insecurity, suspicion, and isolation has developed. It also indicates how such a resistance entails the formation of a unified indigenous identity in opposition to this "other", which for Valbuena, includes "everyone". In this sense, the diversity within the Colombian indigenous movement is dismissed in order to pursue a larger goal. This strategy has obvious difficulties but it allows the indigenous movement to "articulate [its] identity in terms of a set of characteristics recognized by [its] allies and by the media that presents [its] case to the public" (Li 2000: 157). Violence, fumigation, and displacement do not necessarily affect each indigenous community in Colombia but these elements have been organized into one discourse.

There is perhaps no other terminology that can better convey a sense of urgency and the need for immediate assistance than evoking the threat of extinction. For the indigenous communities in Colombia, this is not an unfounded claim. Both guerrilla and paramilitary groups have entered villages and massacred³⁴ numerous indigenous Colombians. In 2004, two massacres were widely reported in the media. On June 15th, 2004, more than 34 farmers including two children from the Tibu municipality in northeastern Colombia were tied up and shot in the back of the head by members of the FARC. Survivors of this massacre have said that the FARC were accusing the farmers, mostly indigenous, of collecting coca for the paramilitaries (Sévenier 2004).

In April of that same year, the AUC killed at least a dozen people and abducted others in the indigenous Wayúu village in the Guajira desert near the Venezuelan border (Weinberg 2004b; Amnesty International 2004). The manner in which the Wayúu were killed adds potency to claims of imminent threat. A survivor from this massacre by the name of Alberto reported the following to a Venezuelan newspaper: "They burned them alive inside my pick up. Also, they beheaded my mother and cut my nephews to pieces. They didn't shoot them, they tortured them so we would hear their screams, and they cut them up alive with a chain saw" (Valetta 2004).

Massacres have increased in recent years but they are not new to indigenous communities. In December 1992, representatives of the Páez³⁵ in the Cauca department brought a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the

³⁴ Although there is no universally accepted definition of "massacre", the Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CPDDH), a State-recognized NGO in Colombia, defines it as the act of killing three or more persons outside of a combat situation, in the same general location within a period of 24 hours.

³⁵ Páez is the name given to the Nasa by the Spanish, and both appellations are used interchangeably. In this case, the appeal was filed using "Páez" and therefore this name has been used instead of Nasa.

Organization of American States (OAS) to announce the massacre of 20 members of the community of Caloto and the burning of crops, farmhouses, and domestic animals by armed groups, among which the National Police was part. One month after receiving the complaint, the IACHR officially opened a file on the massacre and proceeded to inform the Colombian government of their investigation. The Colombian government issued its response three months later, and exchanges between it and the IACHR continued until 1995 when Colombia agreed to the creation of a *Comite de Impulso* - a committee designed to give impetus to these investigations - and announced its commitment to reaching a fair settlement.

It took until 1998 for the Colombian government to accept responsibility for the massacres including acknowledgement of the involvement of the National Police, but the influence of the IACHR on Colombian affairs has proven insufficient. Those police officers accused in the massacres and tried in a military court were ultimately not subject to disciplinary action, and only partial compensation to the Páez community in the form of land allocation was agreed to (but has yet to be allocated). The IACHR determined in its final report that in the eight years following the massacre, the Colombian government made efforts to participate with, and make reparations for, the Páez, but that it had partially failed in initially preventing violations of their rights (IACHR 2000).

Other organizations such as the Organizacion Zonal Indigena de Putumayo (OZIP) have submitted complaints related to displacement due to the invasion of settlers, coca cultivation, guerrilla activities, and torture by paramilitary and military forces (IACHR 1999b: 16). In total, many complaints of abuses related to the coca industry have been forwarded to the OAS but the problem with such recourse is that its declaration of rights

has not been ratified by Colombia, and although Colombia is a member of the OAS, there are no real consequences to membership in this respect. The power of the OAS is limited to recommendations but in the context of an unresponsive government, indigenous communities have little other recourse. By continuing to publicize massacres and including them in a discourse centred on the threat of extinction, indigenous Colombians are increasingly raising awareness of the situation in Colombia.

A discourse centred on the threat of extinction is not implausible. Several of Colombia's 84 indigenous groups have less than 200 members, and eight of these have less than 25 members.³⁶ With dozens of community members being massacred in single events, the threat of extinction of certain groups is very real. Furthermore, the massacres experienced by indigenous communities and their incorporation in a discourse of extinction reflects how "an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it" (Hall 1996: 142). Cultural fragmentation and the threat of extinction can only be understood within the current context of assaults on Colombian indigenous groups, such as violence from armed groups, fumigation by the State, and displacement. Some assaults are not as tangible. The Colombian State's dismissal of indigenous constitutional rights, its unresponsiveness to conditions in remote regions, and its implementation of policies that are deleterious to the well-being of indigenous communities are "subtle forms of violence" (Rojas 2002: xxiv). These subtle forms of violence have a lengthy history in the Colombian State's relationship with indigenous Colombians. In the 19th century, indigenous histories were dismissed in favour of adopting one history of civilization and

³⁶ The government of Colombia still relies on 1993 population census data, intending to complete a new census in 2005. As such, some of the specific group populations mentioned are revised estimates.

one national identity (Rojas 2002: 42). The assimilation of indigenous Colombians within the national society was also manifested through the dissolution of *resguardos* and the redistribution of the lands in individual, and not communal, parcels.

Today, the State's inability or unwillingness to safeguard indigenous *resguardos* from violence and fumigation, prevent displacement, or secure the areas for the return of displaced indigenous Colombians produces similar results. Indigenous Colombians are forced off their communal lands and into new communities, suffering cultural fragmentation and the prospect of adapting to foreign – and sometimes hostile – environments. The State has been clear in its intention (for example, in terms of awarding, and presumably securing, indigenous rights to territory) but its actions have created a very different situation. Before Plan Colombia, ONIC's discourse tended to reflect this discrepancy:

Internationally, the rights won by Colombian indigenous peoples have been held up as an example by both governments and indigenous peoples, but we see there is a huge distance between the word and the reality. For Colombian indigenous peoples, the constitution has become more like a plan of action, in that initial illusions have given way to a real-life situation where rural bosses and transnationals continue to run things, and their henchmen block the rights acquired, starting with the right to live (ONIC 1999, in Carlsen 2002: 7).

Their discourse also revealed a growing concern for survival as a consequence of the government's inaction. Since the implementation of Plan Colombia, ONIC's discourse has changed to reflect the urgency of the threat of extinction of indigenous communities through massacres and random homicides. In August 2001, ONIC President Armando Valbuena asked the United Nations' secretary general and the UN High Commission to personally intervene before the Colombian government to prevent the

potential extinction of all indigenous communities: “The lives of 84 indigenous groups are in danger this millennium. Let's not have this generation be responsible for ... foretold genocide” (Villegas 2001).

Roberto Perez, an U'wa traditional leader, has also noted Plan Colombia's potential for extinction: “Plan Colombia is a death sentence for us...The money the U.S. is spending on Plan Colombia will go to protecting the international companies by purchasing arms and more sophisticated equipment and constructing military bases in the rich zones” (Carlsen 2002: 6-7). Also in reaction to the effects of violence and illicit drugs on Colombian indigenous communities, President of OPIAC José Soria, has noted:

We also need the solidarity and support, not only of the indigenous communities of other countries of the Amazon, but also of the people of Colombia, the European community, and the international community as well. We need them to understand that this is a very difficult situation and that they can help to solve this problem. We believe that if Plan Colombia continues, we will have a huge social crisis on our hands--an increase in displaced people and more deaths. I also believe that a huge number of Amazonian cultures, if they are not prepared, will simply disappear (Fletcher 2003a: 45).

The threat of extinction has incited several innovative forms of resistance among indigenous communities. It appears as though any form of resistance from indigenous Colombians will bring retaliation from armed groups. Weinberg (2004a) has reported an increase in attacks on indigenous leaders as more of them assert their independence from the conflict and seek recognition of their rights. Also, both ONIC and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office have reported that territorial claims by indigenous communities have resulted in threats and violence from armed groups (IACHR 1999). In response to the threat from illegal armed groups, indigenous Colombians have strengthened their

movement by adopting diverse and innovative forms of mobilization. Tarrow (1994: 114) notes that the combination of certain tactics “increases the marginal power of movements” and adds both symbolism and spontaneity, thereby attracting more attention to the movement. Innovation has played a significant part in developing responses that raise awareness among local and international groups. As is discussed below, indigenous Colombians have formed an unarmed Indigenous Guard, peacefully marched, employed various forms of communication to build networks with domestic and international groups, and participated in forums of the United Nations.

The increasing violence at the end of the 1990s led Nasa communities in the department of Cauca to organize an Indigenous Guard in 2000, and formalize it in 2001. Their goal is to peacefully defend their communities, territories, and autonomy. The Indigenous Guard operates under the authority of the *cabildos*, and is comprised of men, women, and indigenous Colombians of all ages. Rappaport (2003: 40) notes that these are the same people who participate in mobilizations today, and that “they will never become leaders, but are the local foundations of the indigenous movement.” They only carry staffs that are purified in ceremonies and act as a symbolic defence against armed groups and violence. Their presence has reinforced their neutral position in the conflict, or one that is outside of the conflict altogether. The staffs symbolize peaceful resistance and the will and authority to defend life. The indigenous guard itself is a spiritual event since many young people attend meetings to gain a greater understanding of Nasa identity (Rappaport 2003: 41). Unfortunately, the Indigenous Guard has not been able to repel all violent acts towards indigenous communities, and its members have even been the target of violence by illegal armed groups as well (FOR 2003).

Another tactic that plays a significant role in the Colombian indigenous resistance is the march. In Colombia, marches and peaceful protests have remained an important element of the struggle because they are accessible to most communities and easier to organize than efforts through the court system. Indigenous Colombians staged some protests in the early 1990s through marches and peaceful demonstrations, such as in 1995 when 6,000 indigenous Colombians from several communities protested the government's failure to act on its promises of economic assistance or justice for massacred indigenous Colombians (Murillo 1996). The demonstrations gained momentum and new significance with the implementation of Plan Colombia in 2000 but the first protests were violent. Four thousand indigenous and non-indigenous protesters looted businesses and burned fumigation chemicals in the northern town of Tibu where no aid had been offered by the government (Baena 2001). Protests related to fumigation continued on several occasions as the raids increased, especially by coca farmers who had lost their source of income through illegal crops, and other farmers who had lost legal food and cash crops (Leech 2001b).

From September 14-16, 2004, 60,000 indigenous Colombians from the department of Cauca and their supporters ignored threats from paramilitaries, guerrillas, and the armed forces and marched 75 kilometres to the city of Cali to demand that armed groups respect their constitutionally-recognized right to territories and self-government, and that the government demilitarize indigenous and peasant territories (Kolar 2004). The march was organized as a Minga - an indigenous term for the practice of joining communities in an effort to reach a common goal (Vieira 2004) – and several Indigenous Guard members were present to symbolically protect the masses of marchers.

Once in Cali, protesters gathered in a stadium and convened an Indigenous and Popular Congress, and received the following response from President Uribe: "I see no link between the problems that are being brought up and the march...I see that the march has a political objective and it should be clearly presented as such, instead of putting forth lies" (Vieira 2004). The negative reactions of President Uribe may reflect his acknowledgement and fear of a strengthening indigenous resistance. Four days before the march, president Uribe flew to southwestern Colombia to try to convince organizers to call off the march (Cryan 2004). More importantly, his message to 60,000 peaceful marchers was that their struggle was not legitimate and that his administration was not willing to accept their claims (and by extension, not willing to effect any changes).

These protests have failed to evoke a positive response from government or to compel it to act directly, but they have raised awareness of current conditions in the media. In this sense, indigenous Colombians have raised their voices and have actively made themselves "newsworthy" (MacDonald and Edeli 2003: 11), in effect, shaping the media coverage of their events (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1230). In addition to extensive coverage on the Internet, media coverage for this event was available on 138 community radio stations, 17 regional ones, and 30 indigenous stations – many broadcasting live during the march to local, national, and international audiences. This was the first instance of such a wide network of communications and media for a particular indigenous protest (Vieira 2004). Incidentally, President Uribe shut down a Nasa radio station less than 10 days before the march due to certain licensing issues – an action whose timing raised suspicion among those involved (Dorado 2004).

Justin Podur translated the final declaration of ACIN released after the march.

Through its message, ACIN has highlighted the fear of both cultural fragmentation and physical extinction through actions by the national government and international corporations. Their message also highlights the necessity for cooperation with international forces to ameliorate conditions at home:

The challenge of this new age is immense. It may be the most serious of our entire history. We suffer a damaging, evil ‘order’. We know this and say it loud. It is not only our cultures, communities, peoples and families who are at risk. It is life itself that can be destroyed by the blindness of those who are using the greatest power in history to make everything that exists part of a market with their project of death.

...

The project that threatens life does not respect borders – that’s why it is called ‘globalization’. It comes to our communities and into our homes throughout Colombia and the world. It brings war, lies of propaganda, the power of law, and the power of money. It comes for the wealth of nature and the work of people to exploit and sell. Those who control and make decisions to serve their interests are far away. They are in the directorships of large multinational corporations and in the financial centres of the world that end up with everything. They use governments and armies and institutions to do their bidding. They convince us that all this is inevitable.

...

Because we face a large and difficult challenge, this mobilization is also different. We have not come out only to demand something of the government or to denounce, though we are doing that also. This time we come to bring people together, to bring organizations and processes together. We march to express our commitment to unite to work and weave reciprocal solidarity that is necessary to defend life. This time we know that we cannot do it alone and we need one another to understand, resist, and create the possible and necessary world. We have surprised the government, power, the country, and the world because we have not come out to demand what is ours by right. Instead we call this Minga with a proposal so that all peoples can define an indigenous and popular mandate to orient the process and advance from this reality of confusion and death towards a project of life for and from the people (Podur 2004b).

Indigenous Resistance on an International Level

Members of indigenous communities are increasingly using the Internet as a mode of communication with other communities, regional organizations, and international bodies in a consolidated effort to raise awareness of violence and other injustices, and to create supranational networks. A plea from the Association of Traditional U'wa Authorities (ASOUWA) and the Regional Indigenous Council of Arauca (CRIA) was issued on the Internet in 2000 in reaction to a sudden and violent forced displacement by army and police forces in Canoas, an U'wa indigenous community:

We urgently request the intervention of governmental and non-governmental observers, from the national and international levels. We urge you to speak out against these abusive acts which violate the precepts of the Colombian Constitution which protect indigenous people and which violate human rights (ASOUWA & CRIA 2000).

Indigenous Colombians have also sought assistance from groups in Canada to both sponsor telecommunications projects in Colombia, and put pressure on the Canadian government to reassess its relationship with Colombia. Vilma Almendra, an indigenous Colombian from the Nasa community operates one of three Internet-equipped communications telecentres in southwest Colombia, supported by the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC). She has noted the benefits of these telecentres in allowing indigenous Colombians to be more autonomous and have more agency in communicating “with the media, donor agencies, and human rights and environmental organizations. In the past we depended on non-Indigenous advisors and intermediaries because we didn't know how to communicate” (Toomey 2003). Not only have these telecentres been useful to remain in contact with other communities within

Colombia at a much faster pace than face-to-face visits or the postal service, it has allowed them direct access to information from international institutions. The IDRC has also supported the Sistema de Comunicación para la Paz (SIPAZ) in creating a telecommunications network linking local radio and television stations through the Internet and rebroadcasting nation-wide, to tie communities together and keep them informed (Castellanos 2001), as was the case during the September 2004 march to Cali.

Delegates from Canada to Colombia have recognized that there are certain similarities in the struggle of indigenous Colombians and Canadian aboriginal people, especially in terms of natural resource exploitation and land recovery. As such, they have shared experiences and strategies through in-person meetings and Internet communications, and an increased awareness of the Colombian situation by the Canadian delegates has led them to criticize Canadian trade and foreign policy in Colombia. They have also pressured the Canadian government to assess the human rights abuses in Colombia and to direct the Colombian government in bringing perpetrators to justice (CCSC 2001).

One of the strategies of the Colombia Canada Solidarity Campaign (CCSC)³⁷ is to develop and implement mechanisms on both national and international levels that would render the use of violence and aggression against indigenous Colombians counterproductive. Through a “permanent SOS” system, the goal is to make any attack on indigenous Colombians an attack on every social movement, thus increasing the implications, consequences, and deterrent effect of such aggressions. The permanent SOS

³⁷ The CCSC was created out of a series of meetings in Ottawa, Canada in 2000. The meetings included interested persons from Canada and Colombia and sought to assess the situation in Colombia and develop strategies to both address local Colombian problems and influence the Canadian government's policies toward Colombia (Podur 2001).

is imposed on the entire country and does not single out a specific community since all indigenous communities are under threat from armed groups. The permanent SOS seeks to link individuals and organizations within Colombia and with international groups so that an attack on an indigenous person or the displacement of an indigenous community will be met with reinforcements from other individuals and communities. As such, violent and oppressive acts by armed groups would result in a stronger resistance.

The network of domestic and international organizations working abroad and in Colombia, for the benefit of indigenous Colombians, is expanding as violence and homicides increase. The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) wrote a letter to President Alvaro Uribe Vélez dated December 15, 2003. The following excerpts, translated by Jasmin Hristov, demonstrate the indigenous peoples' desperation with government inaction in relation to the civil conflict, and their willingness to seek international attention:

We are exposed to the intensification of armed confrontation which is centered on the civilian population, the continuous bombing day and night, the occupation of communities by foreign armies which is done under the pretext of combating terrorism, and the impeachment of entire communities - especially social organizations - for assisting the guerrillas.

...

We demand from judicial institutions and state bodies to regulate the actions of the armed forces in accordance with the constitutional mandates in force. We also demand from the National Government to attend the call of civil society organizations which seek to achieve the peaceful coexistence of all Colombians, based on respect for international accords, especially International Humanitarian Law and those related to ethnic groups and the protection of human rights.

...

Despite of our wish to believe in the National Constitution, the current reality makes us doubt its existence and it seems that we are left only with the option of calling on international human rights bodies, countries that value democracy and on social and solidarity organizations around

the world to be attentive to the conduct of actors in the confrontation (Hristov, in CRIC 2003).

The letter further outlines the violence in specific indigenous communities, and accuses the Constitution and other agreements made between the government and indigenous peoples of being “dead words”.

This attempt to bring awareness of this new direction in the indigenous struggle in Colombia has already become part of the discourse within the United Nations. Through participation at the third session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York in May 2004, vice chairperson Antonio Jacanamijoy, an Inga from Colombia’s Sibundoy Valley, noted the atrocities committed against indigenous people in certain Colombian communities and stressed the threat to their survival, urging the Colombian government and the UN to adopt measures to resolve these issues (DOCIP 2004: 11, 14, 17). Subsequent to his visit to Colombia, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People Rodolfo Stavenhagen remarked that in addition to a need for providing basic necessities for, and respect of, indigenous communities, there is an urgent need for international organizations to mobilize and create “an emergency programme of aid to the indigenous communities in danger of extinction” from violence and displacement, especially in the Amazon region (UN Commission on Human Rights 2004: 2). Rodolfo Stavenhagen’s comments on the possible extinction of indigenous communities have already been widely reported in Colombian newspapers and online news articles, demonstrating the potential for international organizations to influence both the Colombian and international arenas without the involvement of the Colombian government.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen has also recommended immediate investigations into allegations of abuse committed on members of indigenous communities by the State forces (UN Commission on Human Rights 2004). Recommendations and pressure from the UN does not have an immediate effect on indigenous communities in Colombia but their policies and recommendations have fostered critical dialogue and forced the government to critically appraise their practices in a more open and transparent process. For some, like ONIC, critical dialogue is not enough to address more practical issues such as victim compensation and it has asked the WGIP to revise the term “recommendations” and use stronger terminology to further compel the government to act (DOCIP 2003: 16). At the very least, new spaces have been created for indigenous peoples on the international level and their participation has been directly responsible for the degree of involvement of international organizations in Colombian indigenous affairs.

This shift to more powerful terminology reflects not only the new conditions that arose as a result of Plan Colombia but a realization of the impotence of court decisions. A discourse of extinction becomes a more direct plea that attempts to bypass traditional bureaucratic channels in an effort to bring about immediate changes (for example, the cessation of all fumigation or pressure from international organizations on the Colombian government to adopt new methods for dealing with violence). Such urgency does not translate very well in recommendations and monitoring processes but there seem to be no other available options at the moment.

Adopting a discourse that highlights the threat of extinction is an approach that frames local values into a globalized discourse, has global appeal, and seeks to promote sustainable solutions for the survival of indigenous communities. Cultural fragmentation

seemingly has less global appeal since culture is an entity that can potentially be recovered, as has been the case in some Colombian indigenous communities. The extinction of a group immediately instills a sense of finality and urgency because once all members of a particular ethnolinguistic group are lost, the group can never be recovered. The response from the international community indicates a sense of obligation by individuals and organizations across the globe to assist in the struggle to retain the diversity of human groups. As such, indigenous Colombians have combined urgent appeals for immediate action with protests and appeals to Colombian courts to provide both short and long term results.

The power of international organizations like the OAS and the UN to effect change with national governments are limited but they can still prepare recommendations, drafts declarations, respond to human rights violations, establish bodies and appoint rapporteurs to investigate violent or suspicious events. To some it may seem as though their power is severely limited but this capacity to investigate and comment on otherwise internal matters is significant for indigenous Colombians. Recourse to supranational organizations like the OAS and UN are now common practice and part of the Colombian indigenous movement's strategy. The shift to an international platform reflects the Colombian indigenous peoples' dynamism, versatility, and understanding of the potential benefits in seeking protections from international bodies instead of relying solely on a fragile and economically constrained state.

Such a positioning is the product of historical practices, repertoires of meaning, current conditions, and struggle – it is a process of transformation that bridges the old with the new. In the years since Plan Colombia, it has been possible to witness the

emergence of a new resistance and a more unified discourse that focuses less on individual claims and more on recognition for all indigenous Colombians, which includes territorial rights, environmental rights, and the right to life. Such a strategy taps into all available resources to disseminate information about the urgency of indigenous Colombians' situation: protests and marches, appeals to national and supranational courts, and requests for assistance from international influential bodies. This new resistance also considers and builds upon its failures: intimidation by armed groups during protests, government vetoes of court decisions, the slow pace at which international bodies exert pressure on the Colombian government, and a new post-9/11 context that has altered policies and implications for indigenous Colombians. Their experiences are constantly reinterpreted in the context of the intensification of those conditions created by the coca industry. Those conditions have worsened at a faster pace than their resistance has achieved results. As such, the development of a new Colombian indigenous identity as one that is on the verge of physical extinction but strong enough to resist may have a greater impact than those methods and discourses that have previously been employed.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis argued that the conditions created by the coca industry along with the Colombian State's inability to mediate these conditions have acted as a catalyst for a shift in both the discourse and strategies of the Colombian indigenous movement. For most indigenous Colombians, the production and trafficking of cocaine has contributed to a rapid deterioration of their living conditions. Environmental degradation and adverse health effects have been increased through fumigation, displacement has affected an increasing number of indigenous Colombians, and violence has intensified through the integration of illegal armed groups with the coca industry - all consequences of the coca industry that have heavily impacted indigenous communities. These elements do not necessarily depend on the coca industry to exist; in fact, environmental degradation and adverse health effects have occurred in the context of resource exploitation, indigenous Colombians have been displaced by wealthy land owners and a biased agrarian policy, and violence has a lengthy history in Colombia. The coca industry provided an ideal environment for the convergence of many actors from diverse sectors: guerrilla and paramilitary groups, narcotraffickers, coca growers, the Colombian military and police, the Colombian government, the government of the United States, and indigenous people and other citizens caught in the middle. Each of these groups has different motives, strategies, and methods for accomplishing their particular goals. These conflicts of interest have created deleterious conditions for indigenous Colombians but at the same time, have acted as a catalyst for mobilizing at both national and international levels, and strengthened the indigenous resistance.

The combination of U.S and Colombian policies, the lack of State presence in remote areas, and the non-recognition of Constitutional Court decisions has amplified the effects of the coca industry in indigenous communities. The failure of the Colombian State to consistently recognize and enforce indigenous rights has highlighted a discrepancy between the Colombian State's ideal of what the country *could* be, and the reality of the limitations in becoming something "better" solely through proclamations and declarations, without changing the social, economic, and political infrastructure of the country. The coca industry has infiltrated Colombian economic, social, and political spheres, and virtually every indigenous community in Colombia has suffered from its effects.

Through the integration of distinct forms of resistance, indigenous communities most affected by the coca industry have developed strategies to influence the State through pressure from international bodies of influence. Indigenous representatives have included several new articulations in their resistance, such as the adoption of new modes of communication that transmit a new discourse centred on cultural fragmentation and physical extinction, and the need for immediate assistance from any organization willing to offer it. Through this conglomeration of methods, indigenous communities have led the struggle to reclaim autonomy and security for their territories and culture. Their actions will not remove the threat from the coca industry but they may provide enough incentive for the State to secure indigenous areas and displace armed groups from indigenous territories, thereby removing part of the need for intensive fumigation campaigns in *resguardos*. Pressure from international organizations could also affect counternarcotics and counter-terrorism policies that could alter approaches to resolving

the problem of cocaine, and consequently, remove part of the threat for indigenous Colombians.

A discourse centred on the loss of life, through its breadth and social relevance, has the effect of including all those secondary elements – fumigation and its effects on the environmental and health, displacement, and violence – that in the past, formed the basis of independent claims. It is a comprehensive approach that not only includes claims related to the coca industry, but has the potential for including claims against multinational corporations or other projects that threaten indigenous autonomy and well-being.

The first chapter of this thesis examined the theoretical approaches of RMT and NSM as complementary frameworks within which the emergence of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s could be understood. To appreciate the conditions that enabled the Colombian indigenous movement to emerge and sustain itself, Van Cott's set of temporal, internal, contextual, and external variables were employed, and illustrated the array of elements that can come into play in the making of a social movement. Das (1995) has highlighted how "critical events" can provide momentary visibility and incite new forms of action that can capitalize on otherwise unfortunate or catastrophic events. The acuteness of the events created in Colombia by the coca industry has provided the opportunity for such visibility, especially in those years following the implementation of Plan Colombia. Tarrow also stressed the need for innovation and political opportunity structures as internal and external elements necessary for effecting change within a social movement - components that have been apparent in the appropriation of a discourse that stresses cultural fragmentation and physical extinction for Colombian indigenous

communities. Tania Li and Stuart Hall's notions of positioning and articulation provided insight into the ways in which identity shapes, and is shaped by, mobilization. This framework provided a better understanding of the Colombian indigenous movement and its focus on the incorporation of disparate elements to form a multifaceted strategy based on current conditions and opportunities. In sum, through the recognition of current conditions, prior experiences with resistance, the use of new methods, audiences, discourse, and political opportunity structures, the conditions were established for a resistance movement to maximize on the available resources and provide the best strategy for effecting change.

Chapter two contextualized the emergence of the Colombian indigenous movement within the history of politics and violence. The chapter began with an overview of 19th century politics and the 1886 Constitution that established the position of indigenous Colombians as minors within the State, and that remained in force for more than 100 years until the expanded rights gained by indigenous groups through the 1991 Constitution. The political situation of mid-20th century Colombia also established the environment within which the modern violence arose. An unjust agrarian policy, a sharp divide between workers and the elite, and the assassination of a political leader propelled the State into a decade-long conflict that would only subside through a power-sharing agreement between the Liberal and Conservative parties. During this new period of political exclusion and disillusionment, Colombia's major guerrilla groups and indigenous organizations would emerge and provide formal opposition to the traditional Colombian bipartisan political system.

The indigenous movement emerged at this time and despite divisions within it, was able to coordinate efforts that led to the participation of indigenous representatives in the Constitutional Assembly and the creation of a new Constitution in 1991. The participation of indigenous representatives in the Assembly led to the codification of several articles pertaining to indigenous Colombians, including expanded rights to territory, self-government, and culture. It was initially touted as a great accomplishment for indigenous rights but subsequent decrees were indicative of the difficulties in translating constitutionally-recognized rights into practice. The indigenous movement today is still comprised of many different communities that each espouse different values and notions of indigenous identity. This diversity within the movement has allowed for a variety of approaches to resistance that has strengthened the indigenous movement.

Chapter three assessed those conditions produced by the coca industry that have direct relevance to indigenous Colombians. Efforts to eradicate the coca industry through fumigation mandated by Plan Colombia have been controversial for their deleterious effects on the environment and their inefficiency in substantially reducing the number of hectares under cultivation. The product used on Colombian coca fields has destroyed legal crops and adversely affected grazing fields, animal populations, waterways, and human health. Furthermore, placing the majority of the funding in forced eradication measures *in lieu* of manual eradication programs has left coca farmers with little assistance and compelled many to resume coca cultivation after fumigation, and travel deeper into indigenous territories to accomplish this. Both violence and fumigation have become significant agents of displacement, forcing thousands of indigenous Colombians each year from their constitutionally-recognized *resguardos* to other communities that

lack the ability to provide for incoming groups. The displacement from violence and fumigation has resulted in cultural fragmentation, where the loss of social networks, family ties, livelihoods, territory, and autonomy has been so overwhelming as to act as a catalyst for mobilization. Recourse to court systems in both national and international arenas has proven to be a limited approach, but has established important precedents upon which future claims could be made.

Chapter four analyzed the role of violence in the coca industry and its effects on indigenous communities. The emergence of guerrillas in the 1960s and paramilitaries in the 1980s, along with their gradual involvement in, and dependency on, the coca industry has resulted in territorial encroachment on indigenous territories, recruitment of indigenous youth, the involvement of indigenous communities in coca cultivation, and thousands of homicides and other forms of violence. The chapter continued by highlighting how the events of 9/11 redefined the relationship between counterdrug and counterinsurgency measures and had a negative impact on the perception of indigenous organizing in Colombia due to their proximity to armed groups and their involvement in the coca industry. The sum of these events led indigenous Colombians to position themselves as communities under threat of extinction, and incited indigenous Colombians to develop a set of strategies that incorporated the recognition of past struggles, internal and contextual variables, and political opportunities to deploy their message to the *international community and seek assistance.*

Through processes of articulation, indigenous organizations have appealed to a more international audience by combining large-scale protests, media awareness, and appeals to international bodies of influence to mediate disputes between indigenous

communities and the State. Obtaining redress from the Colombian State through third parties has taken years and produced unspectacular results but the same can be said for their efforts on a domestic level (for example, the recognition of indigenous rights in the Constitution, and efforts to obtain redress from the State in relation to fumigation). The shift to a new discourse on cultural fragmentation and the threat of extinction has only begun to impact international organizations but its focus on urgency and imminent threats has global appeal and hopefully will produce results before entire groups disappear. International influence may pressure the Colombian State into adopting more transparent and accountable processes, enforcing indigenous rights, and respecting court decisions.

The Colombian indigenous movement is acting to incite immediate attention and action but the full effect of these few forms of resistance will not be known for some time. Further research is needed to assess the sustainability of employing an approach that stresses imminent danger, especially in the context of adverse conditions that are not the result of a one-time catastrophic event, but a series of policies and conditions that have no foreseeable end. Further research is also needed to gauge the ability of international organizations to compel governments to act for the benefit of indigenous groups under threat. Even in an era of globalization, a third party route may not be the most efficient method for inciting a government to act. The key will be to discover domestic measures that could provide more efficient, genuine, and sustainable changes. It is clear that Colombia has a host of problems, many of which exist independently of the plight of indigenous Colombians. Many other groups – armed or not – experience conditions that urge them to organize and try to change the State apparatus. The indigenous movement in Colombia has chosen a route that rejects violence and opts for legal measures to resolve

disputes - peaceful protest is at the very base of indigenous resistance and holds symbolic value. This method has produced slower results but it has established a firm legal base and a strong international network that has intervened and reacted positively. Once the Colombian State gains accountability and legitimacy, this framework will outlast the effects of more violent approaches to change, and contribute to peace efforts that will affect indigenous and non-indigenous communities throughout Colombia.

Appendix A Shaded Relief Map of Colombia and Its Departments



Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin. 2001.
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia_rel_2001.pdf

Appendix B

Coca Cultivation in Colombia, 2003



Source: Government of Colombia – UNODC Coca cultivation Survey 2003.
http://www.unodc.org/pdf/colombia/colombia_coca_survey_2003.pdf

Appendix D

Presence of Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia - ELN



Source: Government of Colombia – UNODC Coca cultivation Survey 2003.
http://www.unodc.org/pdf/colombia/colombia_coca_survey_2003.pdf

Appendix E Presence of Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia - AUC



Source: Government of Colombia – UNODC Coca cultivation Survey 2003.
http://www.unodc.org/pdf/colombia/colombia_coca_survey_2003.pdf

Appendix F
Acronyms

ACIN	<i>Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca</i> (Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca)
AICO	<i>Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia</i> (Indigenous Authorities of Colombia)
ASOUWA	<i>Asociación de Autoridades Tradicionales U'wa</i> (Association of Traditional U'wa Authorities)
AUC	<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i> (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)
CRIA	<i>Consejo Regional Indígena de Arauca</i> (Regional Indigenous Council of Arauca)
CRIC	<i>Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca</i> (Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca)
ELN	<i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional de Colombia</i> (National Liberation Army of Colombia)
ETI	<i>Entidades Territoriales Indígenas</i> (Indigenous Territorial Entities)
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia</i> (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (OAS)

MAQL	<i>Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame</i> (Quintín Lame Armed Movement)
OAS	Organization of American States
ONDCP	Office of National Drug Control Policy (U.S.)
ONIC	<i>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia</i> (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia)
OPIAC	<i>Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombia</i> (Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon)
OZIP	<i>Organización Zonal Indígena de Putumayo</i> (Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Putumayo Zone)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
WGIP	Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UN)

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